

Inspection of a good school: Mountnessing Church of England Primary School

279 Roman Road, Mountnessing, Brentwood, Essex CM15 0UH

Inspection date:

15 September 2022

Outcome

Mountnessing Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are proud to be members of a school community where everyone is valued. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. They are eager to share their knowledge. They like to explain how their learning connects across different subjects. Pupils benefit from a broad and rich curriculum. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils are friendly and polite. Relationships between pupils and adults are respectful. Pupils respond well to staff members' high expectations. Pupils listen carefully in lessons. They share their thoughts and reflect on each other's ideas. Pupils participate well in discussion and debate. Pupils recognise how the school's values help prepare them for life beyond school. Pupils contribute positively to the life of the school and the wider community.

Pupils are happy in school and feel safe. They are confident that adults will always listen to any worries they may have. Pupils trust adults to help them sort out disagreements at an early stage. Consequently, bullying is rare.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the regular communications that help keep them up to date. They value the school's caring ethos in which their children thrive.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum. They have identified the knowledge and understanding that pupils should gain in each subject from Reception Year to Year 6. The curriculum is ambitious across a broad range of subjects. Teachers adapt the curriculum appropriately so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well alongside their peers. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Leaders have designed the curriculum so that teachers plan lessons that build on what pupils have learned before. Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They support staff well to teach the curriculum. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. Teachers usually plan lessons that enable pupils to practise and apply what they have learned. This helps pupils to secure their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Occasionally, teachers deviate from the sequence of learning that leaders have planned. This happens when teachers are not clear about why the curriculum is sequenced in this way, or when teachers do not consider carefully enough the knowledge that pupils need in order to complete a particular task. In these lessons, pupils do not learn or apply knowledge as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise reading across the school. Older pupils talk with interest about the books they read in school. Pupils learn the knowledge they need that helps them appreciate stories that are set in another place or time. Leaders have introduced a new programme to teach phonics and early reading. This builds on the effective provision that was already in place. Children begin learning to read when they join the school in the Reception class. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read, read books that are closely matched to the sounds they are learning. Pupils who are less confident readers are given extra support to help them catch up. All staff have received training to deliver the new phonics and early reading programme. Leaders recognise that staff need further guidance to implement the approaches of the new programme consistently and confidently. This is particularly important when staff are supporting less fluent readers.

The curriculum and wider opportunities support pupils' wider development well. Through extracurricular clubs, pupils develop their interests in different sports and the creative arts. School visits are planned so that they deepen pupils' learning and broaden their experience. Pupils confidently discuss their learning about different cultures, traditions and beliefs. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, and the importance of tolerance and respect.

Governors and the trust coordinate their work effectively. They work strategically with school leaders to support the growth and development of the school. Governors and the trust are rigorous in holding leaders to account for the positive difference they are making to improve the quality of education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create a culture of safeguarding. All staff receive regular and relevant training. This helps keep their knowledge up to date. Staff are vigilant. Staff know how to recognise the signs of potential abuse and what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders maintain clear records. Leaders are persistent in ensuring that pupils and families get the support they need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

All the necessary checks are carried out before staff are appointed to work at the school. Governors and the trust ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are developing their confidence in implementing the new phonics and early reading programme based on the training they have received. Some staff are not applying the approaches of the new programme consistently, particularly when they are supporting less confident readers. Leaders should ensure that staff continue to receive guidance and support to deliver the programme consistently well so that all pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers.
- Sometimes, teachers plan lessons that do not follow the sequence of learning that leaders have planned. When this happens, pupils do not achieve well because teachers have not made sure that these lessons build on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders should ensure that staff are clear about the sequence of learning and how this builds on pupils' previous learning in each subject. Leaders should provide the guidance that staff need to implement the planned curriculum effectively in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Mountnessing Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, to be good in March 2016.

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](#)' 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

Unique reference number	145773
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10238302
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Barton
Headteacher	Holly Obank
Website	www.mountnessing.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust, which consists of two primary schools. The school converted to become an academy in May 2018.
- The school is in the Diocese of Chelmsford. The most recent inspection of the predecessor school's religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in June 2016.
- The school is a member of the Brentwood Collaborative Partnership, which includes 17 primary schools in the Brentwood area.
- The school is gradually expanding to become a one-form-entry school. In September 2020, the pupil admission numbers increased from 15 to 30 pupils. There are single year-group classes in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2. At the time of the inspection, pupils in key stage 2 were being taught in mixed-year classes. Additional classrooms to accommodate the planned increase in pupil numbers have been built on the school site.
- There are no pupils attending alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club that operates under a separate registration.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 met with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, and the inclusion coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors, the vice-chair of the trust and a member of the governing body who is also a trustee. The lead inspector also met with the trust's chief executive officer, who is also the executive headteacher of Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School. The lead inspector held a discussion on the telephone with the school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art. 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 discussed the arrangements to safeguard pupils with school leaders, including governors and trustees. Inspectors spoke with staff about the training they receive to keep their knowledge of safeguarding up to date. Inspectors spoke with pupils to establish the extent to which they feel safe in school and how pupils learn to keep themselves safe, including when online. Inspectors scrutinised documentation and records of safeguarding concerns and how these are followed up. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors considered the feedback from 45 parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 31 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke with staff and with pupils to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dan Lambert

His Majesty's Inspector

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