

Inspection of Dulverton Junior School

Fishers Mead, Dulverton TA22 9EN

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for pupils at Dulverton Junior School. Pupils receive a warm welcome every day. They are happy and feel safe in school. However, the quality of education that pupils receive does not prepare them effectively enough for their next steps. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They struggle to talk with confidence about their learning across the curriculum.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond positively to the calm approach adopted by the school. They understand and follow the school rules of being 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils form positive relationships with staff and their peers. They are role models for the younger pupils in the infant school.

Pupils enjoy the many opportunities that the school provides. Each year group benefits from attending a residential. Pupils' recent visit to Bristol, including time at another school, was a rich, culturally diverse experience which pupils remember fondly. The school encourages pupils to embrace being in the outdoors. This supports their physical and mental health. For example, pupils develop endurance and resilience through their participation in 'Generation Exmoor'. This outdoor learning project allows them to explore Exmoor National Park alongside pupils from other schools in the federation.

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

The school has been on a significant journey of improvement. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the impact of the leadership of the school. The move to a different site, alongside the infant school, has created a strong sense of community. During this period of change, staff state that they have felt well supported in managing their workload. They benefit from a comprehensive professional development programme which has strengthened their subject knowledge.

Leaders prioritise reading. There is now a well-resourced library in the heart of the school. Pupils who are selected to be 'pupil librarians' take pride in this role. Those pupils who continue to require additional help with learning and blending sounds when they join the junior school, follow an appropriate phonics programme. Other pupils who are secure in their sounds are supported to strengthen their fluency and comprehension. This personalised approach allows pupils to catch up with their peers quickly. Pupils are becoming more confident and fluent readers.

Despite improvements in the quality of early reading at the school, the recent published outcomes from key stage 2 show that older pupils have not built their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum as successfully. Too many pupils have moved onto secondary school without securing strong enough foundations in reading, writing and mathematics.

With the support of the federation governors, and the local authority, there has been a radical overhaul of the content across all taught subjects. Pupils now learn a broad and

ambitious curriculum. The school draws upon its locality to further enrich pupils' experiences. However, there remains variation in the quality of teaching pupils receive. Too often, teaching does not define exactly what pupils will learn or break down activities into manageable steps. Checks on pupils' understanding of the curriculum are not regular or focused enough which means teaching is not always adapted appropriately. Therefore, the impact of recent improvements is not yet being fully realised in what pupils know and can do.

The school has an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is proactive in identifying where pupils may need adjustments or further support. Staff receive helpful information and training which means that most pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers in the classroom. However, at times, staff expectations of pupils with SEND are not as high as they could be. On occasion, staff are not confident in adapting how they deliver the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

Pupils follow a well-considered personal, social, and health education programme (PSHE). They are curious to learn about faiths and cultures different to their own. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. At social times, pupils are well behaved and enjoy the range of activities available to them. They show kindness and teamwork in how they play together. Many pupils participate in extra-curricular activities such as cheerleading, gymnastics, archery and cricket.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too frequently, teaching does not define exactly what pupils will learn or break down activities into manageable steps. Additionally, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding of the curriculum are not regular or focused enough so they are unable to adapt their teaching in response to what pupils remember. As a result, gaps in knowledge and misconceptions persist and some pupils do not progress through the curriculum as well as they could. The school should ensure that the work and explanations provided to pupils are consistently appropriate and that teaching is adapted in response to what pupils already know and can do.
- The school has not ensured that all pupils with SEND have ambitious and measurable targets that support their progress through the curriculum. As a result, the support they receive in the classroom is not always as effective as it could be. The school should ensure that there are consistently high expectations of pupils with SEND and that targets are specific and regularly reviewed.

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	123871
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10378906
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Frances Nicholson
Headteacher	Naomi Philp (executive headteacher) Nicola Stenner (head of school)
Website	www.moorlandfed.co.uk/schools/dulverton-junior-school-somerset
Dates of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Moorland Federation which contains eight schools.
- The school shares a site with All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infants School.
- The head of school took up her post in September 2024.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, head of school (who is also the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator), the chair of the governing body, other members of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Additionally, inspectors visited a history lesson and reviewed pupils' work in religious education.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl Thornton

Ofsted Inspector

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