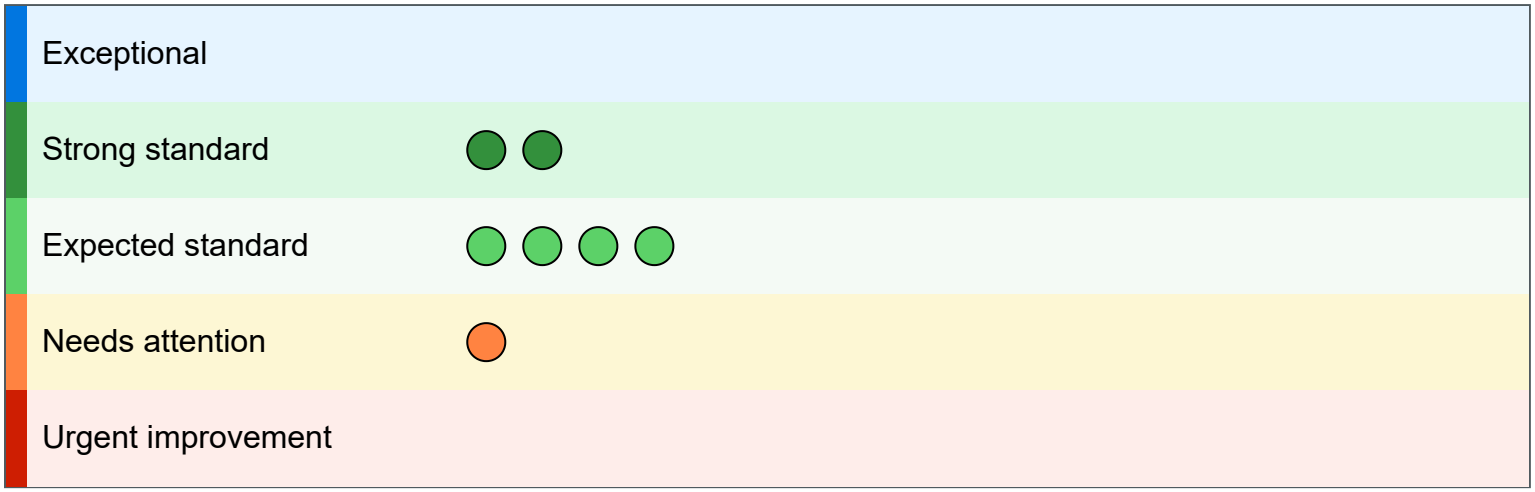
Chew Valley School

Address: Chew Magna, Bristol, Somerset, BS40 8QB

Unique reference number (URN): 145482

Inspection report: 12 May 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders ensure that personal development is central to pupils' experiences at Chew Valley School. Learning about personal, social, health and economic education is planned carefully and taught very effectively in all key stages by trained staff. Pupils have a detailed understanding of fundamental British values and of people who have characteristics protected by law. They are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Leaders are rightly proud of the 'Chew Valley Guarantee'. This ensures every pupil experiences tailored activities, such as visits to the theatre, museums, and field trips for geography and science. These activities help to bring learning across subjects to life. There is an extensive extra-curricular programme where pupils develop their talents and interests in clubs such as in Korean language, reptiles and music. Pupils develop their leadership through 'change and create' projects. They have the opportunity to establish and run projects in areas they are interested in, for example climate action, technology and equality. Some pupils enjoy opportunities where they expand their experiences through international travel, completing the 'Ten Tors' challenge on Dartmoor or dance productions. There are also many sporting clubs, which support pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves healthy.

Staff understand pupils very well. This means that they provide support for their wellbeing that matches their needs and is timely. The house system contributes to this by creating a strong sense of belonging with frequent events and competitions. Post-16 students are role models for younger pupils, supporting them in lessons, helping them develop their reading or peer mentoring.

