



Chickerell Primary Academy

Part of First federation Trust



Every Child Matters, So Every Day Counts

Welcome to Chickerell Primary Academy



Foreword: Mrs Jody Harris, Headteacher, says:

A big hello and welcome to our wonderful Chickerell Primary Academy.

Proud

I am extremely proud to be the Headteacher at Chickerell. It really is a very special place to teach. This prospectus has been designed to give you a flavour of some of the fantastic things that we do here.

An inclusive curriculum

We are extremely proud to provide a varied, interesting, and inclusive curriculum that allows all children to achieve their potential. With our very extensive extracurricular programme, we have regular chances for them to do creative arts, singing, sport, drama and explore the local environment.

Dedicated staff

The teachers and assistants work incredibly hard to make sure each child progresses in the key skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Our carefully planned and structured pastoral care system, where every child's voice can be heard and everyone is loved, valued and respected for who they are.

The sky's the limit

We want all children to feel that 'the sky's the limit' and that they can achieve anything they want to with our support. We want them to be ambitious, positive and determined to make the best of themselves - and it is absolutely our moral obligation to help them to do this through challenging them in their learning and modelling these attitudes for them.

Parent partnership

Another very important part of our school is you, the parent! As you will see, by reading the many parent and pupil stories within this prospectus, you and your child are very important to us. We champion the link between school and parent and work very hard to involve you in every step of your child's time here...and increase your child's enjoyment of learning.

Get in touch

If you wish to hear more about what we can offer your child, please get in touch with us for more information or an appointment to meet me. We welcome visits and love to show our school 'in action'. Telephone on 01305 579148 or email office@chickerell.dorset.sch.uk.



Gemma believes nowhere else could have embraced her daughter's needs as effectively as Chickerell Primary Academy

Gemma and Adam live in Weymouth with their three children. The youngest, Pippa, who is seven years old, attends Chickerell Primary Academy.



Good advice

On friends' recommendations, Gemma and Adam had moved their two eldest children to Chickerell Primary Academy and it's a decision they will never regret. Having immediately felt the warm, family feeling which they believe defines the school, they had no hesitation in later enrolling their youngest daughter, Pippa, despite her serious and complex health problems.

Positive reaction

"When we spoke to the school and outlined Pippa's needs, the first reaction was 'Yes, we will make this work' and in the three years she has been at Chickerell, they have, without a doubt", says Gemma. "Pippa has a range of physical and mental health issues, all of which require careful monitoring, and are potentially life-threatening. We needed to know that she would be receiving the best possible care at school."

Awareness

In terms of her physical wellbeing, Pippa needs a carefully controlled diet in order to avoid collapse or possible coma, and Gemma is greatly reassured that staff members have taken it upon themselves to independently research how to identify and treat an episode. "They have made absolutely sure that, if Pippa shows signs of illness, they are fully aware of what to do in the moment, and they listen carefully to the advice given by the hospital, following it through to the letter." This may involve taking regular blood tests, administering medication or glucose if necessary, and generally being aware of the seriousness of the event, reporting back to Gemma and Adam to keep them in touch.

Overcoming anxiety

As far as Pippa's generalized anxiety is concerned, she receives several sessions of group intervention each week, based around English, maths and reading, in which she had previously been falling behind. Thanks to this targeted approach, she is now making progress and starting to catch up with her peer group. "To begin with, Pippa was fearful of going into school and leaving me, but through the empathy and reassurance of her teachers, she has gained significantly in confidence and is happy to go in every morning. She still needs to know that there is a trusted adult alongside her but she has come a long way."

Reassurance

Pippa's complex condition is still partially undiagnosed and medical interventions are ongoing, but Gemma is absolutely confident that, whatever is required, the school will step up to address whatever is needed to keep her daughter safe. She says: "We feel unbelievably lucky that Chickerell is our local school and that everyone there - teachers and support staff - is prepared to work with us as closely as they are doing. We have had, and still have, major challenges with Pippa's health, but knowing that we have this school 100% behind us is incredibly reassuring."

