

Inspection of a good school: Chilthorne Domer Church School

Main Street, Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8RD

Inspection date:

17 February 2022

Outcome

Chilthorne Domer Church School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and do well. Pupils value the range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them. The many after-school clubs, such as gardening and choir, help to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils of all ages take on roles of responsibility with great pride. For example, Year 5 pupils write letters as 'guardian angels' to welcome the new Reception children before they start school.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. They follow the school's Christian values. Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. They celebrate difference. Pupils say it is important to 'treat people how we would want to be treated'.

Parents and carers describe the school as being nurturing and loving, like an extended family. One comment typical of many was, 'the staff show genuine care for the children'. Pupils say they feel happy and safe in school. They know the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying does not happen. If pupils have worries, they are confident staff will help them.

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

Leaders use their thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement to improve the quality of education for all. They prioritise the right training to ensure the school's curriculum and teachers' subject knowledge are continuously developing. This supports teachers to think carefully about how to help each individual pupil achieve their potential.

The school's curriculum is clearly sequenced to build pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time. Leaders have identified the essential knowledge pupils must know and remember from the early years to Year 6. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Teachers quickly spot if pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, pupils who need extra help with their learning, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive appropriate support to progress well.

Nevertheless, there are a few subject curriculums that are not as well developed. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan and check what pupils must know and remember. As a result, pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge expected by leaders. For example, pupils can remember historical facts but are unable to place them in chronological order on a timeline.

Leaders have rightly made learning to read a priority. Teachers and teaching assistants have a secure knowledge of phonics. The youngest pupils read books that match the phonics they learn. Staff give pupils who need extra help support to practise their phonics and reading. As a result, pupils build their phonics knowledge, reading speed and accuracy well.

Each year, pupils explore books selected carefully by their teachers to study different authors and texts. This begins in the early years. Weekly poetry performances in assembly and sharing 'reading shed' books with the Year 6 librarians encourage pupils to develop a love of reading.

Staff know the pupils and their individual needs well. They use resources effectively to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. Leaders of SEND work with a wide range of external support services effectively. They ensure that any pupils who need extra help to manage their emotions and improve their well-being get the targeted support they need.

The welfare of pupils, parents and staff has a high profile at the school. Pupils know how to be physically and mentally healthy. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration and support to help manage their workload. Leaders work successfully with parents to support pupils' attendance. Pupils attend school regularly.

The school has a calm and orderly environment. There are clear routines and high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Children in Reception benefit from time spent playing with older pupils who show them how to get along with others. Children quickly gain the skills needed to make friends and learn together successfully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders complete appropriate safer recruitment checks before staff begin working at the school. Staff, governors and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training and updates. This helps them to understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities well.

Staff know how to report concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff are confident that their concerns are taken seriously as leaders inform them of any actions taken. When necessary, leaders make referrals to external agencies in a timely manner.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. This includes online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum leaders in a minority of subjects have not identified all the knowledge they want pupils to learn. Consequently, some pupils' knowledge is shallow. Leaders need to identify the depth of knowledge they want pupils to know and remember and use this to develop a well-sequenced curriculum in every subject.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2012.

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	123815
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10211128
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	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Newton
Headteacher	Nichola Chesterton
Website	www.chilthornedomerchurchschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher started working at the school in September 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher; staff; pupils; governors, including the chair of the local governing board; and representatives from the Diocese of Bath and Wells and Somerset County Council.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Costello

Her Majesty's Inspector

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