

Chickerell Primary Academy

Rashley Road, Chickerell, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 4AT

Inspection dates

27–28 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school. Strong leadership from the headteacher and other senior leaders has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and, consequently, pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Development planning is focused sharply on the appropriate priorities, and is checked regularly for the impact that actions are having on driving up standards across the school.
- The quality of teaching is consistently strong across all phases of the school. Teachers and teaching assistants take responsibility for their own performance and for the impact their teaching has on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' progress has strengthened considerably since the previous inspection and is now broadly in line with national averages.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make progress which is at least as strong as other pupils. However, despite this stronger progress, the attainment of pupils in reading and writing is not yet consistently in line with national averages.
- Pupils' behaviour is strong. They are polite, courteous and respectful.
- Leaders have put in place a robust assessment system which provides accurate information about pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. However, assessments in other subjects, such as science, lack the same level of precision.
- The governing body provides effective governance. They have an in-depth understanding of the school and use the first-hand information that they gather to hold school leaders stringently to account.
- Governors' plans for the spending of additional funding lack precision. This is limiting their ability to evaluate the effectiveness of individual initiatives.
- Leaders have established an engaging curriculum that meets pupils' needs and develops their skills and understanding. Pupils talk confidently about their learning, but their awareness of other cultures is more limited.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff are proactive and vigilant in keeping children safe. However, procedures for ensuring that employment checks meet statutory requirements lack rigour.
- Children get off to a strong start in early years. They make good progress across both the Nursery and Reception Years, and often from low starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen rates of progress across the school so that, in reading and writing, the proportions of pupils working at and above the expected standards are at least in line with national averages.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding of other cultures within a multi-cultural Britain.
- Further develop the impact of leadership and management by:
 - refining the school's systems for the assessment of subjects other than English and mathematics, especially of science, so that teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils can and cannot do in relation to curriculum expectations
 - ensuring that planning for additional spending details precisely how the money will be spent and how the success of each initiative will be measured and evaluated
 - adding additional rigour to the school's systems for ensuring that the suitability checks for staff and governors continue to be in line with statutory guidance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school with commitment, drive and a single-minded determination to improve outcomes for pupils in the school. She is supported by a highly skilled team of senior leaders who share her vision and high expectations. Collectively, leaders have been relentless in raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and driving up standards for all pupils. This unwavering resolve has underpinned the rapid improvement of this school.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders use this information to identify priorities for school improvement planning. Actions within whole-school, year group and subject action plans are linked precisely to the impact they will have on pupils' outcomes. Timescales are tight but realistic. This has, over time, ensured that improvements have been implemented swiftly and with a sense of urgency.
- Leaders make effective use of external validation to support their evaluations of the school and to seek additional challenge. For example, the headteacher has established links with a local academy trust to moderate teacher assessments and provide her with an additional layer of scrutiny.
- The headteacher has raised considerably the level of accountability of teachers and teaching assistants. Leaders use their in-depth monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes to hold staff to account and to identify swiftly pupils at risk of falling behind. Where staff performance falls below expectations, leaders provide high levels of challenge as well as support. This robust approach has proved instrumental in strengthening the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Leaders and staff are reflective practitioners, and leaders have established a highly effective programme of coaching and mentoring. This has encouraged teachers and teaching assistants to take ownership of their own performance and development needs.
- While ensuring that school improvement is at the heart of the school's work, the headteacher also pays high regard to the well-being of staff. Staff who completed the questionnaire stated unanimously that the headteacher's consideration of their work-life balance is recognised and appreciated. Staff morale is high, and staff say that they are proud to work at the school.
- The headteacher has empowered leaders across the school. Senior leaders take ownership of their areas of responsibility and lead autonomously, knowing that the headteacher has trust in their abilities. Similarly, subject leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of provision within their subjects. This is especially the case in English and mathematics and is becoming increasingly so in other subjects.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and staff know their pupils well and have put in place a wide range of strategies to reduce the barriers to their learning that pupils face. As result, disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress towards both

their academic and personal targets. Nonetheless, leaders' plans for how additional funding is to be spent lack precision. For example, they do not clearly state the intended purpose of each individual initiative. Without this, leaders and governors are unable to evaluate which parts of their strategy are proving the most effective and which are having the least impact.

- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) is highly effective. The leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND has a thorough knowledge of pupils' additional needs. Working alongside staff, she ensures that the support provided by the school is highly effective and matched closely to areas identified in pupils' individual plans. Improvements in leadership and a greater consistency in the quality of teaching are helping these pupils to make strong progress.
- Leaders are making effective use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium. Money has been targeted towards providing additional equipment and raising pupils' levels of participation. As a result of this spending, greater numbers of pupils are attending extra-curriculum clubs and enjoying success in competitive sports events. For example, pupils recently won a local football tournament and a boys' gymnastics competition. As with the spending of pupil premium funding, leaders recognise that plans for future spending lack the required level of precision.
- Leaders have established a curriculum which is broad and engaging. Conversations with pupils, as well as the work in their books, show that pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Whole-school subject focuses and themed weeks, for example the First World War, are providing pupils with memorable experiences and opportunities to apply their skills in a range of different contexts.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of values. Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone equally and fairly. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, social and moral development effectively. However, pupils' awareness of the different cultures that make up modern Britain is not as strong.
- Parents are supportive of the school and, in particular, the care and guidance that the school provides. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote: 'Chickerell Primary Academy is more than just a school, it's a community where the children who attend are well cared for. My children are well supported academically and emotionally and, for this reason, are thriving at school.'

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Governors have responded proactively to external guidance and have strengthened all areas of their work. The chair of the governing body has led governors in identifying gaps in skills and expertise. These have now been addressed through the targeted recruitment of new governors with particular skillsets.
- Governors provide effective strategic oversight. They have a detailed understanding of the school and can communicate clearly its strengths and areas that require further improvement. They are proactive in gathering first-hand information through, for example, the 'governor of the month' initiative. This enables governors to test the

accuracy of the information that leaders provide them with. Additionally, by deepening their knowledge base, governors have been able to provide leaders with a more robust and informed level of challenge.

- Through their school improvement committee, governors have a secure understanding of the school's assessment information. They monitor the impact that additional funding, for example the pupil premium grant, is having on pupils' outcomes but recognise that this is limited by a lack of precision in the school's plans.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe. This is a view shared by the vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors or completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Leaders have an in-depth knowledge of the school's most vulnerable pupils and their families. They work proactively to ensure that pupils are well cared for and to minimise any barriers to their learning. The school works in partnership with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. When the level of service they receive from these agencies falls short of expectations, leaders are tenacious in following up their concerns.
- Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They have a secure understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures and can explain clearly what they would do should they have a concern about any child's safety. Leaders have ensured that staff have received the appropriate training and that this is up to date.
- Leaders have carried out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school. However, at the time of the inspection, not all the required checks had been carried out for members of the governing body. Additionally, the school's records of these checks were not in line with statutory guidance. Leaders had ensured that all statutory checks had been completed and recorded by the end of the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils well and maintain positive relationships. Improvements in assessment procedures have resulted in teachers having a secure knowledge of what pupils can and cannot do. They use this information to plan activities which are matched accurately to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils across the school are making strong progress from their different starting points.
- Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make. Together, leaders and teachers use regular evaluations of pupils' achievements to identify where pupils' progress is weaker. These assessments inform an effective and rapid programme of intervention and support. Teaching is targeted on reducing pupils' barriers to learning and addressing any gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and a deep understanding of how pupils learn. They use questioning effectively to establish which pupils are ready to move on to more challenging activities, and which pupils need to further consolidate their learning. Where pupils require additional help, teaching staff

provide the support they require, without stifling pupils' independence. As one pupil told an inspector, 'They show us what to do, but do not do it for us.'

- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. Teaching staff have a secure understanding of how to teach early reading skills. Pupils read confidently and with accuracy, using their knowledge of the sounds that different letters make to tackle unknown words. Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with books which are well matched to their phonics abilities. This enables pupils to practise at home and to further develop and consolidate their reading skills.
- A recent change in the school's approach to teaching higher order reading skills is proving effective. A focus on 'VIPERS' – Vocabulary, Infer, Predict, Explain, Retrieve, Summarise – is building on pupils' basic reading skills and ensuring that pupils are developing a deep understanding of the texts they read, both in class and in their independent reading. Teachers' focus on extending pupils' vocabulary is also underpinning improvements in the quality of pupils' writing.
- In writing, teachers ensure that pupils develop the basic skills that they require to write well. For example, lower prior attaining pupils, including those with SEND, make strong progress in their acquisition of punctuation and handwriting. This ensures that they write in accurately demarcated sentences and are able to express their meaning with increasing levels of clarity. Pupils working at the standard above that expected for their age, produce writing of a high quality. However, leaders recognise that this writing often lacks the level of fluency, control and understanding of technical features that is required to demonstrate that pupils are writing consistently at greater depth. This remains a key focus of the school's work.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have focused on developing pupils' writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to reinforce their skills through well-planned activities. For example, pupils across the school have written high-quality historical reflections on the First World War. In science, pupils explain the different concepts that they are studying, as well as recording their experimental work. The quality of pupils' writing in these subjects is of an equally high standard to the work in their English books.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of the mathematics curriculum and work is well matched to pupils' prior learning. This ensures that pupils who are less confident develop security in their understanding, and those pupils who grasp new concepts more quickly are provided with opportunities to deepen their knowledge. Teachers and teaching assistants make effective use of mathematical apparatus to support pupils of all abilities in developing their conceptual understanding. Once this is secure, pupils move on to more abstract problem-solving activities which enable them to demonstrate that they can apply their understanding across a range of contexts.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, the quality of teaching is of an equally high standard. This is ensuring that the school's engaging curriculum is being delivered effectively and leading to pupils making strong progress. Teachers' well-planned schemes of work enable pupils to make links between different subjects, and this further supports the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders recognise, however, that in subjects other than English and mathematics, the school's systems for mapping what pupils can and cannot do against curriculum objectives is not as refined as in the core subjects. This is especially evident in science, where inspection evidence

found teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment to be inaccurate.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff have an in-depth knowledge of their pupils and their vulnerabilities. They work together proactively to support pupils and their families. Where further assistance is required, this is put in place as early as is possible.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's six key learning skills of independence, respect, resilience, confidence, enthusiasm and cooperation. Across the school, these underpin pupils' strengthening attitudes to learning. Pupils were able to explain to inspectors the meaning of each skill, as well as give examples of where these skills were evident in their work.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that should they have any concerns, there is a trusted adult to whom they can turn. Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils have attended workshops with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to help them identify the dangers associated with online gaming. Additionally, the school works with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to teach pupils about water safety.
- The school's curriculum is designed to develop in pupils an awareness of their local community. For example, a forthcoming topic will focus on Weymouth seafront's centenary celebrations. Additionally, links with the Weymouth Sea Life Centre are raising pupils' awareness of global issues, such as water pollution and climate change.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They conduct themselves well throughout the day, for example in lessons, assemblies and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. In learning activities, pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. They work collaboratively, showing respect for other people's opinions. During the inspection, inclement weather required pupils to remain inside at social times. At these times, pupils of all ages either talked, read or played games together sensibly, thus meeting the high expectations of staff on duty.
- Despite the school admitting a number of pupils who find regulating their own behaviour more challenging, the school is calm and centred on learning. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' individual behavioural needs, and they provide pupils with bespoke coping strategies. The school's records indicate that low level disruption is rare, and this view is supported by inspection evidence.
- In 2017/18, whole school attendance remained slightly below the national average. Evidence provided by leaders, including the school's attendance records, demonstrates that this is often as a result of parents taking holidays during term times. Leaders are

proactive in providing challenge and, where required, support to pupils with low attendance. For example, leaders' use of pupil premium funding to provide breakfast club places for disadvantaged pupils has reduced significantly the absence rates of this group of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes are good because, in all year groups, pupils currently in the school are making strong progress from their starting points. This is the case for subjects across the curriculum, including English and mathematics.
- Published assessment information for outcomes at the end of the 2017/18 academic year indicate that, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress was in line with that made by other pupils nationally from similar starting points. This was the case in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite this strong progress, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, and greater depth in writing, remained below national averages. Leaders recognise that further raising pupils' attainment remains a focus for the school and have put effective plans in place.
- Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 demonstrate that pupils make good progress across key stage 1. This is supported by the work in pupils' books. In reading and mathematics, the proportions of pupils assessed as working at both the expected standards and at greater depth were broadly in line with national averages. However, the proportion working at the expected standard in writing was slightly below the national comparator. The proportion of pupils assessed as working at the expected standard in science was well below the national average. However, inspection evidence confirms that this was as a result of inaccurate assessment, rather than weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- In 2018, a very large proportion of pupils were assessed as meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This was well above the national average. The proportion of children assessed as having a good level of development at the end of the Reception year was in line with the national average.
- The school's assessment information shows that, across the school, current pupils are making strong progress from their different starting points. This evidence is supported by the work in pupils' books. Consequently, greater proportions of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to meet both the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in the school are also making strong progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school's engaging curriculum, combined with teachers' strong subject knowledge and high expectations, is leading to pupils making rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. Teaching assistants support pupils skilfully. They adapt tasks and reshape learning so that it meets pupils' needs. As a result, pupils meet their personal targets and many are catching up with their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making progress which is at least in line with national

