

# Critchill School

Nunney Road, Frome, Frome, Somerset, BA11 4LB

**Inspection dates** 16–17 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the future of the school. Along with other leaders and governors, he has improved the achievement of pupils through effective training and regular monitoring of teaching which has led to improvements in pupils' learning.
- Innovative systems to check pupils' progress ensure no one falls behind and can quickly catch up.
- The governing body has a wide range of skills and uses these well to manage the budget and to form an accurate view of the school's work. Governors ensure that additional government funding enables eligible pupils to achieve as well as their peers.
- Parents are very pleased with the school. They say that their children make good progress.
- Improvements to the range of subjects offered have ensured that activities are set at the right level.
- Effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They say they feel safe at school.
- Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Strong relationships and well-planned tasks engage pupils well.
- Pupils across the school achieve well in English and make good progress in reading and writing. More-able pupils make excellent progress in reading.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is outstanding. They really enjoy the practical aspects of the subject and the challenges set for them.
- Children get off to a positive start in the Reception Year. They settle well and make good progress.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students gain a range of qualifications.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Attendance is below that of most other special schools because some pupils do not attend well enough.
- Not all older pupils have the opportunity to undertake work experience.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, most of them jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspector also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspector visited the breakfast club and spoke with several groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of the 15 parent and carer responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View). She also spoke to a few parents and carers at a coffee morning at the school. The 20 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also considered.
- During this inspection the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, receiving free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.

## Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs for their severe or moderate learning difficulties.
- About a third of pupils have a diagnosis of autism and a few others have additional sensory or physical difficulties.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from Traveller backgrounds.
- The school runs a Learning Support Service to support other local schools, in particular Oakfield Academy, Writhlington Academy, Mells School, Nunney School, and St John's.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- Additional primary school sports funding is provided for primary-aged pupils.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is provided for the few pupils in that year group.
- Off-site training for sixth-form students is provided by Fairfield College.
- The Reception class is shared by older pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- The school is currently undergoing a significant amount of refurbishment to some of its specialist facilities.
- The school does not enter pupils early for examinations.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work with pupils, parents and the local authority to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.
- Provide more opportunities for older pupils to undertake work experience so that they are better prepared for their futures.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have worked tirelessly since the last inspection to improve all aspects of the school. They are rigorous in their drive to raise achievement and have already had much success. As a result, achievement, particularly in mathematics, has improved rapidly.
- Key leaders and managers, including middle leaders, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition and are fully committed to improving all aspects of the school.
- Leaders, together with the governing body, have built on previous good performance to improve all aspects of the school. They successfully opened a sixth form last year, followed by a new Early Years Foundation Stage class this year.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and policies are well thought out to ensure that pupils make at least good progress in literacy.
- The wide range of subjects on offer engages pupils well and ensures that they want to learn. This contributes well to pupils' academic achievements, their physical skills and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Emerging links with Zambia are helping pupils to understand the lives of people from different cultures. Together these aspects promote pupils' good behaviour and understanding of safety well.
- Innovative systems for checking pupils' progress have been developed by school leaders. This ensures that all pupils' achievements are regularly assessed so that any pupil falling behind can quickly be supported to improve.
- Parents are very pleased with the school. The few who spoke to the inspector agree that the school ensures that their children achieve well.
- Partnerships with local schools are effective and they welcome the support that this school provides as part of their learning support for pupils across the local area.
- Procedures for setting targets for teachers are rigorous and leaders ensure that salary increases are not awarded unless staff have met their targets, based on pupils' progress. As a result, leaders have developed and improved teachers' skills. Leaders ensure that all staff have regular training in aspects such as managing behaviour and safeguarding of pupils, ensuring consistent practice across the school.
- The school receives 'light-touch' and proportionate support from the local authority because it has confidence in the leadership of the school. However, the impact and effectiveness of the local authority's services to support and challenge the school's improvement, particularly for children who are looked after, those receiving free school meals and the most able pupils, require improvement. Leaders, including governors, do not feel that the support and challenge from the local authority are as good as they were a few years ago. Leaders feel that the local authority do not know the setting well.
- Partnerships with local schools are good and are developing with local colleges. Links with the wider community have improved. However, work-experience placements for older pupils are very limited, hindering preparation for their futures.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and leaders ensure that staff are well trained in identifying pupils at risk of harm.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because there is more to do to improve attendance and develop work-experience opportunities.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is supportive, providing good challenge to leaders. The governors are fully involved in checking teaching and behaviour and looking carefully at how well pupils are doing. They regularly check the effectiveness of the school, so that they have a view of what is working well. Governors have a good range of skills which they use to benefit the school, and they have received appropriate training. They understand the use of data and know how it compares with similar schools. Governors challenge leaders well and, as a result, teaching has improved. Frequent monitoring and full involvement in evaluating the pupils' achievement through the school's own self-evaluation mean that members know how effective the school is. Good management of finances means that the additional government funding is used to improve the learning of those pupils for whom it is intended. It is used very well to provide additional support and resources so that these pupils' achievements and progress are at least as good as those of their classmates. Governors rigorously ensure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded and they understand the process of setting targets for teachers well.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is evident in school documentation and in the very few incidents recorded. Pupils' good behaviour in and around the school is promoted by positive relationships with staff and between pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Older students told the inspectors that they feel safe. Pupils in Year 10 said that they are aware of the importance of staying safe while using the internet.
- Pupils assured the inspectors that there is no real bullying at the school, saying that everyone usually gets on well. A few older girls said there was some teasing by other pupils, but agreed that this is quickly dealt with by staff.
- Pupils say they enjoy school very much. However, some pupils do not attend regularly enough, despite rigorous actions by leaders to encourage them to do so. This is why behaviour and safety are not outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are well promoted by the good range of exciting learning for all groups. As a result, there have been no exclusions in the past two years.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development is good, through the positive support that they receive and the wide range of exciting activities. Leaders promote tolerance for all pupils and help them to be well prepared for life in modern Britain through their study of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.
- Effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils includes fund-raising activities and links with local schools. Assemblies ensure that pupils understand right and wrong and provide a balanced approach to pupils' broadly Christian religious education, which also encompasses world faiths.
- Pupils are prepared well for their lives after leaving school through their good-quality achievements and accreditation. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to experience the world of work to further improve their aspirations.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are safe and secure and behave well.
- Students in the sixth form behave well in lessons and in their free time. They are safe and secure in their accommodation.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently good. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well at the school.
- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching ensures that all groups of pupils make good or better progress.
- Teachers have high expectations and help pupils to deepen their knowledge in order to make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching has improved over time because of increased training and rigorous monitoring by leaders.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught well. The teaching of English typically engages pupils because of some exciting tasks and the effective use of technology to support pupils' learning.
- High levels of support in literacy ensure that pupils can complete their tasks, although occasionally too much is done for them and this impacts on how much individual progress they make.
- The teaching of reading is effective because of the regular teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) and reading practice. As a result, the most able pupils can read simple stories well while others learn to read words or symbols or respond to signs.
- The teaching of writing benefits from good use of technology, enabling many pupils to gain confidence to respond and share their ideas.
- Mathematics teaching is particularly strong, resulting in some outstanding achievement by pupils. For example, as a result of a clear explanation by the teacher, Year 9 pupils were helped to understand and work out how to use coordinates. Questions challenged them to work things out and they showed a high level of response to some difficult questions.
- The marking of pupils' work is often verbal but is always regular, accurate and typically helpful, giving examples of how pupils can improve their skills. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics.
- Teaching in the early years provision and in the sixth form is good.

