

Inspection of Minehead First School

Townsend Road, Minehead, Somerset TA24 5RG

Inspection dates: 30 June and 1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to school. There is a strong inclusive culture, so that every pupil feels that they belong, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils behave well and show respect for each other, including the youngest children in the pre-school, who sit together with their snack, to talk about their day. Pupils understand the 'golden rules', which they follow to keep everybody safe and happy. They understand the need for the current restrictions, caused by the pandemic. Pupils like the 'e-praise' system, which rewards them when they have done something well. Pupils say bullying is rare but is dealt with quickly when it occurs.

Pupils are now receiving a full curriculum. As a result, they are beginning to know more to become confident and independent learners. However, pupils still have gaps in their knowledge of some subjects. As a result, they are not always as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

This is a rapidly improving school. Since the school was placed in special measures in April 2019, leaders have taken the right action, in a logical and coherent manner, to remedy previous weaknesses and secure the necessary improvement. Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They do not allow excuses to limit what pupils can do. The executive headteacher works with a dedicated team of leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and governors, to get the best for the pupils.

Leaders quickly identified the most urgent areas for improvement. They set about making improvements so that pupils wanted to attend. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Staff go to great lengths to understand pupils and their individual needs, including those with SEND. The right systems are in place to provide high-quality care for those with special educational needs. Teaching, in support of the curriculum, is improving. There are strengths in key areas and in some subjects, including reading and mathematics. However, in those subjects where the curriculum is not yet as strong, leaders are continuing to improve teachers' expertise and subject knowledge in order to meet new curricular demands.

Leaders understood the urgency to review the school's curriculum. As a result, they have overhauled the curriculum. Leaders have worked tirelessly to implement their plans. In the first instance, this involved improving English, mathematics and science. The curriculum in these subjects is strong. For example, leaders have established a high-quality early reading and phonics programme, so that pupils learn to read well from the start. Teachers regularly check pupils' progress in reading. When pupils find it difficult to keep up, they are given timely and extra support, often on an individual level to help them catch up. Leaders have also tackled other subjects too, so that pupils are now well on their way towards receiving a good

quality of education. However, there are a few remaining subjects where there are still too many weaknesses in the design or implementation of plans, or where these are too recent. As a result, pupils still have some missing knowledge which is vital for the next stage of their education, such as in art and computing. At times, pupils also find it difficult to connect relevant knowledge from one subject to another.

Leaders have taken over the running of the pre-school during the academic year. Early years leaders are highly motivated and knowledgeable. They have already made some significant improvements for children in the Nursery. For example, the outside environment has been transformed to promote children's physical development well. However, curricular plans for the three- and four-year-olds are not yet complete or sufficiently developed to ensure that children are as ready for school as they could be.

Despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic, leaders have been determined to provide a wide range of activities to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, pupils enjoy their trips to the beach or zoo. They like the range of other clubs on offer, including gymnastics, cookery and computing. Pupils of all abilities love to swim in the school's pool. These kinds of activities stir pupils' interests and provide valuable opportunities to develop their self-confidence and independence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, are tenacious in their work to keep pupils safe. The school has appropriate systems for checking, vetting and training new members of staff in child protection. Leaders make timely referrals and work closely with external agencies to keep pupils safe.

The pastoral team works effectively to care for pupils' emotional well-being, too. For example, they provide rapid bereavement counselling to ensure that pupils' mental and emotional well-being is taken care of.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability in the quality of the curriculum in a few subjects. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge, which still holds them back. Leaders should ensure that there is the same high-quality curriculum for pupils in all subjects.
- Curriculum plans are not complete in all subjects. Consequently, pupils do not always make links between subjects to deepen, or apply, their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned, organised and sequenced to enable pupils to be able to connect what they know in different areas of learning.

- Some aspects of the pre-school curriculum are underdeveloped. Therefore, children are not as well prepared for the start of school as they could be. Leaders should implement robust plans for nursery-aged children in all areas of learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142800
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10184694
Type of school	First
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susie Brown
Headteacher	Adam Evans
Website	www.mineheadfirstschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 January 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is located in the town of Minehead, Somerset.
- The school took charge of the on-site pre-school, formerly known as 'Seashells', during the year. This provision is currently operating for three- and four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the SENCo and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust board, including the chair of the board, other trustees and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors met with pupils and teachers, including speaking with them during lunchtimes and breaktimes.

- The lead inspector met with a group of parents and carers. He also reviewed the 66 responses provided by parents through Ofsted’s survey, Parent View. The lead inspector considered all 17 written responses provided by free-text to the surveys. The lead inspector considered all responses to the staff survey.
- The lead inspector scrutinised school documentation, including the school development plan, monitoring records and governor visits. He also completed analysis of relevant documents for safeguarding. These included: checking the safeguarding policy; referrals to the local authority designated officer for safeguarding; checks of the single central record and staff training certificates.
- Inspectors looked at early reading, mathematics, art and design, and computing as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Marie Thomas	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Katherine Powell	Ofsted Inspector

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