

Inspection of Cheddar First School

Hillfield, The Hayes, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3HN

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Suzanne Smith. This school is part of The Wessex Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gavin Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Jacobs.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cheddar First School sits at the heart of the local community and is highly valued by parents and carers. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of their school. A culture of nurture and care permeates all areas of school life. The whole school team goes above and beyond to support pupils to flourish.

The school and trust have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They are ambitious for pupils' academic outcomes. The school ensures pupils are well prepared for middle school.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They consistently follow 'ready, respectful, safe' rules and routines. Staff pay careful attention to pupils' well-being. Relationships are strong between adults and pupils. Pupils are confident that their teachers will deal swiftly with any issues should they happen.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills, talents and interests. They enjoy taking part in the many clubs on offer, such as football, gymnastics and art. Pupils value the responsibility of being house captains, well-being ambassadors and members of the school council. They enjoy the many curriculum trips and visitors that enrich their wider school experience, such as the residential trip for older pupils.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. This starts in the early years. The curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. Teachers, including those at the early stages of their career, make use of high-quality training and support. As a result, they have good subject knowledge and confidence to deliver the different subjects across the curriculum. Teachers use a range of resources and teaching approaches to help pupils to achieve well. They check on how well pupils are learning. In mathematics, teaching addresses misconceptions and ensures pupils remember the most important knowledge. However, in some subjects, these checks are not always effective. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in knowledge, which hinders their future learning.

The teaching of early reading is a priority in school. Children in the pre-school listen to a range of stories, nursery rhymes and songs. In Reception, children learn to recognise letter sounds and begin to read early on. Staff use regular and effective checks on pupils' phonics understanding to be aware of the knowledge pupils have gained. They support pupils who need extra help with their reading to enable them to keep up with their peers. Pupils read books that typically match their phonics knowledge. This helps them to practise and become fluent readers.

Staff identify pupils' needs early and adapt learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use a range of support and resources to successfully enable pupils with SEND to progress through the curriculum. The school provides effective support for those pupils who need extra help with their behaviour. Strong relationships within school underpin this work effectively. When pupils find it

difficult to regulate their emotions, staff manage this well. The school's provision for nurture is a strength. This means that pupils with SEND overcome their learning barriers and achieve well.

In pre-school, staff support children to settle quickly and begin learning as soon as possible. Strong care and nurture ensures that children learn the routines and expected behaviours of daily school life. The curriculum for early English and mathematics is delivered well. In Reception, children love learning in the engaging classrooms and outside spaces. The curriculum ensures that children are very well prepared for Year 1.

Regular attendance is a priority. The school challenges poor attendance. It works closely with parents when pupils' attendance begins to decline. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved markedly.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about different faiths and beliefs. Pupils learn about cultures and communities different to their own. During assemblies, pupils reflect upon their own thoughts and views. Pupils learn about democratic processes through voting for new house captains. The 'Chance to Shine' board celebrates achievements both in and out of school. Pupils understand the importance of helping others and readily raise funds for national and local charities. For example, they regularly make donations to a local foodbank.

The trust and local partners are ambitious for the school. They have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve and provide highly effective support and challenge. Staff speak highly of the support they receive, including for their well-being and workload. They are proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not check precisely what pupils know. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed quickly, and their knowledge is not as secure as it could be. The trust should ensure that the school routinely checks pupils' knowledge, and use this information to inform future teaching, so that pupils learn well across the curriculum.

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

Unique reference number	147822
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344836
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Jacobs
CEO of the trust	Gavin Ball
Headteacher	Suzanne Smith
Website	www.cheddarfirstschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Wessex Learning Trust.
- Cheddar First School converted to become an academy in April 2022. When its predecessor school, Cheddar First School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club in school which is operated by an external provider. In pre-school, wraparound care is operated by the school.
- The school operates a pre-school for children from aged six-months- to four-years. The pre-school for six-month to one-year-olds is registered separately with Ofsted. It was not part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils, and representatives from the school partners and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate and considered responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Reception Year and Years 1 to 4 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views 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.

Inspection team

Richard Lucas, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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