

Inspection of a good school: Chewton Mendip Church of England VA Primary School

High Street, Chewton Mendip, Radstock, Somerset BA3 4LL

Inspection date:

18 October 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly, village school. Everyone knows each other well. This supports the school's vision of 'Growing Together' successfully.

Leaders want the best for their pupils. However, they have not identified the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember across the curriculum. The needs of some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not well met. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen. They say that there are many adults in school to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils feel safe. Older pupils like the responsibility of looking after younger ones. They enjoy their role as a reading buddy. Pupils get on well together and enjoy their time at school.

Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles. They are the 'eyes and voice' of the school. Pupils value being 'Star Pupils'. They help the school community to be a safe and happy place.

Parents are positive about the school. They speak highly of the support and strong relationships staff have with their children.

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

Leaders have recently ensured that the school has an appropriate reading and phonics programme in place. All staff are trained to deliver the teaching of phonics effectively. Most books match the sounds that pupils are learning. Leaders have established an effective and detailed approach to assessment in early reading. They quickly identify gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Additional support is put in place when needed. These developments are very recent. It is too soon to measure the impact. All staff encourage a love of reading. Pupils enjoy the books read to them by teachers. However, the reading curriculum in key stage 2 is not well organised. Some pupils do not understand how to improve as a reader.

In some subjects, the curriculum is not well designed and sequenced, so that knowledge builds on what pupils already know. Leaders do not ensure that important knowledge in individual subjects is broken into small logical steps to help pupils deepen their understanding. This means some pupils have gaps in what they should know. The inconsistencies in the curriculum design, and its implementation, prevent pupils from deepening their knowledge. They cannot make connections between their learning.

The learning needs of pupils with SEND are not consistently well met. Some support plans lack the necessary precision or detail. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the individual needs of pupils, so that they get the support they need and make the best possible progress.

Pupils' personal development is a strength. It is carefully planned and adapted to support the context of the school. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about society beyond Chewton. For example, older pupils have made links with a school in Bermuda. This provides the opportunity for pupils to ask questions and develop an understanding of a country and culture that is unlike their own. Through the personal, social and health education and religious education curriculum, pupils develop an understanding of British values. They show respect for beliefs that are different from their own and understand that everyone is an individual. Pupils enjoy leading and attending the clubs that are available, including reading, art and chess club.

Pupils are polite and kind to each other. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. However, some disruption occurs when learning is not well matched to the pupils' needs. When this happens, some pupils get distracted from their work. Strategies to manage low-level disruption are inconsistent.

Governors are committed to the school and know the community well. However, they have not held leaders to account effectively to ensure the curriculum in all subjects is carefully designed and well organised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults in school have up-to-date training and staff induction is robust. They know how to keep pupils safe and there is a culture of 'it could happen here.' They ensure that information is reported in a timely manner.

Leaders complete appropriate checks before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. A governor regularly checks that recruitment records are up to date.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Online safety is part of the planned curriculum. Pupils are clear about how to keep their personal details safe when using the internet and how to report concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, it is not clear what essential knowledge leaders want pupils to know and remember. Learning is not broken down into small steps to support pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils do not build on prior learning effectively. Leaders need to identify the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and ensure this is sequenced well.
- Learning is not adapted well enough for pupils with SEND. This makes it difficult for some pupils to access the curriculum. Leaders need to make sure that pupils' individual needs are fully understood, and pupils are effectively supported, so they can learn well.
- Governors do not challenge leaders to ensure that the quality of education is good enough. They do not have a secure understanding of the curriculum strengths and weaknesses. As a result, there are weaknesses in some important aspects of the school's work. Governors need to gain an accurate understanding of the school and challenge leaders effectively to bring about improvements.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 123827 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10240919 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 117 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Mike Cartmel |
| Headteacher | Clare Rice |
| Website | www.chewtonmendipschool.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 and 7 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This school is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school. Its most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in 2019
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative from the diocese of Bath and Wells.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss how to keep pupils safe in school. They considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff

induction and training and records of concerns. The inspectors spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free text responses. Inspectors also took into consideration responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation document, governor minutes and the school's development plan.

Inspection team

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Faye Bertham

Ofsted Inspector

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