

Cheddar First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123717
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359495
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marc Angliss
Headteacher	Margaret Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 teachers and visited 15 lessons. Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, parents and members of the governing body. The inspection looked at pupils' work and the school's monitoring of pupils' work and progress, along with reports made about the school and various policies, including those referring to the school's procedures for safeguarding staff and pupils. The inspection team scrutinised questionnaires returned by staff and pupils, along with 136 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which teaching and the curriculum enables all pupils to make good progress, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which attainment in reading is improving and whether the school is closing the gap between the attainment of boys and girls especially in Key Stage 1.
- The impact of the new leadership team in bringing about further improvements and so move the school forward.

Information about the school

Cheddar First School is a large primary school. The vast majority of its pupils come from families of White British backgrounds but there is an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, a few of whom are learning English as an additional language. The school also has a small group of pupils from the Traveller community who live locally. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils with statements of special needs. The most common difficulties are in the range of mild learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or medical problems. The school has received a number of awards in the past and has recently regained the Active mark.

There is a committee run pre-school group on the school site which was not part of this inspection and the new children's centre is to open on 20 January 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cheddar First School is a good school that enables pupils to achieve well. Parents and carers and the pupils know this, and many parents commented on how happy children are at school and how they enjoy their activities. One parent commented 'The care and warm atmosphere in the school makes learning a happy safe and thoroughly enjoyable experience'.

Attainment has risen rapidly over the last three years and pupils reach standards that are above average in Year 2 and in Year 4. Attainment in writing is particularly strong, with mathematics not far behind, but attainment in reading is a little less successful. Boys frequently are not reaching the same high standards as the girls in reading. The school has been successful in closing the gap between the girls and boys in Years 3 and 4, but staff recognise that reading is the subject that has not received as much attention in recent years and needs an additional boost in both the quality of teaching and more regular monitoring of pupils' learning and progress. The reason for the rising trend in all areas of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics is the very effective focus given to improving teaching and pupils' learning. Activities are successful in stimulating interest, especially in writing, and pupils are helped to understand how they can improve. Teaching is good and pupils are confident that their teachers will help them if they get stuck or do not understand. Effective learning starts in the Reception class and progresses all the way to the end of Year 4. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and enabled to make good progress. Similarly, those pupils who are new to learning English are given effective support in learning new vocabulary so they too are able to play a full part in activities and make good progress. Pupils' personal development is good and they are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils talked with confidence about their activities and all had favourite subjects they could talk about with enthusiasm. A strength of the curriculum is its focus on writing, which is developed well through links with other subjects. However, the school recognises that not enough time is given for pupils to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the additional activities, such as the whole-school Sports Week, which successfully extend their skills and knowledge, but there are fewer opportunities for them in art and to work creatively, which they also enjoy. Activities motivate pupils' interest but do not give them sufficient opportunities to work independently and to explore their own ideas. The curriculum focuses effectively on promoting pupils' personal development, particularly their awareness of how to develop healthy lifestyles and their spiritual, moral and social development. They do not have enough opportunities through which they can experience the diversity of cultures in the wider community.

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Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and all pupils, particularly those who face challenging circumstances in their lives, are well supported. The staff work together as an effective team and are firmly committed to promoting pupils' academic development and personal well-being. They are well led by the headteacher and together have made the significant improvements in teaching and learning, so raising standards. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and they have identified correctly the next steps needed for improvement. Together with the effective support and challenge of the governing body, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading so that standards equal those in writing and mathematics by developing more effective strategies in the teaching of reading, particularly for the boys, and monitoring pupils' progress more effectively.
- Develop a curriculum to more fully meet the needs of all pupils by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of ICT and use them to support their learning in other subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils' independent learning and creative thinking
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of cultures in the British Isles and around the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are keen to do well. They try hard and behave well. This supports their good learning. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Children start Reception with skills and abilities generally in line with that expected. Boys and girls both make good progress across the school but some boys have further to go to reach the same high standards as their peers, especially in reading, because of their lower attainment in language skills when they start school. Attainment overall, however, has been above average for the last two years at the end of Year 2 and in Year 4. Pupils respond well to the teaching and work diligently at their tasks. They will look for ways to improve and confidently make changes, to their writing, for example, so it is better. Pupils behave well, and even when they have finished their task and are waiting to be shown what to do next, they continue to behave well. This was clearly illustrated in an ICT lesson in Year 4 when the teacher was involved in helping other pupils and those waiting started to explore other aspects of their program so they could improve their work. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were excited by the challenge of finding numbers in the 'secret box', making good progress and enthusiastically sharing their ideas to successfully solve the puzzle. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were well supported and they too were well engaged in the task.

Pupils are polite, caring of each other and show empathy for others less well off than themselves. They take responsibility with enthusiasm. They are proud of their jobs and carry them out sensibly. One boy, for example, was very proud that he had 'been chosen' to get the ICT suite ready each morning. Pupils are quick to suggest ideas for helping others and in making the school a better place. They have a good understanding of how

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to keep themselves safe and recognise the importance of developing healthy lifestyles. They enjoy all that the school has to offer and make a good contribution to the school as a community. Attendance is good. Pupils from the Traveller families also attend regularly and so make good progress in line with their peers.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching and good levels of care support and guidance underpin pupils' effective learning and well-being. Pupils say the teachers make their activities interesting and so they enjoy taking part and concentrate well. Teachers are effective in sharing the purpose of the lesson with pupils and use their good subject knowledge to develop pupils' good understanding. They are aware that further developing their strategies to encourage pupils' reading skills is the next step forward, but this is not as effective for the boys who make less progress. Most teachers accurately assess what pupils already know and can do and use the information well to plan activities that help pupils to improve. They are helped to understand how to be successful in their tasks and to recognise what they need to do to improve. Boys and girls are challenged equally and the more able pupils are helped to extend their knowledge and understanding well. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They use their good levels of experience to support pupils in their learning. Their sensitive support is particularly valuable for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have social and emotional difficulties. The recently formed nurture group

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for such pupils is already having a positive impact on developing their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils say they know the staff want them to be happy and this is recognised by the parents and carers as well, one of whom wrote, 'The school has a very nurturing atmosphere and we have complete confidence in the teaching staff and the care they provide.'

