

Inspection of Sheering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street, Sheering, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7LU

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. They are keen to share their views and ideas. Pupils enjoy receiving praise and want to celebrate their successes. They like to learn and try hard to complete their work.

When teaching is well planned and teachers explain the task clearly, pupils achieve and feel a sense of pride in their work. This happens, for instance, in phonics lessons, when pupils write words and sentences. However, often, pupils do not know what to do as learning tasks are unclear.

Teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils. During lessons, pupils talk at the same time as each other and many are not encouraged to show good listening skills. Consequently, teachers find it difficult to teach well. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often, but if it does, teachers help them to sort it out.

Some pupils in the school have social and emotional needs. These pupils have support from familiar adults who know them well and help them with their feelings. Pupils enjoy the clubs they can take part in and they like getting points on reward charts. However, teachers do not use these consistently to develop positive behaviour.

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

Leaders have designed the curriculum for all subjects. This is developed from the national curriculum and includes ideas that leaders feel are important. For instance, pupils learn about different cultures and compare these to the local area. Topics have themes and 'big questions.' These are interesting and pupils ask questions about what they want to learn.

Curriculum documentation for some subjects lacks detail. Teachers are sometimes unclear about the knowledge that pupils need to be taught in each lesson. Consequently, pupils are not sure what they need to do. Teachers do not adapt what they teach for the varying needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. As a result, some pupils find the work too easy while others find it quite tricky. Teachers do not correct pupils' misconceptions. This means that pupils do not learn what they need to.

The teaching of early reading and phonics is prioritised. Pupils regularly practise the sounds they are learning. Teachers check pupils' reading knowledge regularly. Pupils who fall behind have more time for learning with 'keep up' and 'catch up' sessions. Pupils read books that match their phonics knowledge. This helps pupils to learn to read accurately and with understanding. Pupils enjoy reading and sharing books. However, in phonics lessons, pupils do not show good listening skills. This slows down the pace of the lesson and means that valuable learning time is lost, which slows pupils' progress.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. They have learning plans that identify any extra support they need. Where necessary, reasonable adjustments help pupils with SEND with their learning.

Leaders in the early years create interesting environments for children. Staff are attentive to children's needs, so they are well looked after and feel safe. Children have opportunities to develop their early reading and mathematics knowledge. However, as children develop their independence skills, some need more adult support to stay on task.

Pupils learn about discrimination and how to stand up for themselves and others. They understand that families can be made up of different individuals.

Leaders have established a programme to teach pupils to think about how their behaviour and attitudes may impact on others. However, for quite a few pupils, these skills are not developed to an age-appropriate level. Teachers are not consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour, such as listening to others in class. This means that some pupils' learning is disrupted by others. Teachers do not use the school's approach to promoting positive behaviour consistently.

Leaders and governors have development plans in place that identify priorities for improvement. However, governors do not check effectively that leaders' actions to achieve these priorities are making the difference intended. This means that weaknesses that leaders and governors have identified are not being checked. Leaders and governors ensure that staff well-being and workload are given a high priority. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff have up-to-date and relevant safeguarding training. Staff understand what needs to be referred to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and how to do this. The DSL ensures that pupils get the help they need to stay safe, including from outside agencies when necessary.

Staff are aware of the local and national safeguarding challenges that may affect the pupils in the school. Pupils understand how to stay safe online.

All required safer recruitment checks are undertaken thoroughly and recorded accurately. Governors review the record of these checks regularly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In too many subjects, leaders' curriculum plans do not detail the subject-specific learning that pupils need. Pupils do not learn the knowledge and skills they need and it is hard for teachers to assess pupils' understanding. Leaders need to ensure that all plans identify clearly the knowledge pupils need to learn and that teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and use this to adapt their teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of general behaviour and conduct are not high enough. Some pupils' learning is disrupted because they are not able to listen to and learn from the teachers. Teachers do not respond to this in a consistently effective or timely way. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers share high expectations of behaviour. They should ensure that the whole-school approach to behaviour management is understood and used consistently by staff.
- Leaders and governors do not have effective monitoring systems in place. Governors are not holding leaders to account for the quality of education they provide. Governors need to check that leaders' actions are resulting in the improvements intended, so that they can better support and challenge school leaders.

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	115099
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240994
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	103
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Townsend
Headteacher	Lorna Brittain
Website	www.sheering.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision to meet the needs of pupils.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in December 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher. The lead inspector also spoke with a school effectiveness partner from the local authority.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, the finance manager, some pupils and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and records of racist incidents.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with 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.
- Inspectors considered the 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons, as well as observing the behaviour of pupils across the school site.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Fykin

Ofsted Inspector

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