Seeing her daughter grow in confidence and achievement is all Gemma could ask, and why she is so grateful to the school which is making it happen.

School day: settling in

School hours

Our school hours are from 8.40am to 3.10pm.

Breakfast club and after-school provision

We have a Breakfast Club that runs from 7.30am – 8.30am. Our After-School Club runs from 3.05pm – 5.30pm Monday-Thursday and from 3.05pm to 5.00pm on a Friday.

Uniform

The Governors and staff believe that school uniform increases the children's pride and ownership of their school, and we insist on children at Chickerell wearing a school uniform. School uniform is kept as simple and practical as possible and the colours are maroon jumpers and cardigans, grey pinafore dresses, skirts or trousers and white shirt with school tie. The school emblem is embroidered onto our uniform, which is now available to purchase from Dorset Embroidery and Printwear, 4 Mckay Close, Lynch Lane, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 9DN.

School meals and snacks

Lunch

Hot meals are available for all children. They are very popular with our children and the menu provides up to three options to choose from each day. Please contact the school office for the most up to date price.

Packed lunches

Children may also bring a healthy packed lunch into school instead of choosing a hot meal, and this should be in a study labelled lunchbox and stored in their locker until lunchtime.

Free School Meals

All children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are entitled to a free school meal each day. Older children may also be eligible for free school meals if the family is in receipt of certain benefits; please call Dorset Direct on 01305 221000 to register.

Snacks and drinks

Every 4-6 year-old will receive a free piece of fruit under the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. Other children are encouraged to bring their own fruit as a snack. All children will be provided with a water bottle on their first day of school.

We also have a milk scheme that is available to all our pupils.



Katie despaired about finding a school which could address her son's needs. And then she found Chickerell Primary Academy

Katie and Kyle have two children at Chickerell Primary Academy. Roman is six and Indy, four.



Who can help?

Katie and Kyle had only recently moved to the Weymouth area when it was time to enroll Roman in school, and they began trying to find a suitable setting for him. Roman has a range of additional needs, including global development delay and autism, so they needed a school which could address those issues.

Last resort

"We were torn between a specialist provision and mainstream options but as Roman didn't have eligibility for an EHCP we approached various mainstream schools. Virtually all said that they did not have the resources to deal with his range of needs so when friends whose children attended Chickerell Academy suggested we apply, we did so, as we were running out of ideas."

Stability

Roman had been out of education until he was four years old, partly because an appropriate setting couldn't be found and partly because his parents felt it was better to keep him at home until he was legally obliged to start school at five. "We needed to make sure he had some permanence, some stability," says Katie, "so we were delighted when Chickerell was so accepting and told us: 'Let's see what we can do.'"

Fantastic support

Although Roman is still undergoing assessment of eligibility for an EHCP, the school was more than happy to make accommodation for his immediate needs, including a dedicated 1-1 teaching assistant and restricted hours. "The level of support has been fantastic," Katie says. "All the staff are fully invested in Roman's welfare and take their cue from what he needs, and his interests, so that he is completely comfortable with them."

Palpable progress

Although Roman has only been attending the school for a short time, his progress has been palpable.

From being unable to read, write or even hold a pencil, he is now able to write his name, count to ten and read simple sentences. He is even progressing in his speech development which gives his parents much joy.

Professional backup

Katie and Kyle are still hoping that Roman will soon be awarded an EHCP, which in turn will enable the school to access additional funding for his needs, but in the meantime, Katie is confident that the current level of support will continue. "The SENCO has been a huge help in going through the LA mediation process with us, giving her professional opinion as to Roman's situation, and backing us up with her knowledge and expertise."

Care and compassion

Parents of children with special needs face a range of challenges, and Katie feels more than lucky she found a school which, she believes, has as much interest in her son's welfare as do she and Kyle. "I honestly think they are completely on our side. Roman loves the school, and his teachers, and has made a special bond with them; that speaks volumes about the quality of care and compassion which abounds at Chickerell."

