

# Chewton Mendip Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123827
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314731
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Burghart

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vicky Whittaker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Hack
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Chewton Mendip Radstock BA3 4LL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01761 241465
<b>Fax number</b>	01761 241514

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and, in doing so, investigated the following areas: • the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 • pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics; the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation • how effectively assessment is used. Discussions took place with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own views, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school in a rural setting. Pupils are drawn from a wide area. All are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school now has a stable staff, but for Years 1 and 2 this has not always been the case with several changes of teacher in the previous four year period.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

All elements of the school's work are at least good and significant elements are exemplary which makes for an outstanding school. Pupils are happy and respond extremely well to the school's excellent care, guidance and support with very positive attitudes and hard work. Attainment when children first join Reception is about what is expected of this age group. Pupils build on the excellent start they get off to in Reception to reach consistently above average standards at the end of Year 6. This is not at the expense of pupils' personal development, which is of high quality. Pupils show consideration for others, clearly enjoy learning, and appreciate how to stay healthy and keep fit. Attendance is well above average and a very positive indication of how pupils feel about the school. However, unauthorised absence caused by holidays taken in term time is above average and this takes the edge off what otherwise would be an outstanding profile. The pupils have confidence in staff and relationships are outstanding. 'We are treated fairly. Staff listen to you,' was one school councillor's comment which sums up pupils' feelings. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is one of the school's many strengths. Pupils respond extremely well to opportunities to take responsibility, for example as playground buddies, and to show independence. Notwithstanding the very few pupils who can and very occasionally do let things slip, behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. For the three years prior to this year, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in reading, but only adequate progress in writing and mathematics. It is clear that more capable pupils underachieved. The root cause of this lay in frequent staff change and a subsequent lack of challenge. There has been substantial improvement this year with much better use of assessment to identify what pupils know, understand and can do, and altogether much more effective teaching. Pupils are now making good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Standards have risen considerably in reading, writing and mathematics and are now above average, with some well above average elements. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is outstanding and has been so for four out of the last five years. In 2007, the school was in the top 2% of all primaries nationally for the value it added to pupils' performance from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Current data and inspection evidence point to similarly outstanding achievement this year in English, with standards well above the norm. In mathematics and science, standards are securely above average, with more able pupils doing very well, but pupils of middle ability do not do quite so well as in English. A mark of the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is that this has been identified as an area to improve upon. Action is already being taken to fine tune the situation, making very good use of assessment to set targets and show pupils how improvements can be achieved. The full impact of this initiative is yet to be seen, but the noteworthy improvement in standards in Year 2 more than confirms that things are on the right lines.

The outstanding profile of achievement and standards is the result of consistently high quality teaching and support. A highlight of this provision is in perceptive questioning which prompts pupils to explain their strategies, seen very successfully in a Years 1 and 2 mental mathematics session, and express their opinions, as evident in an outstanding religious education lesson focusing on Hinduism. Teachers use time and resources well and ensure that work is well adapted to different ages and abilities in the same class. Support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Teaching assistants in particular make a very positive contribution, and help to ensure that such pupils make the same progress as other pupils. Teachers plan lessons very effectively, drawing on outstanding curriculum planning. They make full use of the school environment, visits and visitors to make work interesting and bring learning to life.

Recent initiatives to help pupils consider how society can make the best use of sustainable materials have made a substantial contribution to pupils' personal development and to their social and cultural awareness. The curriculum is particularly well enhanced by a wide range and good number of extra-curricular opportunities that are very well attended. A few parents and pupils feel that the school does not do enough to encourage competition, for example in sport, and believe activities are more attractive to girls than boys. These views have been drawn to senior leaders' attention, but this inspection does not find them to be significant issues.

The school's leadership and management are outstanding, being at least good in all respects. Although a very small number of parents feel that communication between school and home is not as good as it could be, 95% of parents who returned the Ofsted questionnaire think the school is well run. Links with parents are good. Nevertheless, the school is looking at ways to make them even better. Governors make an excellent contribution because they are well informed and are clear about the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Self-evaluation, despite being too modest, is accurate and extremely effective in underpinning improvement. Headteacher, staff and governors work very effectively as a team and rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of decisions made on the school's performance. Consequently, the school has excellent educational direction and makes particularly good use of staff and resources in pursuit of challenging targets. On the basis of policies, procedures and systems, which are securely in place, the school has an outstanding capacity for further development.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children get off to an excellent start. They are extremely well behaved and are obviously happy to be at school. They respond very enthusiastically both to the opportunities to learn through play activities and more formal lessons. Teaching is consistently good. Staff know children well and take excellent care of them, making sure they are not disadvantaged by being taught in a mixed age class with Year 1 pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed and especially effective in supporting children with learning difficulties. Relationships are outstanding. Children grow in confidence and independence as a result. They make outstanding progress, especially in learning to read and in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Reception year, children reach at least what is expected of the age group. Currently, two thirds of the year group are on line to exceed these expectations. Children are very considerate and willingly share and wait their turn. Provision is very well led and managed, with careful attention to planning, record keeping, and the accurate assessment of children's performance. Space, time and resources are all used well. It is little wonder that parents are pleased with the way their children are introduced to education. 'The school promotes a caring environment with all children being integrated', 'fantastic care' and 'happy children!' are typical comments.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

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- Noting that standards are above average, ensure that pupils do as well in mathematics and science as they consistently do in English.
- Embed the use of assessment, which is proving effective in English and mathematics, to set targets and show pupils how to improve their work throughout the curriculum.

(A measure of the school's capacity to improve is that both the above aspects are already being accounted for as part of the school's ongoing development planning)

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chewton Mendip Church of England VA Primary School, Chewton Mendip, Radstock BA3 4LL

I really enjoyed visiting your school. Many thanks to all those who talked to me, especially the school councillors. In all classes, I was impressed by your excellent attitudes and how well you work, especially when you are in groups.

Chewton Mendip is an outstanding school. This doesn't mean that it is perfect, but it does show that it is particularly good at helping you to learn and grow up as sensible young people.

Here are some of the many highlights.

- You make outstanding progress to reach standards that are above average in English, maths and science because you are especially well taught.
- Staff take excellent care of you and are good at showing you how you can make improvements to your work.
- Despite a few times when things are not quite right, your behaviour is excellent.
- Teachers do very well to make sure work is interesting. The list of visits, visitors and clubs and activities is impressive. (I know some of the boys would like more competitive sport opportunities and I have talked this over with the senior staff and governors.)
- The school is very well run by an excellent team of staff led by the headteacher and governors.

Here are two things which will make the school even better.

- Even though your standards are higher than in most schools, the school needs to make sure you do as well in maths and science as you do in English.
- Teachers should use the very good target setting that already happens in English and maths in other subjects, to help you see how you can make even more progress.

You can help by keeping up the good work! Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart Lead inspector