comparators and, in some cases, stronger. Consequently, differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is effective. The leader has a secure understanding of the quality of provision across both the Nursery and Reception Years. Where areas for improvement have been identified, for example in raising the attainment of boys and the most able children, the early years leader has put in place effective plans. This ensures that the quality of provision and, consequently, children's outcomes continues to strengthen.
- A large proportion of children enter the early years provision with skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age. Particular weaknesses are in children's speech and language skills, as well as in their personal social and emotional development. Additionally, an increasing proportion of children enter the early years provision with health and self-care skills below those which are typical for their age. For example, some children in both the Nursery and Reception Years are unable to toilet themselves. Despite these low starting points, children make strong progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is in line with the national average.
- Children who enter the early years provision with skills and knowledge in line with, or above, those typical for their age, make similarly strong progress. As a result, they make strong gains, with many children going into Year 1 having exceeded the early learning goals.
- Teaching is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers plan children's learning based on their observations and assessments of what children can do and where they need particular support. Teachers have, for example, identified that girls tend to make better progress than boys. As a result, adults provide activities which appeal to both boys and girls.
- Teachers and other adults have a secure understanding of how children learn to read. Children quickly gain an understanding of the sounds that letters make. Teachers' well-planned activities encourage children to practise their phonics skills when attempting to spell words or write sentences.
- Across the early years, leaders and teaching staff have established a language-rich environment. Adults promote children's language development through structured opportunities to talk about their learning. For example, during the inspection, adults were encouraging Nursery children to think of different words they could use to describe volcanoes and lava. In Reception, children were preparing finger puppets in readiness for a performance of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Teachers and other adults provide children with plentiful opportunities to write. They make this purposeful for children by linking it to other topics.
- In Nursery and Reception, adults have created environments which are engaging and stimulating. They make effective use of resources to support children's development and to encourage them to want to learn. Leaders have recognised the need to further develop the outdoor environment. However, it was not possible to gather a broad

range of inspection evidence in this area due to inclement weather.

- Adults support children's personal and social development well. They have established effective partnerships with local providers to ensure a smooth transition into school. Whether joining in Nursery or Reception, children settle quickly. They learn to follow the school's routines as well as the importance of good behaviour.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's early years provision. They appreciate the opportunities that they are given to work alongside their children as well as the information that teachers provide on how to support their children at home. One parent summed up the view of many, saying, 'I have one child in Reception who struggled to settle to begin with as he is so shy. The Reception team have been amazing with him. He is now happy to go in and play in the morning and is enjoying school. My son has amazed me in all he has learned so far.'
- All adults ensure that children are kept safe and statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	139147
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10058306

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Tattersall
Headteacher	Jody Harris
Telephone number	01305 783 876
Website	www.chickerell.dorset.sch.uk
Email address	office@chickerell.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 September 2016

Information about this school

- Chickerell Primary Academy is a larger-than-average sized primary school in Dorset. There are two classes per year group from Reception to Year 5. In Year 6, pupils are currently being taught in three separate class groups. The school also has a Nursery with early years provision for 24 children at a time.
- The school converted to become an academy in January 2013, and governance is provided by a local governing body. Although not part of a multi-academy trust, the school is an associate member of the Acorn Multi-Academy Trust. This provides the school with external support and challenge as well as staff training.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average, as is

the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.

- At the time of the inspection, no pupils were attending alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its learning improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also considered a range of documentation about child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read. An inspector attended an assembly and visited the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and took account of 101 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as parents' written responses. Inspectors also took account of the results of the pupil and staff questionnaires.

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