

Chew Valley School

Chew Magna, Bristol, BS40 8QB

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to ensuring that all students make good progress and enjoy school. They have a good understanding of what needs further improvement.
- Leaders, including governors, recognised that GCSE results in 2014 were disappointing. They have taken effective action to put in place a range of strategies to rectify this.
- Leaders have worked determinedly to ensure that students develop the skills necessary to take responsibility for their revision and to work with resilience when preparing for their examinations. This is helping to strengthen achievement across a wide range of subjects.
- The curriculum has been developed to include a range of subjects which are well matched to students' talents and aspirations. Attainment is very high in a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to effectively support students to make good progress across the curriculum.
- Students behave well in lessons and have good attitudes towards learning. They are well equipped to participate in learning and lessons start on time.
- The school makes a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- The school's Equality Teams, which are led and run by student leaders, provide opportunities for students to mix in socially diverse groups. Consequently, students demonstrate high levels of respect for each other and are extremely welcoming of difference. Discrimination of any kind and the use of derogatory language are not tolerated.
- The leadership of pastoral care is extremely strong. Students feel very safe and well cared for when at school. This view is endorsed by the vast majority of parents.
- Highly effective leadership of the sixth form ensures that all students make rapid and sustained progress. The numbers securing places at university, including Oxford and Cambridge, are high.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking does not consistently enable students to make sustained progress.
- Not all teachers use information from assessments or from marking students' work to plan activities that help students to build on their prior learning.
- Disadvantaged students do not make as much progress or attain as well in mathematics as they do in English.
- Teachers' professional development and training does not always match the development priorities for the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and behaviour in 41 lessons, several of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, groups of students from each year group and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation relating to other aspects of the school’s work, including its self-evaluation summary, development plan, records of students’ behaviour and attendance, information about students’ progress and attainment, and records relating to the school’s work to keep students safe and secure.
- Inspectors conducted a separate scrutiny of students’ work in their books and also listened to a group of students read.
- Inspectors considered the 80 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of the 134 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter from a parent received during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Full report

Information about this school

- Chew Valley School is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has a sixth form.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school has nine primary schools in its catchment area. However, the school attracts students from a much wider area which can result in students in some year groups joining from more than 40 feeder primary schools.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Three students are in receipt of a highly personalised curriculum which is delivered at home due to medical reasons.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully disseminate the recently strengthened process of departmental review to all subjects so that all teachers' professional development is carefully matched to the school's development priorities and thereby strongly accelerates students' progress further.
- Improve the progress of disadvantaged students in mathematics by ensuring that they fully understand the key principles and are therefore able to confidently work things out for themselves.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide clear guidance to students about how to improve their work so that marking helps them to make sustained progress
 - use assessments and the outcomes from marking to plan learning activities that help students to build on their prior learning and therefore embed their understanding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school effectively. He is highly respected by all members of the school community, by parents and the local authority. His vision that all students are cared for and supported to achieve their best is fully embedded across the school.
- Leaders, including governors, recognised that the GCSE results in 2014 were disappointing. Evaluation of the school's work is accurate and clearly identifies the key areas for improvement. Effective action has been taken to shift the emphasis from attainment to progress, and students, regardless of ability, are now supported to achieve their best. Leaders have rightly focused on Year 11 and the sixth form; they are working to ensure that the good practice spreads into Key Stage 3.
- The systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress have been strengthened and there is now a more coherent approach to tracking progress within and between the different key stages. The shift from attainment to progress allows subject leaders to develop curriculum pathways to match students' differing rates of progress. However, this work is not yet fully embedded across all departments.
- The leadership of pastoral care is exceptionally strong. Every possible attempt is made to remove any barrier to learning. This includes providing counselling for those who find school challenging as well as a raft of support from outside agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the school nursing team and the Youth Bus, which is staffed by social workers and health professionals. Consequently, students feel very safe when at school, attendance is high and fixed-term exclusions are very low.
- There is a very strong ethos of inclusion across the school. Highly effective use has been made of student leaders to lead and run the school's 'Change and Create' teams which include the Equality Teams. These groups provide opportunities for students to mix in socially diverse groups and ensure that the promotion of equality is very well disseminated across all aspects of the school's work. Discrimination of any kind and the use of derogatory language are not tolerated.
- The school's systems for reviewing the quality of provision at departmental level have been strengthened and leaders now rigorously evaluate the impact of teaching on students' achievement. Where these reviews have taken place, subject leaders have a very good understanding of how to hold teachers to account for the progress of the students they teach, and how to match training and development to the school's improvement priorities. Senior leaders recognise that these reviews need to be disseminated to include all subjects to maximise the impact of good teaching on students' achievement.
- The systems for managing teachers' performance have been strengthened. The emphasis on students' progress rather than just their attainment is being used to set high expectations for all students and to ensure that all are supported to achieve their best regardless of ability. Leaders have taken appropriate action to provide additional support where teaching has been identified as not being good enough.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets all statutory requirements. It has recently been reviewed and strengthened to include more vocational subjects and is now well matched to students' talents and aspirations. Almost all students move on to sustained education, training or employment when they leave the school.
- The school's contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Students benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities which extend learning beyond the classroom and enable students to experience cultures very different from their own. Students' involvement in charity work, most notably with Stonewall, ensures that the school is fully inclusive regardless of students' sexual orientation, faith or ethnicity.
- Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain. The personal development curriculum provides a rich variety of opportunities for students to understand religious diversity, the challenges and pressures facing young people in the twenty-first century and the rule of democracy. There was full participation in the activities to mirror the recent general election including hustings, election of candidates and voting at a whole-school level.
- The pupil premium is managed effectively to provide additional support in English and mathematics, to improve attendance and to ensure that students have somebody to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. The progress of disadvantaged students is now good in English and a broad range of other subjects. Progress is improving quickly in mathematics.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure meets statutory requirements. Almost all parents believe that the school keeps their children safe and would recommend the school to others.
- The information, advice and guidance students receive is of very high quality. Students make good choices for their GCSEs and post-16 studies, and this helps to secure good progress in almost all subjects.