Encouragement to achieve

Katie and Kyle's daughter, Indy, currently attends Chickerell Nursery School and as she also shows signs of autism spectrum, with the full support of the school, is delaying the transition to Reception until she is five. "When I had concerns about how Roman would cope in a mainstream school, our experience with Chickerell completely changed my mind. Seeing how being alongside other children has encouraged him to achieve has convinced me that this is absolutely the best setting for him and will be for our daughter, too."

Katie's experience has taught her that the best help comes from unexpected sources. "So many other schools said 'we can't help'. Chickerell said 'we can.'"

Creative curriculum: foundations for success

Stimulating natural curiosity

At Chickerell we aim to provide the children with a curriculum which is broad, well-balanced and above all stimulates the children's natural curiosity to learn. In addition to acquiring skills and knowledge, we want to help the children to grow in confidence and maturity so that they can enter secondary school 'secondary ready', with the ability to pursue wholeheartedly, academic, social, sporting and cultural activities.

All areas of learning

To make our education relevant to the world the children live in today and their wider experiences, we also incorporate the following key aspects of Global Citizenship learning:

- Social Justice and Equity; Diversity and Identity, Globalisation and Interdependence, Peace and Conflict, Environment.



Themes weeks

Additional theme weeks and special whole school event days for the whole school provide further in-depth coverage of PSHE and Rights Respecting Curriculum, e.g., Anti-Bullying Week, Fairtrade Fortnight, and Outdoor Learning Day.

Enriched curriculum: trips and visits

To further enrich our curriculum, all children are offered a range of visits, both locally and further afield. These include:

- Farmer Palmers.
- Charmouth Fossil Hunting.
- Nothe Fort.
- Portland and Maiden Castle fort.

Older children have the opportunity to go on residential trips during the school year. We feel these experiences can help to develop qualities of self-reliance and tolerance of others. Children learn independence and develop confidence. Examples include:

- Barton Hall
- Carey Camp
- Leeson House

Additionally, we arrange visits to the school by theatre groups and those with professional expertise such as singers, artists and musicians.



Only one place could provide the support this family desperately needed, and that was Chickerell Primary Academy

Megan and Liam live in Weymouth with their two sons. Connor is six and Jack, four, is in the pre-school, Chickadees.



A long wait

Connor has been on a waiting list for an assessment for autism since he was two and a half years old. He had initially been placed in another nursery but Megan and Liam felt that Chickadees would be more appropriate as it would help his transition to the main school reception at Chickerell Primary.

Kind and caring

"The difference was immediately apparent," says Megan. "The pre-school staff were very understanding of his particular needs and helped him settle in so well. They were kind, caring and patient and, in contrast to his last placement, allowed me to go in with him for a while to get him settled, rather than my having to leave him at the door, crying for me, which was heartbreaking."

Set back

Connor became comfortable with his new pre-school but the summer break between leaving pre-school and starting at Reception class set him back. "It was a totally new environment, with different teachers, and he really struggled to adapt," explains Megan. "The staff, however, were wonderful with him and we felt he was turning a corner, but Connor does not respond well to change and again, we were nervous when he was about to start in Year 1."

Nowhere to turn

Megan and Liam had previously sought help from their local GP. "The doctor just said that this was not something within their remit and referred us back to the school. At this stage we were tearing our hair out, needing some support from somewhere. Thankfully, Chickerell stepped up and gave us a massive amount of help."

Routine

At school, Connor was generally well behaved and showed no major signs of behavioural problems, but he was very dysregulated at home.

"What the school helped us with, and recognised when we talked to them, was that Connor responds well to a school routine but because he had less structure at home, he found it difficult to make decisions. When those decisions were taken out of his hands at school, he found it easier, so we came to understand how we could do something similar at home. It was invaluable advice."

Invaluable advice

Parents of children with additional needs are naturally fully aware of their children's various personalities and their own particular traits, but as Megan freely acknowledges, having an expert and professional input from another source is invaluable. "What Chickerell has done is to fully understand Connor's own self. They have seen him as a person in his own right and have put in place everything they can to support him, and us as a family."

