

Inspection of Eastchurch Church of England Primary School

Warden Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4EJ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy and motivated at this school. Both pupils and staff have a strong understanding of the school values of love, respect, honesty, courage, kindness and forgiveness. They demonstrate these throughout the school day. Leaders have created a highly inclusive school where pupils know everyone is welcome.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have created a calm and positive environment where pupils can learn. As a result, most pupils behave exceptionally well, both in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes. Where pupils do not meet these expectations, leaders make sure they are provided with effective support to improve. Pupils overwhelmingly make the right choices and are polite and respectful to each other, to staff and to visitors.

Leaders also have high expectations of what pupils should learn. However, pupils do not learn to read quickly enough. Furthermore, children in Reception are not well prepared for the next stages of their learning. They have not made the expected progress and do not all have the knowledge they need to be successful.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about these, including their work at the forest school and 'Fabulous Fridays'.

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. They have made significant changes to the curriculum and are determined to make further improvements. Some of the more recent changes are beginning to show impact. Others are still in their infancy. Subject leaders are knowledgeable about their curriculum and have identified the knowledge and skills pupils need to be successful. They have carefully sequenced this over time. This is particularly the case in mathematics, and pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned. Leaders also have high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers adapt the learning to meet pupils' needs effectively. Where these pupils need additional support, this is provided quickly.

However, leaders' actions in some instances have not been swift enough. This is especially the case with early reading and provision in the early years. This means there are a significant number of pupils who have not been taught to read with accuracy and fluency. Leaders are beginning to take steps to address this and some improvements can be seen. Pupils who need support to catch up have not received this quickly enough though. These pupils are not always given the right opportunities to practise what they need precisely or regularly enough. Leaders have not monitored this progress carefully and do not yet have systems in place to provide this additional support.

Although the children in early years behave well and are motivated to learn, they are not all well prepared for their next steps. Leaders have not made sure children are provided with the right foundations for learning to read and that they are taught the knowledge and vocabulary needed for a range of subjects. Links between the early years and the key stage 1 curriculum are not clear. Leaders have ambitious plans for how this provision will be developed, but this is not yet fully in place.

Leaders are aware that not all pupils attend school regularly enough. They have taken effective steps to address this, including making adaptations to how the curriculum is delivered. This means rapid improvements can be seen and more pupils are attending school regularly. Leaders are continuing to build on these successes as they recognise the importance of pupils being in school.

Leaders have created an ambitious and thoughtful programme for personal development. They are rightly proud of the work they have done. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, different faiths and their own roles in the wider world. They can talk confidently about what they have learned. Pupils have taken part in a number of trips and events and have learned about the work of different charities. Leaders are committed to providing pupils with a breadth of experiences which are woven throughout the curriculum, including art days which draw together different aspects of the curriculum and develop pupils' cultural capital.

Staff are well supported by leaders and the trust. The trust has provided extensive support for the school. Subject leaders, many of whom are new, have especially benefited from this. Staff and parents recognise there have been some significant improvements in recent months. There is still further work to be done to ensure parents are kept informed about some of these changes, so they can continue to support the work of the school. Governors and trustees are alert to staff workload and make effective adjustments as needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed clear and robust systems for safeguarding. The trust makes regular and thorough checks on the processes which are in place, as do governors. Leaders carefully identify where there may be risk and act quickly to provide any support that is needed. They have also ensured all staff are well trained and know how to report concerns. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online, and who to talk to if anything worries them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not systematically checked that pupils are taught how to read effectively. They have also not provided the right support for pupils who have fallen behind to catch up with their peers. This means that pupils are not learning to read quickly enough and many pupils are not able to access the full curriculum. Leaders need to urgently ensure that pupils are provided with the right teaching and opportunities to practise so they can learn to read with accuracy and fluency. They need to make sure pupils are provided with additional support to catch up as soon as possible.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum in early years is providing the knowledge and skills children need to move on. Children at this early stage are therefore not well prepared for their next steps. This includes them not having the foundations to be able to read with accuracy. Leaders need to develop a curriculum which provides what pupils need to be successful at key stage 1.

How can I feedback 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	148118
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268275
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Wetherell
Headteacher	Naomi Ivory
Website	www.eastchurch.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust in September 2020.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its last Section 48 inspection took place in May 2023.
- The school is governed by a trust board and by a local governing body with delegated powers.
- Until April of 2023, the school was divided across two sites. It is now on a single site having demerged from the other part of the school which is now a separate provision.
- The school uses one alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery provision on site that is run by the school.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first inspection of the school since joining the academy trust.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector 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, other school leaders, teaching staff, the chair and vice chair of the local governing body and a representative from the Board of Trustees. They also met with the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early 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 also spoke to other subject leaders and looked at planning and sampled work from these subjects. They spoke to a range of pupils for about their learning in these areas.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to behaviour, attendance and SEND.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads. The single central record was also scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding records.
- The inspector considered the view of pupils, parents and staff through discussions during the inspection and the Ofsted surveys. They also spoke to parents directly.

Inspection team

Zoe Enser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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