Students are also provided with a full range of career choices and those wanting to enter further education are supported well to consider a range of providers.

- The local authority has provided good support for the school. The reasons for the disappointing GCSE results in 2014 were fully explored with appropriately qualified local authority representatives and this work has also enabled the school to check and validate its information about current students' progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governance of the school is effective. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge for school leaders. This included seeking full and robust analysis of the reasons for the disappointing 2014 GCSE results. Governors have a good understanding of the school's improvement priorities and are insistent that leaders regularly provide information to governors' committees about the progress being made. Reports to governors include information about students' progress and achievement, which enables them to evaluate the impact of teaching on outcomes for students.
- Governors have ensured that the headteacher's performance objectives are based on students' progress. This has enabled leaders to ensure that the shift from attainment to progress is embedded across the school. Pay awards are only recommended when the quality of teaching is strong enough to ensure good outcomes for all students.
- Governors diligently oversee the school's financial resources. They are aware of the projected impact of changes to sixth form funding on the school's budget and have therefore worked hard to achieve a financial surplus which will allow the school to maintain high-quality sixth form provision. Governors monitor the spending of the pupil premium well and know that the gaps are closing more rapidly in English than they are in mathematics.
- Through the committee structure, governors are also able to accurately monitor the way in which the school keeps students safe and secure. They ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their conduct around the school is excellent. They demonstrate high levels of respect for each other and are very welcoming of visitors to the school.
- Most students take pride in their work. However, where marking is infrequent or inconsistent, work is sometimes left incomplete, presentation is poor or books are defaced with graffiti.
- Students have a strong sense of pride in their school. They value the opportunities to participate in learning beyond the classroom and therefore the take-up of extra-curricular activities, including additional revision sessions, is high.
- The influence of Sir Ian McKellen and involvement with the charity Stonewall underpin the exceptionally strong promotion of equal opportunities. Discrimination of any kind and the use of derogatory language are not tolerated by students or staff.
- In the majority of lessons, students behave well and have good attitudes towards learning. However, low-level disruption can occur when teaching fails to capture their interest or when activities are not sufficiently well matched to students' differing needs. Consequently, behaviour is not yet outstanding.
- Students say that bullying is exceptionally rare and, when it does happen, it is usually very low level and the result of friendship breakdown. Students feel very well cared for and supported by school staff. They know who to go to if they have any concerns or worries and are confident that any issues will be quickly resolved.
- The behaviour and attendance of the student receiving education off-site are regularly tracked and monitored.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The regular and well-organised checks on health and safety ensure that the school site is well maintained and secure. It is free from litter and graffiti.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are robust and well managed. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and the child protection policy has recently been updated to include information about identifying the signs of female genital mutilation or child sexual exploitation. However, key staff have yet to receive training in these aspects of child protection.

