

Inspection of Fordham All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Road, Fordham, Colchester, Essex CO6 3NN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Mostly, pupils enjoy their lessons at Fordham All Saints. They enjoy learning about different religions and the topics they study in history. Pupils show respect and understanding of people who are different to them. Pupils like having opportunities to share their own views and beliefs. They know these will be respected in school. Pupils are proud to represent the school in sporting events such as football tournaments.

Pupils behave well during some lessons and in the school dining hall. Though most pupils understand the new expectations for their behaviour, staff apply them inconsistently. This shows in a small minority of pupils who disrupt the learning of others by calling out during lessons and in how a small number of pupils respond to and treat staff in the school.

Pupils know there are staff they can talk to if they are worried about something. They are confident staff will help them to deal with any problems they have. This includes when pupils fall out with friends or are worried that bullying is happening. So, pupils feel safe in school. However, leaders do not manage safeguarding concerns well enough. This puts pupils at risk of harm outside of school.

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

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not ensured they adhere to statutory duties when recording and following up on concerns about pupils. Leaders do not always check up on concerns and actions to be taken or, if they do, they do not do this swiftly enough to safeguard pupils well. The local authority has established an improvement board to support governors. However, there is a lack of rigour in the monitoring of safeguarding processes and new initiatives to support school improvement that leaders have introduced in the school.

Leaders have recently updated the curriculum. However, some of these changes have not been managed well. Some teachers do not use effective checks on pupils' understanding of what they have learned. This means that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils also have misconceptions. Some teachers do not adapt their teaching to account for what pupils have learned before. Some pupils lack the knowledge and skills they need to access current learning.

Similarly to the rest of the school, in early years, what children know and remember is not checked well enough to accurately inform future learning. Where children complete activities matched to what they know and can do, they achieve better. However, there are occasions where the activities teachers plan are not precisely matched to children's previous learning. This means children do not get the opportunity to secure and build on new learning.

Where subject leaders are new to post, they have not identified issues about how effectively teachers check what pupils know in their monitoring. So, teachers have

not received the support they need to teach the new curriculum successfully.

Leaders have recently introduced new approaches to the teaching of early reading. As with the rest of the curriculum, staff require support to adapt the curriculum to the needs of all pupils. When they teach sounds and words, they do not always spot those pupils not joining in. This makes it hard for these staff to know if all pupils are keeping up with the learning. Children in the early years begin learning to read straight away. They quickly learn the sounds that letters make. Children have opportunities to listen to stories and rhymes and this helps to develop their vocabulary. Teachers identify pupils who find reading difficult. Pupils then receive support to help them read fluently.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience the same issues in the curriculum as their peers. However, some of the targeted support pupils receive works better. This is because the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) trains staff well to support pupils with SEND. The SENCo actively seeks help from other professionals. Staff use advice and strategies offered by these professionals effectively in class. For example, they use specific interventions to help pupils develop their confidence and resilience.

Alongside changes to the curriculum, leaders have recently introduced new policies and procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. Leaders have not checked how well they are working. This means they do not have a clear understanding of some of the inconsistencies in behaviour that exist and where pupils' behaviour is not as good as it should be.

Leaders are extending how they promote pupils' personal development. They have had success with this. Pupils understand what healthy relationships are. Pupils relish the opportunities they have to hold positions of responsibility. They develop their confidence in speaking in front of an audience by presenting speeches as prospective school councillors and house captains. This also helps to teach pupils about democracy. Prayer leaders enjoy the opportunities they get to lead collective worship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

There are serious weaknesses in leaders' following of statutory duties to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding records relating to concerns raised about pupils do not meet statutory requirements. Leaders do not consistently record the actions they take to keep pupils safe. This means it is unclear whether there has been any follow-up on concerns raised by staff. In some instances, pupils and staff then raise the same concerns.

Leaders ensure they complete all required pre-employment checks on adults when they join the school.

The curriculum content ensures pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not follow statutory guidance for keeping children safe. Safeguarding records are not clear and comprehensive and do not detail how concerns are followed up. Leaders must ensure that all concerns are followed up and that actions taken are appropriate, done swiftly and recorded accurately.
- There is a lack of rigour in how governors monitor the curriculum and wider school systems, such as attendance and safeguarding. This means governors cannot assure themselves that school leaders' evaluation is accurate and their plans for school improvement are working well. Governors must ensure they receive the training that allows them to determine how best to challenge and support school leaders to effect change successfully.
- Assessment is not used consistently well across the school, including in early years, to identify what pupils know and can do. This means that teachers do not identify and address where pupils are less secure in their understanding or have misconceptions. Leaders must ensure that all teachers know how to check pupils' understanding effectively to plan learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge and addresses any misconceptions pupils have.
- The curriculum that leaders have put in place is very new. Leaders must ensure that all subject leaders are able to monitor the implementation of the curriculum in their subjects so they can support staff with the teaching of the curriculum.
- Leaders have recently reviewed their approaches to behaviour. There are inconsistencies in the setting of expectations and application of the new approaches from staff. This means there are occasions of disruption in classes and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Leaders must ensure there is a consistent approach to behaviour and expectations so that pupils know, understand and follow leaders' expectations and behaviour incidents reduce.

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	115078
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10242260
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Smith
Headteacher	Julie Ingram (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.allsaints-fordham.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2008

Information about this school

- Fordham All Saints is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was in March 2018, and it will receive its next inspection within eight years of that date.
- There have been significant changes to staff and governors in recent years.
- An improvement board was established by the local authority in February 2022 to support governors.
- The executive headteacher leads another local school.
- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. A separately registered and inspected childcare provider runs it.
- School leaders do not currently make use of 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 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks of adults at the school, a local authority audit of safeguarding and a sample of child protection files. Inspectors also spoke with governors, a representative from the local authority, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding practices at the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the SENCo, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, minutes of improvement board meetings, records of governor visits to the school, school improvement plans and school policies.
- There were 45 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 33 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered correspondence received from parents during the inspection.
- There were 47 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Shadbolt

Ofsted Inspector

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