

Inspection of Southminster Church of England Primary School

Burnham Road, Southminster, Essex CM0 7ES

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Wendy Woods. This school is part of The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Emma Wigmore, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Charlotte Little.

What is it like to attend this school?

Southminster is a happy and nurturing place to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school. From the Reception Year, children learn how to make friends. They take turns and share with their peers. Older pupils enjoy being role models through responsibilities such as being play leaders and prefects.

Some pupils have experienced a disrupted curriculum due to poor teaching in the past. This is no longer the case. Pupils learn a varied curriculum that helps them to build on what they already know. Where they have gaps in their learning, staff help pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get effective support. Pupils know reading is important. They develop a love of reading that begins in the early years.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and take ownership of their behaviour choices. Pupils know that adults are in the school to help them. Pupils share their worries and concerns. They feel safe in school.

Pupils attend clubs and trips, but these are limited. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities to develop their talents and interests with a wider range of activities and experiences.

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

Leaders have worked diligently to make significant improvements to the school's curriculum. The approach from the trust ensures that pupils are at the centre of school improvement. The school has clear ambitions for all pupils to succeed in learning. Staff are supported with relevant training so that they have the skills they need to teach the curriculum effectively. Staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, review the impact of their support. This enables them to accurately identify the improvements needed to meet their determination for all to succeed.

The school curriculum is both broad and highly ambitious. Right from the start of early years, there are high expectations for what pupils will learn. In most subjects, the school's curriculum planning addresses where pupils have gaps in learning due to historical poor teaching. This allows for pupils to catch up quickly and focus on age-appropriate learning. Staff skilfully identify pupils' gaps in learning through regular checks in lessons. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They explain new concepts clearly for pupils. Pupils revisit prior key learning to develop their fluency. However, this is not consistent in all subjects. Sometimes, pupils struggle to recall what they have learned.

Outcomes for pupils are better now that the quality of education has rapidly improved. However, in some subjects, staff do not closely follow the plans the school has set out. This means that some pupils are not learning what is intended and develop gaps in key knowledge.

The school has implemented an effective phonics programme. The consistency in the teaching ensures that pupils have high-quality phonics sessions. Pupils learn the sounds that letters make and they apply this to their reading. Children in Reception quickly learn to read, preparing them well for the next stage of learning. Staff quickly identify pupils who need further help with reading. They then receive effective support. Regular opportunities for pupils to practise reading help them to become confident and fluent readers.

Teachers track pupils' progress closely and identify where more support is needed. Staff promptly and accurately identify pupils with SEND. Teachers ensure pupils with additional needs are well supported. Staff benefit from well-organised training. They value the opportunities to work with other leaders and staff from across the trust.

Pupils learn about ways to stay safe, including when online. They understand about healthy relationships and how their bodies change as they grow. Pupils learn about their emotions and how to regulate them through a range of strategies. This helps them to be ready for learning.

Staff know children well. The school closely monitors pupils' attendance. It works in partnership with families to improve attendance, following up absences quickly and providing effective support where necessary. Pupils behave well both in lessons and during play times. They listen carefully to instructions and persevere with their learning when it gets tricky.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, prior learning is not always recapped. This means that some pupils struggle to recall what they have learned. The school needs to strengthen retrieval practice to check that prior learning has been retained, to ensure pupils know and remember more over time.
- In some subjects, staff do not always closely follow the plans that leaders have set out. This means that some pupils are not learning what is intended and develop gaps in key knowledge. The school needs to provide staff with the relevant information to teach the curriculum effectively and carry out checks to ensure it is being taught the way it has been designed.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests are limited. The school needs to ensure that there is a wider offer for pupils to ensure that they are accessing experiences beyond the academic offer.

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	140180
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10336975
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charlotte Little
CEO of trust	Emma Wigmore
Headteacher	Wendy Woods
Website	www.southminsterschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 April 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school has a Christian character and ethos. It is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. The next section 48 inspection will be within two years.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, history and art and design. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in some other subjects, including science and personal, social, health and economic education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including those from the trust. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust board, the CEO and members of the school intervention board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Marc White	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca McCutcheon	Ofsted Inspector

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