The curriculum is adapted satisfactorily to meet the needs of all pupils. It is effectively supplemented to help those who are new to learning English and or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Sometimes activities are dominated by the class teacher and although pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas to consolidate their understanding, they are given few opportunities to explore new ideas or suggest ways of working. Sometimes learning in subjects such as ICT, history and geography is dominated by the need for pupils to write about what they know and do not enough focus enough on pupils finding out information for themselves. There are strong partnerships with local schools, which are used effectively to supporting pupils' learning and extend the range of their activities through the use of additional resources. The sports partnership, for example, is a particular strength of the curriculum and enables the school to gain the Activemark each year. Similarly, the school successfully uses visits to places of interest and visitors to school to enable pupils to learn through first-hand experiences.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear focus on what the school needs to improve. With the good support of senior leadership team, she has set an effective agenda for putting these developments into place, with the result that teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics have all improved and standards have risen. The school recognises that pupils attainment in reading is not as consistently good as in writing and mathematics. The school's assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress are used well to ensure teaching is well focused, and expectations are high. Monitoring arrangements are effective and regular focus is given to evaluating all aspects of the school's work. Governors are self-evaluative and well informed. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and are influential in the school's development. Financial management is effective and governors are forward-looking to ensure the best staffing arrangements are made within the confines of the budget. The governing body is often proactive in suggesting developments, such as developing an induction programme for volunteers. Keeping pupils safe is high on the school's agenda. Governors and staff regularly review their safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure good practice and to meet statutory

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requirements. Procedures are good and carried out effectively. The school is a safe environment for staff and pupils.

The school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils have a strong sense of place and staff effectively promote equality and mutual respect and avoid any possible discrimination. All pupils have equal access to all the school offers. The school has accurately evaluated its provision for community cohesion as satisfactory. The school promotes good relationships between pupils of different backgrounds and there are good links with the local community. It has correctly identified the need to develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and good plans have been made to develop links with schools with a more diverse community and with schools overseas. The school's partnership with parents and carers is good, as are their partnerships with a variety of local schools and outside agencies that are used well to extend curricular development and support pupils and their families.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well into the Early Years Foundation Stage and quickly start to work and play together happily. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. Last year they achieved particularly well to reach above average standards. This is not always the case because the cohorts differ from year to year, but this year the same good progress is already evident. This is due to the good teaching and sensitive support provided by all adults in the two Reception classes. Children's needs are well understood, their progress is monitored carefully and next steps effectively planned. The curriculum is well planned to take into account children's interests so they are eager to learn. There is a good balance of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to organise their own activities to experiment and explore. The safe area outside is used well to extend the

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activities provided in the classrooms and a good range of resources stimulate children's interest. Staff work together very well and build strong partnerships with parents and carers, which supports children's personal development and confidence. Good links with the two pre-school groups also ensure a smooth transition and ensure children are happy and feel secure. The two Reception teachers provide good leadership. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and are constantly looking for ways to improve with the result that attainment has risen for boys and girls. They are accurate in their evaluations but do not always use national data fully to help them benchmark the children's achievements, which would further support their assessments.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Over half of the families with children at the school responded to the questionnaire, which is higher than the average return. All responses were very positive and there were very few concerns or complaints. All were isolated comments which were followed up by the inspection team. The many written comments showed considerable support for the school and its work: parents and carers showed their appreciation for the staff's hard work, their good teaching, their care for the children and the leadership of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cheddar First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 136 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 296 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	99	73	35	26	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	105	77	31	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	73	54	61	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	56	59	43	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	100	74	35	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	83	61	51	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	62	47	35	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	75	55	51	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	74	54	58	43	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	51	60	44	2	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	71	52	59	43	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	102	75	32	24	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	103	76	32	24	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cheddar First School, Cheddar BS27 3HN

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents and carers are correct in thinking that you go to a good school.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- You get a good start to your schooling in the Reception classes.
- You make good progress to reach standards that are above those of most children of your age, particularly in your writing and in mathematics.
- You want to do well and enjoy your work.
- You are polite, friendly and helpful, you enjoy taking responsibility and have done lots of things to help the school be a better place and to help people around the world.
- You are taught well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting.
- The school is led well and everyone works together as a strong team.
- The staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though Cheddar First School is a good school, there are two things we have asked your headteacher and staff to do to make it even better:

- We have asked that you are helped to make even better progress in your reading, especially some of the boys, so that you reach the same high standards as you do in your writing and in your mathematics work.
- We have asked that you are given more opportunities to use your ICT skills to support your learning in other subjects and that you have the chance to explore new ideas for yourselves and to learn more about people of other cultures.

Thank you again for making our visit so enjoyable and remember you can do your bit by continuing to work hard and helping each other.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector

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