- The school maintains effective links with the local authority's child protection officers. This ensures that any concerns are reported promptly and effective action taken.
- All staff and students have been trained to identify the signs and symptoms of deteriorating mental health. All are vigilant and this means that help, including from outside agencies such as CAHMS is quickly put in place as soon as it is needed.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe through personal development and information technology lessons, in assemblies and during tutor time. They understand the risks associated with use of the internet, including social media. They know how to report their concerns if they feel threatened or targeted when online. Teaching in religious studies lessons sensitively addresses issues related to enforced marriage, sexism, radicalisation or extremism. The school has mainly focused on addressing the issues associated with white extremism and this has resulted in student-led campaigns to eradicate racist behaviour and homophobia.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use to effectively ask questions which deepen and challenge students' understanding.
- The relationships between teachers and students are strong and this results in high expectations for students' achievement. Students have good attitudes towards learning because they trust their teachers and know that they want them to do well. They appreciate the additional support, including revision and examination preparation sessions, provided by teachers outside of lessons.
- Teachers use the information about students' progress to identify where there is underachievement. Personalised intervention, especially for Year 11 students, is swiftly implemented to help students to improve the quality of their work and secure their understanding.
- Not all teachers use the outcomes of assessments or information from their own marking of students' work to carefully match the work in lessons to students' needs. Learning activities therefore do not always help students to build on their prior learning or to embed their understanding. This can lead to low-level disruption where students lose motivation or become disengaged.
- In mathematics, teachers sometimes set work that students find difficult because they have insecure understanding of the key principles or basic facts. This can slow progress, especially for those students who are disadvantaged.
- Teaching assistants provide a valuable contribution to students' learning and progress in lessons. They ask questions to help students build on what they already know, and this helps them to become more confident and independent learners.
- Teachers provide effective challenge for the most able by encouraging them to think deeply about what they are learning and to make links between different aspects of the subject.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is well established across the school. This ensures that students, especially those in Year 11 and in the sixth form, are able to understand and answer a range of examination questions which require different approaches or strategies in order to gain high marks.
- Some marking is frequent and of very high quality, providing precise guidance to students about how to extend or improve their work. When this happens, students' work is very well presented, spellings are accurate, subject-specific words are used correctly and subsequent work is well developed. However, because the quality of marking is inconsistent, both within and across departments, students' work is sometimes poorly presented or incomplete, or they repeatedly make the same errors. Marking does not yet routinely help to accelerate and sustain students' progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students in most year groups join the school with levels of attainment that are above national averages. In 2014, the proportion who gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C was slightly above the national average. However, attainment in both English and mathematics was significantly above the national average for each subject.
- In 2014, the proportion of students making at least the expected progress in English and mathematics was close to the national average.
- School leaders have shifted the school's focus to progress rather than just attainment. Students of all abilities are now supported to achieve well. Information provided by the school indicates that in 2015 the

vast majority of students are likely to make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics, with very high proportions likely to attain grades A* to C in almost all subjects.

- The Year 7 catch-up fund has been used effectively to improve the reading and mathematical confidence of those students joining the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy. In English, the majority work confidently at Level 4 within two terms of joining the school. Improvements in numeracy are not quite as rapid; approximately half reach Level 4 within two and a half terms of joining the school.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students made less progress in English and mathematics than others in the school. The gap was approximately half a grade in English and one grade in mathematics. Compared to students nationally, the gap was one third of a grade in English and just less than one grade in mathematics.
- In 2014, in both English and mathematics, the attainment gap between those who were disadvantaged and their classmates was much narrower than it was in 2013. Information provided by the school indicates that, for students currently on roll, the gap has closed in English and is narrowing rapidly in mathematics. This is because the spending of the pupil premium is carefully matched to the individual student's needs.
- Across the curriculum, students are encouraged and supported well to develop their reading around the subject. The well-stocked library provides a broad range of books from different genres to encourage students to read for pleasure.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because of the carefully planned and effective support from teaching assistants.
- In 2014, the majority of the most-able students made the expected progress and almost all achieved five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, at grades A* to C. Current information indicates that the achievement of the most-able students is improving steadily; almost all are likely to make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics in 2015.
- Students are not routinely entered early for GCSE examinations.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding, and this means that students benefit from a curriculum which is well matched to their needs and aspirations, and that teaching is of the highest standard. Consequently, students make very good progress in a broad range of subjects to secure the grades they need for life beyond school.
- Very effective leadership also ensures that students in Year 11 receive high-quality information, advice and guidance about post-16 choices. The numbers choosing to remain in the school for their sixth form years is increasing steadily. Almost all students move on from the sixth form to sustained education, training or employment. Successful applications to university, including Oxford and Cambridge, are increasing and are now high.
- A very small number of students enter the sixth form having not achieved grade C or above at GCSE in English and/or mathematics. These students are supported well and therefore pass these examinations before they leave school.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding because teachers use their very strong subject knowledge to plan work that interests and engages students, and therefore motivates them to achieve their best. In an observation of an A-level practical art examination, students' work was of the highest calibre, creating a real 'wow' factor in the learning environment.
- Students trust their teachers to help and support them to prepare for their examinations. Inspectors observed lively and interesting revision activities in which students were allowed to identify gaps in their learning and understanding in a focused and systematic way.
- Teachers' marking in the sixth form is exceptionally strong. It is routinely diagnostic and provides personalised guidance to students about how to extend and improve their work. This has a strong impact on accelerating progress and raising standards of achievement.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They display consistently positive attitudes towards learning and take advantage of the many opportunities to work as positive role models for younger students. The strong relationships between students and their teachers are underpinned by high levels of mutual respect.
- Students in the sixth form are kept very safe. The registration systems ensure that their attendance to school and to lessons is routinely tracked and monitored. Overall attendance in the sixth form is high.

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

Unique reference number	109306
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	461597

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,160
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Wibberley
Headteacher	Mark Mallett
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2011
Telephone number	01275 332272
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