Inspection of Bulphan Church of England Academy

Fen Lane, Bulphan, Essex RM14 3RL

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Gina Bailey. This school is part of Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Emma Wigmore, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Caroline Haynes. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at Bulphan Church of England Academy. They value the positive relationships they build with their peers and the staff who help them. Pupils show the value of friendship in how well they play together on the playground. They particularly enjoy using their new play equipment.

The school's values and ethos are important to pupils. Pupils live these values in all they do. They reflect deeply on how their actions affect their community. This helps to inspire pupils to be the best they can be. It also helps pupils to reach the high expectations the school sets for them.

Pupils' personal development is planned for comprehensively. Pupils learn about different cultures, countries and religions. As a result, pupils share and celebrate differences. There are a wide range of trips and workshops for pupils to enjoy. These are carefully planned to enhance pupils' classroom learning.

Older pupils learn the importance of responsibility through the opportunities the school provides them to take on many leadership roles. They do this with enthusiasm. Pupils have an active voice in the school. This has brought about positive changes, such as a more structured approach at lunchtime with a greater variety of planned activities.

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

Across subjects, the school has identified the most important knowledge pupils need to understand. In most subjects, the school has further broken this knowledge down into precise chunks. They have ordered this knowledge into a logical sequence. This helps teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it. Here, pupils build their knowledge over time. In a few subjects, the school has not broken this knowledge down into precise enough steps. As a result, teachers are less clear about the small steps of knowledge pupils need. This can lead to missed opportunities to secure learning.

Teachers check how well pupils are learning to identify misconceptions and revisit important concepts. This helps pupils understand important knowledge. They make links between what they are learning and what they already know. The school has not identified the key vocabulary they want the pupils to know. This means that some pupils cannot fully explain their understanding. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND precisely. This enables staff to make bespoke adaptations to learning or provide targeted interventions. This helps pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their peers.

Reading is a high priority. Staff are experts at teaching phonics. They check that pupils remember the sounds they have learned. This helps pupils to read and spell new words. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Staff support pupils who need extra help. This helps pupils to become fluent readers. Pupils enjoy reading and are exposed to a wide range of books. They read and share these at school and home.

There is a coherently planned early years curriculum. Children receive the teaching that is suitable for them. Staff promote a love of books by reading key texts with children. Staff regularly revisit learning, which helps children secure their understanding. Children learn to be independent, cooperate and play well together.

Pupils understand the school rules of 'be kind, be safe, be the best you can be'. They know this is the right way to behave and model this consistently. Leaders have robust systems in place to secure good attendance. They ensure that early help for families is effective. This is reducing persistent absence levels in the school.

The personal development offer and ethos of the school enable pupils to develop their character, interests and talents. Pupils embrace opportunities to take part in school and local events. They are an integral part of the Bulphan village community. They raise money for local and national events. For example, the pupil parliament organised a fundraising event to create an outdoor classroom. Leadership roles support pupils to be resilient and independent. Pupils demonstrate their understanding that everyone is unique and that this should be shared and celebrated. Pupils across the school know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts. They understand what it means to be a responsible citizen.

The trust knows the school very well. They hold leaders to account through challenge and support. Staff are happy working in the school. There is a real family and community feel to everything they do. They are well looked after by leaders and appreciate the support from the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not broken knowledge down into precise enough steps. As a result, teachers are not always clear about the small steps of knowledge pupils need to understand. This can lead to missed opportunities for pupils to secure this important knowledge. The school should ensure that plans outline what key knowledge pupils need to secure and in what order this should happen.

- The school has not identified the key vocabulary they want pupils to know. This means that some pupils do not fully develop their understanding of important knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should develop a more consistent approach to teaching subject-specific vocabulary to deepen pupils' learning.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144603
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10323777
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Caroline Haynes
CEO	Emma Wigmore
Executive Headteacher	Gina Bailey
Website	www.bulphanprimary.thurrock.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 January 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school. In 2017, it became part of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust.
- The school has a different headteacher since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher took up post in January 2024.
- The school is a Church of England school. The school's most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act was in 2019 and it will receive its next inspection within five years of that date.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, support staff, the chief executive officer, members of the local governing body and trustees.
- There were 26 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey. Inspectors met with staff and pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Nina Kemp, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alice Early	Ofsted Inspector

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