Above and beyond

Megan and Liam's youngest son, Jack who is diagnosed with Autism and Global Development Delay, has also received a huge amount of support from Chickerell. They have created a sensory space for him to regulate within the pre-school and go above and beyond to ensure he feels happy and safe whilst he is in their care. They have also been instrumental in gaining an EHCP for Jack and allowing him to do an extra year in pre-school whilst a placement in a specialist school is sought.

Our extended family

"We still have a way to go with both our boys, but we know we have the full and absolute backing of this school to help us through this complicated process of diagnosis and additional, funded, support. Chickerell to us feels like an extended family, who know us and our children so well. They really, genuinely care about the children, and that means the world."

Inclusion: a curriculum for all

Special educational needs

We want every child to feel they fit in at Chickerell and our aim is to make each classroom as inclusive as possible for every child, regardless of their needs.

Flexible approach

We believe there are considerable benefits for all pupils in catering for special educational needs in the mainstream class. Some pupils may, however, at times require more specialised teaching, which can be better provided within 1:1 or small group provision away from the main classroom. Our Inclusion Leader, Mrs Penn, works tirelessly to assist the teachers and support staff in providing help for the children who need that slightly different, more bespoke approach for them to be able to access the curriculum.

Support

Class teachers provide the support required, largely by the provision of differentiated material teaching and learning. Teaching assistants provide support for children in the classroom and also in small group tuition, under the guidance of the class teacher.

Gifted and talented children

We recognise that all children are individuals with their own specific needs, gifts and talents. Children who are identified as being exceptionally able or talented, are monitored and provided with stimulating and enriching lessons appropriate to their needs.



“This is so much more than just a good school. It has been a lifeline in so many ways”

Sarah and Brian live in the Weymouth area and have three daughters. Rose is 18, Robyn 13 and Esmay is 11.



Extra time

Esmay is in her final year at Chickerell Primary Academy, having taken an extra year there in order to help her catch up because of her additional needs. Robyn was also a pupil there until she moved up to a secondary setting.

All three girls are neurodivergent, with the two older ones on the autism spectrum and Esmay diagnosed with ADHD.

Hardship

This family has been through an extremely difficult few years. Aside from the fact that the girls all have mental

health challenges, the recent pandemic left both Sarah and Brian without jobs or income and they found themselves homeless through no fault of their own, and for a while were housed in emergency accommodation.

Struggling to survive

“It’s hard now to contemplate what an awful time that was,” explains Sarah. “We were struggling to cope, both financially and to care for three children with special needs. We moved to Chickerell during the early stages of the Covid crisis but needed a school for the girls. In a huge piece of good fortune, we found Chickerell Primary Academy and it’s not too much to say that I don’t think we would have survived without its support.”

A need for routine

Robyn and Esmay were enrolled at the same time and although their parents were not classified as Key Workers, were offered classes in school. “The people we talked to at the school realised that the girls needed to continue their education as much as possible, partly because they had previously missed quite a lot but also because the staff recognised that children with autism and ADHD benefit greatly with routine.”

Life-saving support

At this point, Sarah explains further why she feels so deeply grateful to Chickerell school: “It’s a fact that boys and girls with autism present in very different ways, and that girls are much less likely to be diagnosed. Girls tend to mask their feelings and appear compliant and calm, whilst suffering badly inside, and this can lead to greater problems further down the line. This was actually the case with Rose who, when she attended a different primary school, was not given support at any level and subsequently became severely anorexic, from which she nearly died.”

Revelation

When Sarah happened upon Chickerell school, saw how “they scooped up my girls and treated them like valued individuals”, she realised: “this is what a good school should be.”

Safety

Sarah has a lengthy list of the ways in which she says that she and her whole family have been helped by the school, including the outstanding SENCO team who immediately offered specialist help with pastoral care, more effective reading support and what Sarah describes as a safe place. The girls can suffer from social anxiety so are given the opportunity to benefit from breaktime and lunchtime clubs where they do not feel they have to interact with other children on the playground.

