

Inspection of Minerva Primary School

Outer Circle, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2BU

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of their school. They have positive attitudes toward learning. Staff give pupils the confidence to not give up when they find learning tricky. Pupils' resilience is developing well.

The school values courage, compassion and collaboration. Pupils remember and understand these values. Pupils believe that everyone should be treated fairly. They say they feel safe in school. There is always an adult to talk with if they have worries.

Parents and carers say their children are happy and enjoy going to school. Pupils attend school regularly. They know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils enjoy taking part in the daily mile. They like the wide range of after-school clubs on offer, such as netball, chess and tag-rugby. Years 5 and 6 pupils value the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility. For example, pupils are lunchtime monitors, school councillors and science ambassadors.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning. Nonetheless, leaders' ambitions are not fully actioned across all subjects. Pupils have gaps in their wider curriculum subject knowledge. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve as well as they could.

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

Leaders have developed a clearly sequenced curriculum in English and mathematics from Nursery Year through to Year 6. They have identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and remember.

Children are introduced to a variety of high-quality texts from the moment they join the school. Staff select books to match learning activities effectively. For example, children in Nursery Year listen to and recreate 'The Train Ride' in their play.

Staff implement the phonics programme well. Pupils' phonic knowledge is secure. For example, pupils can correctly identify, say and write the letter sounds. Reading books match pupils' phonic knowledge well. Pupils segment and blend words with increasing confidence and accuracy. Pupils who need additional support to develop their reading fluency and comprehension are quickly spotted. A 'bridging' group gives pupils extra practice to build these skills well.

This is not the case for all subject areas. Subject leadership is not well developed in the wider curriculum. As a result, some curriculum content is not clearly identified or structured in clear, achievable steps. Where content is not clear, teachers do not know what essential knowledge should be taught. As a result, some learning activities are not suitable. For example, pupils in Year 1 are introduced to compass points before some secure their vocabulary and knowledge of position and direction.

These activities do not enable pupils to achieve the intended learning outcome. Pupils do not know more and remember more over time.

In the core subjects, teachers quickly spot when pupils need additional help. Pupils get the support they need through regular phonics practice and 'maths on track' sessions. This helps them to secure their knowledge. However, leaders do not know where pupils have gaps in their knowledge in some wider curriculum subjects. In the early years, staff do not consider children's starting points when planning learning. As a result, gaps in knowledge and misconceptions increase over time.

Most pupils with SEND have individual targets that reflect their needs. Nevertheless, some targets are not precise. As a result, teaching and resources are not adapted effectively to meet the needs of those pupils. When this occurs, some pupils with SEND are not supported sufficiently well.

Staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly way. Some pupils need extra help to learn how to understand and manage their feelings. Staff are quick to spot pupils who need additional support. These pupils work with staff in the school's nurture provision, The Roost. This leads to productive learning in class and enjoyable playtimes.

Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being and personal development. They plan opportunities carefully to help pupils develop skills for life. For example, the weekly sports activities build pupils' understanding of fair play and sharing. Pupils use the school's values to make the right choices in life. They understand the importance of democracy and respect. Pupils know about different cultures and religions from across the world. They are developing their knowledge and experience of life in modern Britain.

Leaders' work 'beyond the school gates', with families and the local community is a strength of the school. For example, their work with families has successfully improved pupils' attendance. Years 3 and 4 pupils learn to be 'mini police' with members of the local police force. Pupils learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

Leaders, including trustees, know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They welcome advice and support from appropriate external agencies to develop their effectiveness as strategic leaders. They are considerate of staff's well-being. Staff feel valued and appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The appropriate checks are carried out before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. Trustees regularly monitor these safeguarding records. Staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training and updates. This helps them to understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities well.

Leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of support for the school's most vulnerable pupils. They escalate concerns should they be unhappy with the response from an external service.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online, at home and in the local community. They say they feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The essential knowledge leaders want pupils to know and remember in some foundation subjects has not been identified. Consequently, teachers do not plan learning that helps pupils to secure and build their knowledge of important concepts over time. Leaders need to identify this essential knowledge in some foundation subjects.
- Some pupils with SEND do not have helpful information and precise targets in their individual education plans. This means staff are not able to plan and resource the provision to meet pupils' needs accurately. Leaders need to ensure that targets for pupils with SEND are precise and provision is consistently matched to their needs.
- The role of the subject leader is not sufficiently well developed. They do not have the knowledge and skills required to raise the standards of education across all subjects. Leaders need to ensure subject leaders support teachers to improve their subject knowledge and select appropriate learning activities across all subject areas.

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

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| Unique reference number | 143143 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10227515 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 130 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Tess Gale |
| Headteacher | Gareth Nation |
| Website | www.minervaprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 14 January 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Minerva Primary School and Nursery is part of the Redstart Learning Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- The head of school started working at the school in September 2021.
- The assistant head of school joined the school in January 2022. The special educational needs coordinator joined in April 2022.
- The school uses the multi-academy trust's on-site alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This was the fourth routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19

pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the head of school, senior leaders, staff, pupils, the chief executive officer, the chair of the trust, a link trustee and the associate head of accelerated learning.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and spoke with pupils and subject leaders about personal, social and health education.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding practices.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff. There were no pupil survey responses.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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