

# Inspection of Southminster Church of England Primary School

Burnham Road, Southminster Church of England Primary School, Southminster,  
Essex, CM0 7ES

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Southminster are polite. Most are happy and enjoy school.

Most pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults deal with any bullying. A few pupils do not feel so safe. Some pupils in the younger years have not been taught well enough how to behave. Pupils say not all adults deal with poor behaviour well enough.

Pupils do not learn from a curriculum that is sufficiently well designed or taught. This means that many pupils do not achieve well. Pupils struggle to remember any detail about their learning in some areas of the curriculum. Pupils across the school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not receiving an acceptable standard of education.

Pupils value the many opportunities to take part in sport, swimming, after-school clubs and trips. Pupils say that they like their teachers. Pupils learn how to stay safe online.

Too many children leave Reception not prepared for the demands of key stage 1. Pupils are not taught to read well enough or quickly enough. Many pupils leave the school not having the necessary skills they need to be successful at secondary school.

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

Leaders have overcome significant challenges over the last year. While they are starting to address the areas of improvement identified at the previous inspection, changes in staff have contributed towards school improvement being too slow. The quality of education that pupils receive from Reception to Year 6 has taken far too long to improve.

A significant proportion of pupils are not receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils in a few classes have not been taught the full range of subjects for some time, such as music and art. Many pupils throughout the school, including pupils with SEND, are not receiving their curriculum entitlement.

Recently, changes have been made to secure a consistent approach to teaching early reading. However, this work is newly in place. Currently, too many pupils do not learn sounds quickly. Reading books are not consistently well matched to the sounds pupils are expected to learn. Some adults do not teach phonics well enough. They spend too long checking what pupils know and too little time teaching pupils what they need to learn. The significant number of pupils that have fallen behind are not catching up quickly.

Leaders' thinking in all areas of the curriculum is not clear or coherent. Because of this, subject leaders' monitoring of what pupils know is inaccurate. Staff report that

by prioritising some subjects, others are not being taught well. While pupils like many of the learning activities they take part in, they learn too little. This is because leaders have not set out the important knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn and remember.

Leaders have started to focus on improving behaviour. While most pupils agree that this is the case, some pupils say that staff do not consistently deal with behaviour well enough. Not all staff are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the behaviour policy. Leaders are not checking that their behaviour policy and the agreed recording systems are being effectively implemented by all staff consistently well. Therefore, leaders do not know how much difference their actions are making to behaviour.

Pupils with SEND are not given support to achieve well. Those in the nurture provision are not supported well enough to access the curriculum, so they can return to the classroom. Learning for pupils with SEND is not reviewed routinely to check that teachers are providing the support, so that pupils can successfully access the curriculum. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have not made sure that Reception is led by skilled and experienced leaders and staff. As a result, children do not get a strong start to their education. This means too few children are ready for Year 1.

Leaders are implementing plans to support pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about accepting people for who they are and that being different is okay. Pupils learn about different families and can talk about different religions.

Many teachers do not feel supported to be able to do their job as well as they wish to. Several teachers who are new to the profession are taking on leadership roles with little guidance or support. This has led school leaders and staff to be overwhelmed and has resulted in an increasing and unmanageable workload.

Relationships between school leaders and the trust have not been as productive as they should be. Leaders have not sufficiently prioritised the most important areas for improvement.

Parents are noticing the improvements that leaders are making. Parents have renewed faith in the school and report that they are happy with what the school offers. Leaders have worked with parents, so that the school is positively recognised in the local community. Pupil numbers are increasing.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Systems to ensure pupils' safety are not securely in place. Concerns recorded about pupils who are not in school are not followed up quickly enough. In addition, pupils' persistent absence is high and continuing to rise. Leaders do not check on some

persistently absent pupils' whereabouts or well-being. Similarly, systems for analysing trends in behaviour are not in place.

All checks on staff and visitors to the school are in place and the single central record is well maintained.

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

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

- Systems for checking on concerns raised about pupils and for checking on pupils not in school are not rigorous enough. Leaders need to ensure that all persistent absences are followed up and immediate action taken to provide the support to help pupils to attend. Additionally, all referrals and concerns recorded need to be followed up routinely to make sure all pupils and families, particularly the most vulnerable, are getting the right support quickly.
- Reading has not been given a high priority by the trust and school leaders. The school's chosen phonics programme is in its early stages of implementation. Some staff who deliver phonics and support pupils with early reading have not had sufficient training to do this well. For example, they do not match the learning to help pupils learn the sounds that they need to know and practise. In addition, not all books are matched to the sounds pupils are learning. Leaders need to make sure that staff have the appropriate training and guidance to ensure pupils are taught to read well. Books need to be matched to the sounds pupils are learning, so that they can practise the sounds to read fluently. Leaders also need to routinely check the progress of how well pupils read and those working with pupils need to record this information routinely, so that progress can be measured accurately, and pupils learn to read fluently quickly.
- Some pupils say that staff do not consistently manage behaviour well, which means that they do not always feel safe in school. Staff are not implementing the behaviour policy consistently. Leaders need to make sure that all staff are trained to manage behaviour effectively and in line with leaders' policy. All incidents of behaviour need to be recorded and monitored, so that leaders can check whether systems in place are effective to ensure that all pupils are and feel safe in school.
- Curriculum plans do not specify the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know in each subject across each year group. Teachers plan activities that do not build on specific knowledge and skills over time. As a result, pupils do not develop a secure grasp of important knowledge. Leaders need to design a curriculum that builds on important knowledge and skills throughout the school from Reception to Year 6. They then need to provide support and guidance to teachers, so that they implement leaders' intended curriculum as leaders expect.
- Pupils with SEND are not getting the support they need to achieve well. Those in the nurture unit are not getting the specific support they need to reintegrate back into class. Leaders need to make sure that trained adults provide precise support to ensure that pupils are making positive steps towards their academic and social

and emotional goals. Leaders and teachers need to monitor support and review routinely and precisely against the targets set for each child.

Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140180
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227322
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local school board
<b>Chair of local school board</b>	Mark Carter-Tufnell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Spencer Bragg
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southminsterschool.co.uk">www.southminsterschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Southminster Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 November 2013. It is sponsored by The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2017.
- The headteacher took up post in April 2021.
- Many senior leaders and teaching staff are new to the school this academic year.
- The trust put in place a trust intervention board. This was removed during this academic year and replaced with the local school board.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, also the designated leader for safeguarding, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, designated leaders for safeguarding, and teachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, mathematics, history, and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector held meetings with six members of the local school board, the chief executive officer, the director of education and the school improvement partner from the trust.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of information, including the school's improvement plans and records of safeguarding concerns, school policies, other documents, including the single central record and minutes from the local school board and trust meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors also reviewed attendance and other information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed in 12 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, and nine free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 21 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and 80 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. An inspector spoke with several parents at the beginning of the second day.

## Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mike Wade

Ofsted Inspector

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