Unexpected generosity

Perhaps what Sarah and Brian have been most appreciative of, however, is the way the school quietly provided a completely unasked-for and unexpected resource in terms of help with food and utility bills, and holiday activities and Christmas presents for the children. “These things came out of the blue. Being unable to put a decent meal on the table, heat the house or afford something for the girls to unwrap at Christmas was just dreadful and yet we were able to do so thanks to the incredibly generosity shown to us.”

Looking to the future

Thankfully, the family now have a home of their own, and Sarah has a job she loves with an Alternative Education Provider where she finally feels she can make a positive contribution of her own. “My school actually works quite closely with Chickerell, providing much-needed care for other children who have fallen out of the mainstream. Having seen at first hand what a difference appropriate treatment can make to children in need, it’s wonderful to be able to play a part in that myself.”

Credit where it is due

Both Robyn and Esmay will be attending a specialist setting at secondary level, but Sarah is convinced that it is Chickerell Primary Academy which should take the credit for keeping them in a mainstream setting for their vital early education.

Sarah sums up her feelings thus: “The difference between Chickerell and some other primary schools I have seen is like the difference between night and day.”

Clubs, sport and music

Wide range of clubs

We highly value offering our children the chance to participate in extracurricular activities as experience tells us that these are the things that pupils enjoy and remember most. Clubs are run for all ages, and we try to cater for most interests. They take place every week outside of the first and last weeks of each half term. Clubs include:

- Art.
- Writing.
- Basketball.
- Colouring.
- Circus Skills.
- Table Tennis.

Sport

We have a dedication to sports such as football, rugby, netball, and gym. We also participate with local schools in offering a wider range of sporting opportunities, including cross country, rounders and cricket.

Music

One-to-one peripatetic music tuition is available for samba, keyboard, piano and the guitar. The whole class music provision is accessed through the Dorset Music Services.



Admissions... and getting involved

Admission Chickerell Primary School

We are very proud of our wonderful school and all that it has to offer. We strongly recommended that you contact us directly to arrange a visit as we would love to show you around.

Applications

At Chickerell we follow Dorset Council's School Admissions Policy. Chickerell admits children to the Foundation Stage at the beginning of the Autumn Term once they reach the age of 4. This is known as "4 plus" entry.

Prospective parents are invited to make an appointment with the Headteacher when considering applying for a place here at Chickerell. After this initial visit, parents need to apply to the Local Authority (LA) for a place at the school, whether or not they live in the catchment area. Once a place has been allocated through the LA, the school will make arrangements for some introductory visits for the child, during the summer term preceding their entry.

Contact Dorset Council's School Admission Team

- Visit: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/schools-and-learning
- Ring us on: 01305 221060
- Email us: admissions@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Write to us: School Admissions Team, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Getting involved

Voluntary helpers

We are always delighted to welcome parent volunteers into school to help with reading, but a full DBS is required for this. If you would like to become a volunteer, please ask at the school office.

PTA

This is a thriving group, which raises funds for the school and holds social events for the children and adults. Everyone is welcome to join this group and the variety of their events appeals to all tastes. Generous PTA contributions make the environment for the children much more stimulating and enliven their education. The Staff and Governors are grateful for their enthusiasm and continued interest.

