

Inspection of a good school: Chew Valley School

Chew Magna, Bristol, Somerset BS40 8QB

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 May 2022

Outcome

Chew Valley School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak positively about their school and are proud of it. They enjoy learning across the range of subjects and feel that staff support them well. Learning is structured in ways to help pupils know and remember more. As a result, pupils are starting to make stronger progress than was the case in the past.

Pupils describe the school as a very easy place in which to make friends. They value their relationships with others, and this is supported by the school's tutoring programme. This places pupils from across the year groups together. Pupils like this system and feel that it helps them to make productive friendships across all years. Bullying is rare but if it does occur pupils say that staff quickly help to resolve it.

There are a wide range of activities available beyond the classroom that include clubs, recreational activities and trips. Pupils really value these opportunities, and they all take part in at least one of them. Leaders also enable pupils to pursue their own interests and passions through working in 'change and create' groups. These produce a wide range of pupil-led initiatives, which pupils describe with genuine enthusiasm.

Students in the sixth form are well integrated into the broader life of the school. Several initiatives engage them in positive ways with younger pupils.

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

Senior leaders keep the curriculum under constant review. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which leaders continue to develop. As a result of the school's effective leadership of teaching and learning, there is a good level of consistency across the school. This is enabling pupils to know and remember more of their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in the life of the school and its curriculum.

The school's approach to assessment is developing well across the curriculum. However, pupils do not always understand what they must do to improve in all subjects. Leaders identify the weakest readers. They are supported through an effective reading programme. There are a range of approaches in place to develop reading more widely, which leaders are continuing to develop and improve.

Leaders have given much consideration to enhance pupils' wider learning and their personal development. This is promoted through a high-quality personal, social, health and religious education curriculum. Staff teach pupils to embrace tolerance, challenge stereotypes and understand healthy relationships. The school employs its own careers adviser and delivers an entitlement to careers education, information, advice and guidance for pupils across all years. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The school is a very calm and orderly community. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a consequence, pupils mostly live up to them. Pupils listen to their teachers and peers and show consideration for others. Leaders implement the behaviour policy fairly and consistently. As a result, poor behaviour is rare. The school's curriculum and culture create a positive environment where discrimination and derogatory language are not tolerated. Pupils feel able to be themselves at the school and are therefore open about their personal beliefs.

Leaders are ambitious for their pupils, including students in the sixth form, who are well prepared for the next stages of their education. A focus on what it means to be a scholar raises pupils' aspirations. There is a focus on pupils' wider development, as they take part in an extensive and valuable range of activities.

Staff feel very positive about working at the school. They praise its supportive ethos, feel that workload is well managed and enjoy their working relationships with the school's leaders. The governance of the school is strong. Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account. The trust is active and adds much value to the leadership and management of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust systems for ensuring that safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained. Everyone understands their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Staff identify pupils who may need early help, and those who may be at risk of harm, in order to help and intervene. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not entirely clear on how to improve their learning in all subjects. As a result, pupils in some areas cannot always articulate the knowledge that they need to acquire in order to make further progress. Leaders must ensure that pupils know what they need to do to be able to improve and learn more.
- Leaders have a strategy in place to develop pupils' reading and a plan for its further development. This is because some pupils are finding it difficult to keep up or catch up. Leaders must ensure that their actions directly improve pupils' reading.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Chew Valley School, to be good in May 2015.

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	145482
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10227701
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1155
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	146
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adele Haysom
Headteacher	Gareth Beynon
Website	www.chewvalleyschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 May 2015

Information about this school

- Chew Valley School joined the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Multi-Academy Trust in January 2018.
- Chew Valley School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, and with the chief executive officer of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership.

- Inspectors examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated lead for safeguarding. They also scrutinised policies, procedures and record-keeping and reviewed the safeguarding checks made on staff when they are recruited.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils around the school site and held meetings with boys, girls and a mixed group of pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, exclusions and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Will Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Ray Hennessy	Ofsted Inspector

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