Leaders have planned opportunities carefully for pupils to learn about different careers and the opportunities open to them beyond school. These opportunities change to match pupils' interests and needs as they get older. This means that pupils know what they need to do in order to achieve their ambitions, including attending prestigious and international universities.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard

The Chew Valley sixth form is welcoming and inclusive, with very effective pastoral support. Leaders understand the strengths of the 16 to 19 study programme and ensure that all students are very well supported to achieve their aims. Subjects are taught well. Resources are used effectively to ensure this. Any changes to teaching that are needed to help students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other barriers, are made promptly. Students produce high-quality work, preparing them well for advanced study. As a result, students achieve very well from their starting points. Students studying applied courses that are closely related to employment, achieve particularly positively over time.

Leaders ensure that students fully participate in wider enriching opportunities. These include supporting younger pupils in their lessons or peer mentoring, raising money for charity or volunteering at local sporting events. Other opportunities include participating in clubs, such as debating, or hosting clothes swaps.

Leaders have planned a highly effective 'Aspire' programme so that students get frequent high-quality information about their next steps, experiences with employers and with higher education institutions. This means that students are very well prepared for later life and study. The destinations for students include degree apprenticeships, employment and university courses, including prestigious and international establishments.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. They typically achieve well, with outcomes in national tests and examinations in line with national averages over time. Generally, the work that pupils produce is of high quality, which reflects their secure understanding of the curriculum across a range of subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to their learning. These groups of pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. Students in the sixth form, particularly those studying courses closely aligned to employment, consistently achieve outcomes better than their peers nationally.

Leaders ensure that pupils have basic skills, such as the foundations of communication and numeracy. Any pupils who do not have this foundational knowledge are identified quickly and receive effective support to develop their knowledge and skills.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have designed an appropriate curriculum that is broad and balanced. The knowledge and skills needed have been clearly set out so that pupils build understanding over time. Leaders monitor how the curriculum is delivered and provide additional support where necessary, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others with barriers to their learning.

Leaders ensure that teachers have the skills to support all pupils with their learning. As a result, teaching is generally effective. Staff present new learning in manageable steps and usually make sure that pupils have understood before moving on. Staff typically change or revisit learning when this is not the case. At times, some teaching does not follow this process. Checks on when pupils are ready to move on with their learning can be less precise. This leaves some pupils with gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders are particularly aware when pupils have not secured the necessary foundations in reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. They make sure that pupils who have gaps in these areas receive appropriate additional support. Leaders monitor the impact of this support to make sure it helps close any gaps in knowledge. They alter the activities if the support is not having the effect they would like.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear commitment for all pupils to feel part of Chew Valley School. Staff identify the individual educational and pastoral needs of pupils precisely when they join the school. Leaders plan effective support for pupils in partnership with other agencies. For example, the school has a wide range of effective support available for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes the school's learning support base, where pupils are supported well to develop their social skills and to manage their mental health and wellbeing. Pupils are supported to improve their reading, handwriting and numerical skills effectively. This helps to ensure that pupils receive the right help for their needs. Leaders systematically review the impact of the additional support provided to pupils, including post-16 students. Leaders identify quickly when changes need to be made to further improve pupils' experiences. Teachers receive effective training to support pupils. Generally, teaching uses effective strategies to support pupils with SEND to learn as well as their peers.

Leaders use additional funding appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils, including pupils known to social care. The alternative provision used by the school is in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. Leaders have ensured a strong sense of belonging for all pupils and students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those facing other disadvantages. This has been achieved in a range of ways, for example, through a prominent house system, mixed-year tutor groups and an impressive array of experiences outside the classroom. For pupils with SEND or those who need support for their wellbeing, the school's learning support base is highly effective in assisting pupils with their learning or their social and emotional health. Leaders rightly acknowledge that actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, especially for disadvantaged pupils, have not been quick or effective enough.

