

# Inspection of a good school: Dunster First School

13 St George's Street, Dunster, Minehead, Somerset TA24 6RX

---

Inspection date: 26 March 2024

## **Outcome**

Dunster First School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

There is a strong sense of community at Dunster First School. Staff know pupils well. The school is ambitious for pupils. It is keen for them to develop a sense of belonging, as encapsulated in the school vision of 'looking for the best in everything – then playing our part in achieving it'.

The school provides a calm, friendly and caring environment. There are high expectations for behaviour. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well. They appreciate the rewards they receive for their positive behaviour. Pupils understand the need to practise to get better and to improve. This helps them to develop resilience.

Pupils understand what bullying is and say that if it does happen, adults help to resolve it. They know that there are adults to talk to if they have a concern. As a result, pupils feel safe.

The school provides a range of experiences to enrich the curriculum. Pupils take part in local community events such as the Remembrance Day service. They help with local beach cleans and charity fundraising. This helps them to learn to be active citizens. Pupils understand the importance of treating others equally and fairly.

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

Reading is a priority for the school. There is a well-structured phonics programme. Children in Reception Year learn to read as soon as they start school. Well-trained staff deliver the programme consistently and support pupils well. As a result, pupils use the right strategies to read new and unfamiliar words. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they know and have learned. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly confident and fluent readers. Pupils who fall behind in reading

receive the support they need to help them catch up. Pupils develop wider reading skills, such as inference and deduction, and enjoy reading a variety of different texts.

The school has developed a curriculum that sets out the knowledge that it wants pupils to know and remember. For example, it has recently designed a coherent and well-sequenced mathematics curriculum. It starts in the early years with a strong focus on number that prepares children well for learning in Year 1. The school has recently introduced a new system to check the effectiveness of the curriculum. However, this is in its infancy. As a result, the school does not yet have a clear and accurate understanding of the impact of the curriculum in all subjects and phases. For example, while the intent of the new mathematics curriculum is clear, the implementation is in its early stages. The school has not ensured that all staff have sufficient subject expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. As a result, there is some variance in how well it is implemented. This means some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Staff use assessment to check what pupils know and remember. Most teachers routinely check for misconceptions and address them well in lessons through questioning and additional support. However, this sometimes varies in quality and impact.

The school effectively identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school ensures that pupils' individual plans match their specific needs. Most pupils with SEND learn the curriculum alongside their peers. However, the school is continuing to refine how it adapts the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils across all subjects and phases, including in the early years.

The school's curriculum extends beyond the academic. Pupils enjoy a range of leadership opportunities such as head boy, head girl, the school council and the eco-team. Pupils value their roles and responsibilities. The pupil parliament works effectively with school leaders to improve the school. For example, it successfully helped to develop the school's behaviour policy.

Most staff and parents are positive about the school. However, some parents would appreciate improved communication from the school to have a better understanding of how the school manages behaviour and meets their child's needs.

The school has developed systems to support improvements in attendance. The school continues to work with pupils and families to ensure that pupils attend well and do not miss important learning.

Pupils learn about keeping healthy, both physically and mentally. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise and how to look after themselves. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including in the community and online.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variance in the implementation of the curriculum, for example in mathematics. Some teaching, including in the early years, is not precise enough to ensure pupils learn the curriculum well. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding, including their mathematical vocabulary. The school must ensure that staff have the subject expertise they need so that pupils develop a secure understanding of the mathematics curriculum.
- The school has not checked the impact of the curriculum effectively in all subjects and phases. This means it does not always have an accurate view of how well the curriculum is implemented and what pupils know and remember. The school must ensure it regularly checks the effectiveness of the curriculum so that it informs staff training, ensures the needs of pupils are met and secures improvements in the curriculum and pupil outcomes.

## 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 good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2013.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123643
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10313254
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Helen Jenkinson and Frances Nicholson (Co-Chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Naomi Philp (Executive Headteacher) Paul James (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dunsterfirstschool.co.uk">www.dunsterfirstschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Moorland Federation which is a group of five schools.
- The federation is led by an executive headteacher. Dunster First School also has a head of school.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club which is managed by the governing body.
- The federation provides holiday clubs which are overseen by the school and managed by the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher and the head of school. They held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders from the school and the federation, staff and the co-chairs of governors.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the view of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online survey. They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views of the school.

### **Inspection team**

Nicky McMahon, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024