

Inspection of Ditcheat Primary School

Ditcheat, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6RB

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite, courteous and proud to be part of this inclusive village school. They are safe, enjoy school and attend well. Pupils have a strong voice here.

Staff are proactive in ensuring that pupils learn about big and important things, like climate change and diversity. Pupils link with international schools to gain different perspectives. They enjoy sport and public speaking. A highlight is 'rendezvous' at the village hall, where pupils share their learning with older members of the community.

Pupils get on well with their classmates and the staff. If bullying happens, pupils have confidence that adults sort it out. Pupils behave well at break and lunchtimes. There are many activities to do and enjoy. However, some pupils report that the many ball games can sometimes affect the typically calm atmosphere.

Pupils study a broad curriculum. They experience lots of educational visits, visitors and exciting activities to enhance their studies. They say, 'Learning is fun'. However, in previous years, the curriculum did not include everything that pupils needed to know and remember in each subject. Much work is being done to put this right. Pupils are learning and remembering more now.

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

Leaders, including governors, have an acute understanding of the school's strengths. They are working on the right aspects for improvement. Leaders have been successful in raising pupils' attendance markedly. Governance is strong. Governors check the impact of leaders' work with tenacity. Subject leadership is developing well.

Leaders assess the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They provide ongoing support and keep staff up to date with a wide range of training. Increasingly, staff tailor sequences of learning to meet pupils' social, emotional and academic needs well.

Leaders' actions to assess and reteach the essential knowledge that was not secured in previous lockdowns are making a palpable difference. In mathematics, staff use their strong subject knowledge skilfully. Most pupils enjoy mathematics. Sequences of lessons make pupils think hard and enable them to gain much new knowledge over time.

In English, staff make careful checks to identify any specific gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Children in Reception brim with pride as they learn the sounds that letters make and the new world of reading opens up for them. Books are usually well matched to the sounds that pupils know. A minority of pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 need to catch up with their phonics. They are receiving the right support and becoming more confident readers. Pupils across the school learn to read well.

There is a sharp focus on getting children talking and reading right from the start. Staff across the school support pupils to widen their vocabulary across a range of subjects. In Reception, children are learning how to write letters and some simple words well. Sequences of work provide older pupils with the right building blocks to improve their punctuation and grammar. This means that, increasingly, pupils write with the complexity they should.

Leaders are putting plans in place to ensure that the curriculum progresses systematically from year to year in every subject. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not yet sequenced well enough. Pupils do not cover all the essential knowledge they need to gain a deep and thorough understanding in each subject. Some teaching plans miss out important knowledge in some subjects. Leaders and teachers are already making the right changes to improve the curriculum.

Teachers are implementing better sequences of work subject by subject. This is taking time. Recent lessons sequences in history, and some other subjects, are proving more effective and pupils are learning much more. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 skilfully addresses any gaps in pupils' prior knowledge across the curriculum.

Leaders set clear expectations for staff and pupils. Pupils follow the school rules and respect each other. When pupils find it difficult to regulate their own behaviour, staff provide the right support. Consequently, pupils' learning is not interrupted often.

Leaders and teachers provide many opportunities to develop pupils as well-rounded young citizens. There is a clear focus on pupils' mental and physical health. Pupils learn about different cultures, the rule of law and democracy. Leaders' recent work to implement new teaching plans in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is proving effective.

Leaders' and teachers' communication with parents is effective. Parents are very positive. Every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding work closely with families and external agencies. They make swift referrals to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need. Staff are trained in the most recent guidance and legislation to keep pupils safe. Staff have a clear understanding of local contextual risks. As a result, they apply their safeguarding training well. They are vigilant in reporting concerns. Pupils are well informed of the risks around them, including road safety and using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teaching plans do not build from one year group to another consistently well. Pupils remember the activities they do but some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders must ensure that the planned curriculum covers the depth of knowledge it should in every year group and subject, so that all pupils are well prepared for their next stage.
- Staff do not always identify when teaching misses important steps within sequences of work. This hampers pupils' progress through the curriculum. Leaders must monitor how well pupils are learning the curriculum, in every subject, so that no essential learning is missed, and all pupils gain the essential knowledge they need to achieve consistently well.
- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subject areas. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about and are making the necessary amendments in response to the pandemic. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied in this case.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	123642
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10200996
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	Local governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Webber
Headteacher	Michelle Heap
Website	www.ditcheatprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a small rural school with four classes.
- There is an interim headteacher who works three days a week. The senior teacher is the teacher in charge on the remaining two days.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior teacher, members of the governing body and representatives of Somerset local authority.
- Inspectors also talked to other school staff.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, English and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject

leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked more widely at subject plans and pupils' work on day two of the inspection. Inspectors talked to the physical education, science, geography and PSHE subject leaders, to review their roles and responsibilities and their current work.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator, to consider the quality of provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- An inspector reviewed the school's procedures for before- and afterschool care.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted staff survey alongside 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text responses from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katherine Powell

Ofsted Inspector

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