

# Inspection of The Cathedral Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chelmsford

Victoria Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1PA

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

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

Pupils learn in a warm and friendly environment. The school's Christian ethos and values permeate the school. Pupils show respect and consideration for each other and adults. Year 6 pupils are very proud of looking after children in Reception. Pupils are clear about the meaning of right and wrong. They know that bullying is unkind and would immediately report it if they ever saw it happening.

Pupils feel safe and happy. They are enthusiastic about their learning and the 'fun' activities they do. Pupils also appreciate the many opportunities to participate in the range of sports and clubs. They enjoy performing additional leadership roles for their houses and school council.

Pupils have a mature understanding of the world around them. They enjoy debating and speak confidently about issues such as climate change. Pupils have a secure knowledge of what it means to be a good citizen.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. One parent summed up the views of many, describing the school as 'a wonderful caring school with a fantastic community'.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have sharply focused on strengthening leadership roles and developing the curriculum. Leaders have a secure understanding of their responsibilities and are driving change and improvements. There is an ambitious curriculum for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Work is well underway to ensure that the curriculum for other subjects is equally as ambitious.

Pupils are enthusiastic and speak confidently about their learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 use scientific vocabulary well when talking about pollination. Year 2 pupils speak knowledgeably about their previous learning in history about the Great Fire of London. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils' knowledge is to be built over time in most subjects. Leaders have also considered how pupils make logical connections in their learning across subjects. However, this thoughtful work is not replicated in a few subjects, such as design technology and art. There is further work to do to make sure that pupils gain key knowledge from year to year so that they understand and can do more complex practical work.

Teachers plan effective lessons in mathematics which help pupils to learn and improve. Due to interrupted time during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a greater emphasis in teachers' planning on helping pupils recall number facts. This is working. Pupils can apply their mathematical knowledge well.

Children make a good start with learning to read in Reception. The systematic teaching of reading helps children and pupils in key stage 1 to rapidly learn how to read. Books are suitably matched to pupils' reading ability. Teachers closely check pupils' progress. Staff quickly address any errors or misunderstandings so that pupils do not fall behind.

In line with national changes, leaders have recently altered the early years curriculum. They have also changed the procedures for checking how well children are learning. In reading the curriculum plans are working well. This is not the case in all areas of learning. In some areas of learning, there is not as clear a link made between the information teachers have about children's learning and what is then taught. This prevents teachers knowing exactly what children can and cannot do and what children need to learn next to achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) successfully learn the same curriculum as their peers. Staff are well trained and provide appropriate support. Leaders ensure that pupils' individual plans are user friendly and precise. Pupils have sensible goals to achieve. Teachers use the plans well to help support pupils with their learning. The special educational needs coordinator liaises effectively with parents so parents can support their children at home.

The wider development of pupils is well-considered. Leaders have thought carefully about how the school's Christian ethos is woven throughout school life, while also celebrating other religions, cultures, and traditions. The teaching of the core values of faith, as outlined in the school's vision statement, underpins the respectful behaviour of the pupils. This begins early in Reception where children learn to work well and cooperatively together. Occasionally, a few children in early years and older pupils do not follow instructions closely, such as trying to answer when a teacher has not finished asking a question.

Governors are clear about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and how well pupils achieve. Governors also hold leaders to account for the workload and well-being of staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff are well trained and use the new electronic system effectively to keep a close eye on pupils. They identify concerns quickly and seek out effective ways to support pupils. Leaders work effectively with external agencies when necessary.

Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when using online technologies. They know which applications are appropriate for them to use according to their age and which are not. Pupils know how to report concerns with online activity.

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

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

- In a small number of practical subjects, leaders have not defined the precise knowledge that they want pupils to learn. In these subjects, planning is for the phase rather than for each year group. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding do not develop in their complexity from year to year. Leaders need to ensure that all curriculum plans clearly specify the progression in knowledge from year to year so that pupils gain the knowledge and understanding they need to complete more-complex practical work.
- The new assessment system in early years does not currently identify exactly what children can and cannot do across all areas of learning. This limits teachers' ability to intervene quickly if a child starts to fall behind. Leaders should ensure the new system helps staff identify any gaps in children's knowledge, skills or understanding so these can be quickly addressed.

## 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>	115289
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10207066
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	317
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Keith Baggs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Wiskin
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cathedralschool.co.uk">www.cathedralschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 – 15 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England (Voluntary-Aided) school. It is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2019.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority, governors, leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and design technology to evaluate the quality of education. Inspectors spoke to

senior leaders and subject leaders about the curriculum. Inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils. They looked at pupils' work. They also looked at the curriculum plans for other subjects and spoke with pupils about their learning.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with pupils about how they are taught to stay safe. They spoke with staff and leaders about safeguarding. They looked at the school's policies, procedures, and records.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, such as school development plans, the school's self-evaluation summary, and information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views when talking to them in groups.
- Inspectors considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors took into account the 77 responses to Ofsted Parent View and the 54 free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Liz Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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