**The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils' attainment on entry is usually well below that expected for their age, because of their learning difficulties.
- Nevertheless, progress across year groups in a wide range of subjects is consistently good and evidence shows that pupils achieve well. Inspection evidence and school information show that achievement in English is good, and in mathematics it is outstanding.
- All groups of pupils, including those who receive additional funding, those with a diagnosis of autism, those with sensory or physical difficulties and those from Traveller backgrounds, achieve well.
- Just occasionally, pupils' achievement dips when staff do too much for pupils in lessons, making decisions for them. This is most evident in literacy.
- The most able pupils achieve particularly well in reading. This is because they benefit from the tasks set and from daily opportunities to improve their phonics and reading skills.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that of other pupils in the school so that gaps between pupils are closing fast.
- Almost all pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics because of some very effective and enjoyable activities. In Year 8, for example, pupils worked hard to be the first to find answers to questions as they were challenged to draw two-dimensional shapes.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs receive effective support to enable them to work alongside their classmates. They make similar progress because of the additional expertise provided for them.
- Pupils' sports skills are improving following additional funding that has enabled the school to provide extra coaching. Pupils are developing very healthy lifestyles because they are able to take part in physical activities on a daily basis.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those in the sixth form achieve well.

**The early years provision** is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made an effective start to their school lives. They benefit from sharing their learning with their older peers in Years 1 and 2.
- The education offered has depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning and provides some exciting activities which children enjoy.
- The quality of teaching is good and all adults have high expectations and plan activities that are set at the right level. For example, children enjoyed playing in the 'dark room' using a range of lights and had fun while they learned.
- Learning opportunities are well organised. The planning contributes well to the development of children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- For example, children showed that they were confident to move around the classroom and use the various areas to explore and enjoy their learning.
- Children are taught phonics regularly, ensuring that they quickly learn how to match letters and sounds through playing games.
- Staff work extremely well with parents, keeping them well informed about their children's progress.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies are implemented well so that children are safe and secure.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the importance of staff training and development so that all staff have appropriate qualifications to support children. Monitoring has already begun, ensuring that this area of the school gets off to a good start and to enable leaders to drive improvement.
- Children behave well and are beginning to interact with adults and other children.
- Leadership of the early years provision is good and the area is well prepared for its new pupils.
- The early years provision is not outstanding because it is too new to show children's progress over time.

**The sixth-form provision****is good**

- The sixth form is good. Leaders have an accurate view of the sixth form. Significant progress has been made over the past year to introduce programmes and accredited courses that fully meet students' individual needs and abilities.
- Relationships between students and staff are good and staff are keen for pupils to do well. Students are very well supported in lessons and in their free time. They get on well with staff and know that there is always someone to talk to.
- Progress is good. It is not yet outstanding because at times tasks are not challenging enough for all groups. However, students are given as much independence as possible despite their accommodation not yet being fully completed. Staff work hard to help them make the best of their sixth-form area.
- There is no sixth-form common room as yet but plans are well advanced to improve the accommodation to develop life skills and those for becoming independent. In addition, facilities such as a polytunnel have enabled students to grow their own vegetables.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is good because of the strong focus placed on these areas. Students in the sixth form make good progress on their accredited courses, preparing them well for their futures.
- Students attend Fairfield College for one day a week to undertake work-related courses which they thoroughly enjoy and which contribute to their employability.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to undertake work experience to ensure that they learn the skills they will need in their future employment. This is why the sixth form is not outstanding.
- Teaching in the sixth form is relevant to the ages of the students. A good start has been made in social development, through working together in groups.
- Students' behaviour is good and they were observed working well, taking turns, making decisions and enjoying their activities. They feel safe and secure in the caring learning environment.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and the range of qualifications on offer is improving. College links have been successfully established and students' work is regularly checked to ensure that they are making good progress.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123946
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	439469

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	49
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	7
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Hudson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Armstrong
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 July 2011
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