

Inspection of Meonstoke Church of England Infant School

Chapel Road, Meonstoke, Southampton, Hampshire SO32 3NJ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

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

This 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?

Pupils are happy, and love their school. They have a good understanding of their school values of 'love, respect and courage', and this is demonstrated through the warm and caring relationships around the school. These values underpin the curriculum and are threaded through everything pupils do in their learning. Pupils feel safe, and know whom they can go to if they have any worries or concerns.

The school behaviour rules of 'ready, respectful and safe' are clearly understood by all pupils, who use the rules in everyday situations. One parent commented that her child uses them at home as well. Pupils said that behaviour was good and that everyone was kind. Pupils who may find self-regulation a challenge are well supported by leaders and staff. Pupils said that bullying does not happen and feel that any friendship fallings out would be quickly sorted out by staff. They are confident that teachers would help them if needed.

Relationships are warm and caring between pupils. They play well together at breaktimes. There are many activities pupils can choose from, such as Lego, car racing tracks and reading, to engage their imaginations.

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

Leaders have mapped out an ambitious curriculum that caters for all pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have great subject knowledge and a passion for the subjects they lead. They have carefully considered how skills and knowledge are built on over time. Leaders quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND and ensure that they are well supported in class. The design of the curriculum incorporates 'growing time' for all pupils to ensure that they all keep up. There are also daily basic skills sessions for recapping prior learning, which help all pupils remember more.

The curriculum development and design have been completed recently, which means that teaching in some subjects is not as effective as it is in others. Where there are strengths, such as in mathematics, science and English, pupils' work is of a higher quality. In other foundation subjects, the planning is clearly ambitious, but not as fully embedded as it is in the core subjects. There is variability in the quality of work pupils produce in these subjects as a result.

Reading is of high importance in this school. Children learn phonics from the moment they enter Reception class. Leaders ensure wider opportunities are available for parents and children to understand phonics and develop a love of reading. This starts as soon as a place is offered in the summer term, before children start school, and continues with workshops and additional support. The books pupils read are carefully matched to sounds, and there are daily opportunities to read and talk about books. Teachers ensure that there are no gaps, and will intervene and reinforce learning if needed.

Children in Reception do not do well enough in most areas of learning, despite the strong start they make when learning to read. The federation early years leader is ambitious, and driven to design the best possible curriculum for all children. However, this is not being implemented well enough in this school. Staff do not have a thorough understanding of early years practice that underpins learning. As a result, children do not make a strong start to their school journey. However, relationships are warm and caring in the Reception class and children are supportive of each other.

Leaders and staff ensure pupils have a broad curriculum offer that supports their mental and physical health. Pupils understand how they are feeling, and share that with adults in school. Pupils have many opportunities to be active, completing physical activities during learning time. They have a broad understanding of how physical activity keeps you happy. Pupils also clearly understand differences, and know to respect everyone no matter where they come from or how different they are.

Leaders and governors have worked to develop a new leadership structure across the federation. As a result, leaders have begun to ensure consistency for the curriculum and the pupils at this school. Staff have a wide training offer and value the time they are given to carry out their subject leader roles. Staff feel their work-life balance is supported, and are all proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a clear culture across staff and governors whereby they are fully aware of their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff receive yearly training, but also receive regular, weekly updates of important information. Leaders keep robust records, and follow up concerns quickly and tenaciously. Governors assure themselves through audits and visits that safeguarding practices are embedded.

Through the curriculum, pupils are given knowledge which strengthens their understanding of keeping safe. Pupils know not to share personal information online and know that there are people who could help them if required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Children in early years are not achieving as well as they could. The learning needs of children in early years are not underpinned by effective early years pedagogy and practice. Leaders should enable staff to develop their expertise in early years pedagogy and provide clear teaching sequences to improve learning and outcomes for children.

- The curriculum design is relatively new, so pupils have not developed detailed knowledge across the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in some subjects. This is reflected in some of the work they produce. Leaders must ensure the full breadth of the curriculum is implemented across all subjects as effectively as in English, mathematics and science, so that pupils retain the key knowledge that has been set out.

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	116301
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10242310
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Carter
Executive headteacher	Emma Howell
Website	www.meonvalleyfederation.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 January 2009

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Newtown Soberton Infant School and shares a governing body. The school has a religious character and is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth. The last section 48 inspection was in February 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club on site.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out four deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the federation teaching and learning leads for early years and key stage 1, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and subject leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents provided by the school.
- An inspector met with representatives from the governing board, the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors met with pupils, parents and staff and also took into consideration the feedback from Ofsted questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.

Inspection team

Simon Woodbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Bulmer

Ofsted Inspector

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