

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Chickerell Primary Academy

Rashley Road, Chickerell, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 4AT

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

Chickerell Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jody Harris. This school is part of the First Federation Trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alexander Walmsley.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's view, 'every child matters, so every day counts,' is at the heart of its work. The school provides high-quality pastoral support to pupils and their families. It teaches pupils how to be safe, keep mentally well and stay active. Pupils talk openly and positively about differences between people and how staff 'always see the best in us'. They flourish because of the nurturing relationships and support that they receive from staff. Pupils typically comment that 'at this school no worry is left unattended'.

The school is ambitious for its pupils. Staff want them to do well. Pupils are keen to learn, and most achieve well. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff follow the school's approach to behaviour. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and social situations. When pupils struggle with their emotions, staff take effective and supportive action. This enables pupils to get back to their learning.

The provision for pupils' wider development is a strength. Pupils enjoy the opportunities on offer, such as kickboxing, circus skills and computer coding. These activities develop pupils' interests and talents well.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum in place. It has identified the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember across all subjects. The staff carefully

weave six 'learning skills', such as enthusiasm, independence and resilience, throughout the curriculum. There is a strong focus on reading. Pupils in the early stages of reading have time to practise their sounds and become fluent readers. It ensures that any pupils at risk of falling behind in their reading catch up quickly.

However, too many pupils do not attend school regularly. This impacts on these pupils' learning. Consequently, there are gaps in some pupils' knowledge. Nonetheless, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and are eager to learn when they are in school.

Most pupils achieve well in their learning, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school identifies pupils with SEND quickly. They make the necessary adaptations in order for pupils to access the curriculum with success. The school works closely with agencies, such as occupational health and speech and language therapists, to support pupils' learning. However, the school's systems to check that pupils remember and understand what they have learned are not securely in place. This means that sometimes gaps in pupils' knowledge are not picked up and addressed quickly enough.

As soon as children start in the early years, including in the pre-school, they learn how to play together and work independently. A strong focus is on children's early communication skills and language development. For example, children in the pre-school could share with the inspector how they were wrapping Christmas presents. They knew the equipment that they needed and the process to be followed to be successful. Children can speak in short sentences with confidence. They start to build their early reading, writing and mathematical knowledge well. For example, children in the Reception Year could use mathematical vocabulary to describe a square and say how it differs from a rectangle. Children quickly learn the routines and behaviours staff expect. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

The school's work to develop pupils' personal development is well thought out. It provides pupils with rich developmental experiences, such as the Junior Dukes Award and the Young Apprentice Club. Alongside other opportunities, these develop pupils' perseverance and leadership skills. Pupils relish the roles and responsibilities available. These include being equality ambassadors and house captains. Pupils spoke with eloquence about the impact of the slave trade. They learn how to become thoughtful young people who respect and appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. This means that they understand the importance of equality.

The school's work on supporting pupils' mental health is impressive. It works closely with the mental health in schools team, which ensures pupils get the right support at the right time. Pupils can use letter boxes to share any worries or concerns with adults in school. Pupils are confident that staff listen and take action when needed. This work reduces pupils' anxieties and helps them to focus on their learning.

The school appreciates the high-quality support, guidance and challenge the trust provides. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. They welcome the efforts of leaders to look after their well-being and ensure that the workload is manageable.

Parents and carers are thrilled with the work of the school. They typically comment on how 'the school puts the children first' and are 'encouraging, nurturing and supportive'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. As a result, they do not build their knowledge well over time and have gaps in their learning. The trust should continue to improve its attendance strategies and work with families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.
- The school has not ensured that leaders at all levels evaluate the impact of the curriculum. This means it does not know if pupils are remembering the key knowledge and skills they need. The trust needs to ensure that leaders at all levels evaluate how well pupils know and remember what they learn.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2018.

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	139147
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10334702
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alexander Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Jody Harris
Website	www.chickerell.dorset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the First Federation Trust.
- There is an on-site pre-school for children aged three years upwards.
- The school provides wraparound care through breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, heard pupils read, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and staff.
- The inspector met with the CEO and the director of school improvement from the trust.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with an education officer from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. She met with school leaders to discuss and review how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered written correspondence sent by parents.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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