Leaders have high expectations of staff. They ensure the wellbeing of staff is looked after and their workload is manageable. There is a suitable programme of professional development for staff so that they continue to improve their expertise. Teachers who are at the beginning of their career are very well supported. Staff are listened to and contribute to the direction of the school.

Leaders have built trusting relationships with parents, and they work together in the best interests of pupils and students. Leaders also work together with other schools creatively to improve practice further. Work with other organisations and the community has led to partnerships and opportunities for pupils, such as work experience and raising funds for the school.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Pupils do not consistently attend school regularly enough. Compared to the national average, pupils' overall attendance has been declining. Persistent absence is close to the national average, but for disadvantaged pupils, it is above average over time. Leaders have appropriate ambitions for more pupils to attend regularly. They have started to take action to improve attendance. However, leaders do not use the information they have consistently and effectively to understand the barriers to regular attendance. This makes it difficult for them to tailor their actions precisely to the needs of pupils, or to know whether any actions they take are having the intended impact.

Leaders have ensured that there is a culture where high expectations of behaviour are the norm. They skilfully use a range of information, including about learning and behaviour, to develop a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Leaders share this information with staff so that they can adapt teaching and support strategies to any changes in these needs, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils generally get on well with each other and have positive attitudes to their learning. Any form of bullying or discrimination is rare. When it does happen, pupils are confident that it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils and students at Chew Valley School are happy and enjoy their learning. Staff know them as individuals and there are warm relationships. Staff provide effective support with learning or wellbeing challenges. As a result, pupils feel cared for. The house system brings a strong sense of belonging and community. There are friendly competitions and fun events to take part in. Friendships span year groups, and older pupils provide advice and guidance to younger ones in the mixed-age tutor groups. Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare, but when it does happen it is dealt with quickly.

Teaching is effective generally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those facing other barriers, get the help they need. For pupils who find the main part of the school overwhelming at social times, there are a variety of activities in the learning support base, including yoga, crafting and an outdoor education space. Pupils achieve at least as well as others nationally. Students in the post-16 provision achieve particularly well over time, often achieving above their peers nationally. However, some pupils do not attend well. This means they do not get the teaching or experiences that their peers do.

The array of experiences as part of the 'Chew Valley Guarantee' gives all pupils and students the opportunity to thrive. There are clubs that bring subjects to life, such as the foreign language film club, writing clubs or science challenges. There are visits to Lulworth Cove for geography, and to art galleries or universities. International trips include European foreign language exchanges, residential art trips and battlefield trips for history. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own talents and interests. There are many 'change and create' clubs, such as reptile handling, gardening and robotics. In addition, pupils appreciate the

numerous physical education clubs, including traditional sports as well as climbing, taekwondo and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff adapt their teaching more consistently to meet pupils' needs and use formative assessment effectively to check when pupils are ready to move on with their learning.
- Leaders should strengthen their analysis of attendance and persistent absence so that they are able to accurately identify patterns and take appropriate action to ensure more pupils attend school regularly.

About this inspection

This school is part of Lighthouse Schools Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gary Lewis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adele Haysom.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, a trustee, the chair of the local governing board and additional governors, the CEO and other members of the school's leadership team during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 4 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Gareth Beynon

Lead inspector:
Sarah Wilson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Jonathan Jones, Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Collins, Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Griffin, His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Barnes, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,188
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,253
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

17.12%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.28%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.35%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	50.5%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	51.0%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	48.7%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	49.8	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47.8	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	48.6	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.10	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.18	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	13.8%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	34.1%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	22.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	31.7	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.2	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.68	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.78	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	13.8%	53.1%	-39.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	34.1%	53.1%	-19.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	22.2%	52.4%	-30.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	31.7	50.4	-18.7
2023/24 (final)	39.5	50.0	-10.6
2022/23 (final)	36.2	50.3	-14.1

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.68	0.16	-0.84
2022/23 (final)	-0.78	0.17	-0.95

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	95%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	97%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	34.75	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.11	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.99	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.1%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.8%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	26.9%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.2%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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