

# Inspection of a good school: Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery

Waterloo Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5HE

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Inspection dates:

31 January to 1 February 2024

## Outcome

Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Caring and knowledgeable Nursery staff provide children with precise help and support. This ensures that children are happy, well cared for and settle quickly. Strong pastoral support continues throughout the school. All staff ensure that they get to know pupils exceptionally well. Everyone feels part of this warm and friendly school community.

Staff routinely model the school's high expectations. Pupils learn the importance of good manners and respecting one another. They learn about kindness and how to make friends. Playtimes are fun.

Pupils experience an exciting curriculum across a range of subjects. There are lots of opportunities to learn the important foundational knowledge of speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. This, along with the school's approach to teaching pupils the attributes they need in order to stick at their learning and become independent, prepares them very well for junior school.

There are lots of fun experiences that enhance the curriculum, such as visits to a safari park, going to the cinema and watching or taking part in theatre performances. There are extra-curricular clubs such as yoga or learning to play the ocarina. Pupils sing enthusiastically and tunefully in assembly.

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

The school is very well led and managed. The members of the staff team are wholly child focused. The school community works closely with parents. Nearly every parent who responded to the Ofsted survey would recommend the school to others. Leaders assure pupils' and staff's well-being effectively. Governors know the school well and provide effective challenge and support. Leaders identify the school's strengths and any areas for development accurately. By the time pupils leave the school, they achieve well.

In Nursery, staff model early language development well. Children learn how to speak in sentences and expand their mathematical vocabulary with success. In the Reception classes, pupils learn the sounds that letters make effectively. Staff prioritise teaching children how to write the sounds and words they learn to read. This ensures that as they move into key stage 1 pupils are well prepared to 'take off' with their writing, and many do. Typically, the curriculum is successful in teaching pupils to read. Most gain a love of reading. However, a few pupils need more practice at school to increase their fluency. The teaching of mathematics is effective. A notable feature is how pupils are able to explain their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils have quick recall of the number facts they learn because they get lots of practice.

Staff know all pupils well. They work collegiately to ensure that pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) have the exact teaching they need. For example, specialist staff introduce new vocabulary before teachers introduce new curriculum content. This ensures that these pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders in the Nursery and school have stringent systems in place to check the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, these pupils receive a tailored curriculum that meets their individual targets well.

Across the school, staff use assessment well to find out what pupils know and remember. They use this information effectively in order to shape the subject content they teach term by term. However, there are occasions when staff do not adapt their teaching to address misconceptions when they arise within sequences of work or lessons. When this happens, pupils do not get the immediate support they need to thrive. This slows their learning down.

The school's curriculum is well established. It sets out what pupils will learn over time and is particularly successful in interesting and engaging young learners. For example, pupils show a genuine excitement about learning about dinosaurs in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Staff are proactive and reflective in refining the subject content they teach. However, the school's work to refine the curriculum by breaking down specific subject content that it wants pupils to learn in some aspects of the wider curriculum is at an early stage.

Most pupils attend well. There are stringent systems and processes in place to challenge poor attendance. As a result, persistent absence is reducing markedly this year. Staff champion pupils' mental and physical health and well-being. The curriculum teaches pupils about online safety and the importance of abiding by rules and having morals. This helps them understand right and wrong and value difference.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

**(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are occasions when staff do not adapt their teaching to address pupils' misconceptions when they arise within sequences of work or lessons. This slows a minority of pupils' learning down. The school must ensure that teaching is adapted consistently well so that all pupils can thrive in their learning.
- In a few subjects, leaders have not yet refined some specific subject content that they want pupils to learn. Pupils do not always learn the depth of knowledge they could. The school must ensure that all aspects of the wider curriculum include the necessary subject content that pupils need to learn so that pupils learn across the curriculum consistently well.

## 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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in February 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123660
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297929
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kate Lovell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Honoria Thompson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sheptonmalletinfants.co.uk">www.sheptonmalletinfants.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school's Nursery takes children who are aged two, three and four.
- Four classes make up the early years phase of the school. There is one Nursery class for two- and three-year-olds and one class for three- and four-year olds. There are two Reception classes.
- In key stage 1, there are two Year 1 classes and two Year 2 classes.
- There is also a Nursery for one- and two-year-olds within the school building. This is managed by Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School Governing Body. This was not inspected as part of the school inspection. It was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register in October 2022 and graded good.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school staff. She also met with representatives of the governing body, two representatives of Somerset local authority, and the school's external adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also held several other meetings to discuss Nursery provision, geography and the support for pupils with EAL and SEND.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to an adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. An inspector also considered the responses to the staff survey.

## **Inspection team**

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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