Trustees

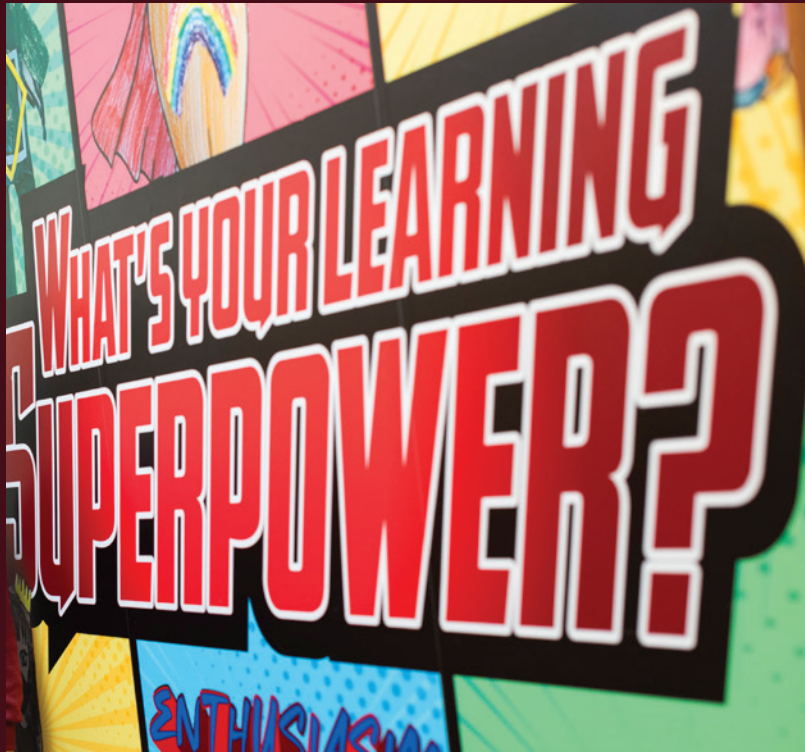
The trustees of the MAT monitor the achievements of the school by challenging the Head at regular Hub board meetings. Although this is a voluntary role, it carries great responsibility and they take their duty very seriously.



Adam had a very difficult start in life, but with new loving parents and the outstanding support of Chickerell Primary Academy, is blossoming

Some names have been changed.

Sam and Jim's son is 10 years old and attends Chickerell Primary Academy.



A perfect match

Sam describes Adam as the wittiest, kindest, most warm-hearted child she has ever known, and this despite a very difficult early life before he was taken into care at the age of four. Sam and Jim had decided to adopt and Sam had initially set her heart on a much younger child but as she explains:

“As soon as we met Adam we just knew! He was four and a half and appeared somewhat young for his age but he was the loveliest little thing and although the intervening years have been challenging to say the least, we have no regrets whatsoever.”

Outstanding support

Sam credits Chickerell school for the outstanding level of help and support the staff have provided to both Adam and to the family as a whole. Following assessment by various professionals and agencies which specialise in the treatment of children from abusive backgrounds, Adam has been diagnosed not only with ADHD but in particular with developmental trauma, caused by early neglect.

Emotional scars

“Children who have experienced mistreatment and neglect in the first few years of their lives are very vulnerable, and it is often the case that the results will manifest later, as they get older. This is what we have discovered in Adam, and even though he is a genuinely lovely, and clever, child, he still has the mental and emotional scars.”

Targeted approach

Although, like so many other children, Adam was negatively impacted by the pandemic lockdown, with the support from Chickerell, Adam started to settle into school life, but his teachers became aware that he needed a different approach to most of his peers. “They could tell when he was about to become stressed and needed a break, and he was able to access a quiet area to be able to calm down, and both the pastoral and SENCO teams were wonderful in anticipating, and responding to, what he needed.”

Positive intervention

As far as family support is concerned, not only did the school throw its weight behind Sam's application for an ECHP – which was successfully granted following its intervention – but have arranged family conferences and most notably, courses designed to support families in challenging situations. “We enrolled on an Incredible Years course which was a bit of a game-changer for us,” says Sam. “Far from feeling patronised, we were really grateful to be able to pick up information, new strategies to try, and it was amazing to talk with other people like ourselves, who understood exactly what we were dealing with.”

Rising to the challenge

Adam still requires a more hands-on approach than his peers, in that he finds it hard to concentrate and needs help with many aspects of his work, but with 1-2 attention, is making progress, and both Sam and Jim feel that no other school setting could have done more.

“There are times when I have had my own meltdowns, in sheer frustration, and there is always, always, someone there to pick me up. I cannot praise highly enough the school which has enabled us to get through some difficult times, has been behind my son all the way, and recognised that Adam is special in his own right. Schools have many challenges to deal with, and that Chickerell has risen to this one means the world to us.”



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