

Terling Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

New Road, Terling, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 2PN

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, governors, the local authority and the diocese have failed to stem a decline in standards over recent years. Pupils do not make the progress that they should by the end of key stage 2.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been high turnover in leadership and staffing at the school. This has hindered leaders' capacity to bring sustained improvements in teaching, learning and the curriculum.
- Governors do not all have the same understanding about the weaknesses in teaching and learning. They do not challenge leaders and the local authority effectively about standards in the school.
- Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make good progress over time, both socially and academically.
- Teaching, learning and assessment, and the achievement of pupils are not yet consistently good. Although staffing is now more stable, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, especially in mathematics, which have yet to be fully addressed.
- Some subject leaders' work to raise standards in subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet fully embedded. It is too early to see the impact of this work.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, governors and staff are working relentlessly to bring about improvements. Despite significant staffing issues, they have maintained the daily running of the school remarkably well.
- Children in the early years get a very good start to their education. They learn, behave and achieve well.
- Pupils feel safe, well supported and happy at the school. They love learning, and build strong relationships with staff, despite staff changes. They behave well and act as positive role models for one another.
- Staff are positive about the changes being brought by leaders. They are diligent and committed to doing their best for pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, governors, the local authority and the diocese to work collaboratively and collectively to raise standards in leadership and management by:
 - continuing to build leaders' capacity to sustain and build upon improvements rapidly
 - improving the quality of governance so all governors bring a high level of rigour and challenge to leaders
 - sharpening the guidance for staff about how they are meeting the social and academic needs of pupils with SEND and checking that it is implemented consistently
 - further developing subject leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the wider curriculum.
- Increase the progress pupils make by the end of key stage 2 by:
 - identifying and providing timely and effective support to pupils to bridge gaps in their knowledge and understanding, most notably but not exclusively in mathematics
 - developing staff expectations and knowledge about what pupils should be achieving by the end of key stage 2, especially in mathematics and the wider curriculum, so that they plan more effective learning opportunities
 - ensuring that adults use effective strategies to support and meet the precise needs of pupils with SEND so that they achieve well and are better prepared for the next stage of their education.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, governors, the local authority and the diocese have been unable to maintain the outstanding standard of education identified in 2013. High turnover in leadership and staffing, and difficulty in recruiting new teachers, has a negative impact on pupils' progress in key stage 2 since the previous inspection.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has resorted to undertaking additional teaching to cover lessons for a short period to reduce the potential underperformance of pupils. Although this intervention made a positive difference to the day-to-day running of the school, it has limited her capacity to undertake other essential strategic work.
- The appointment of the deputy headteacher in September has not brought the intended additional capacity to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Since January, she has stepped up as acting headteacher to cover the headteacher's absence. In this new role, she is maintaining the positive atmosphere and daily running of the school incredibly well. However, she does not have time or sufficient support to undertake the essential strategic work to raise standards quickly.
- The local authority and diocese have given support and challenged leaders and governors about weaknesses. However, leaders and governors do not agree that this help has been transparent or precise enough in the guidance that they have received to build long-term capacity in leadership and management.
- Owing to the range and complexity of issues, leaders' actions to raise standards in key stage 2 have not secured rapid enough improvements. Pupils' achievement and progress by the end of Year 6 has been too variable since the previous inspection and remains so for current pupils.
- The acting headteacher has identified that pupils with SEND are not making the progress academically and socially that they should. Staff do not receive precise guidance to support pupils effectively in lessons. For those who have more complex needs, adults look after these pupils well on a daily basis but do not review over time whether their support is meeting their needs well enough.
- Leaders prioritise and provide a curriculum for pupils where they engage in a variety of subjects, extra-curricular clubs, trips, visits and music tuition. To develop this further, and strengthen leadership capacity, the headteacher has reallocated responsibilities for some subjects to staff this year. Leaders have identified that the monitoring and curriculum development of these subjects is still work in progress, especially for those subject leaders who are new to their roles.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is being used effectively to develop more opportunities to pupils to access a wider variety of sports and fitness, both in lessons, in competition and in extra-curricular clubs. Lots of pupils engage in these opportunities. Leaders are using the funding this year to provide more staff with the necessary skills to teach PE effectively.
- The pupil premium funding has been allocated appropriately to finance the work of the learning mentor. This is particularly effective in supporting those disadvantaged pupils

who require intensive support to manage their emotions, behaviour and social needs, and who need additional one-to-one tuition. However, leaders do not know enough about how well this funding is meeting the needs of all disadvantaged pupils.

- Leaders and governors have stabilised staffing by recruiting new teachers this year. They are raising expectations about what pupils can achieve, and where they need to catch up so that pupils can be better identified and supported over time. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this promising start on the achievement of pupils in key stage 2, especially those who have been at the school the longest.
- Pupils understand and epitomise the school values of 'honesty, trust, respect and friendship' which are underpinned by the school's strong ethos. Pupils learn about other people from a range of cultures and lifestyles in a sensitive way. Leaders skilfully ensure that these opportunities support the development of a cohesive school community that respects and values one another. Despite all staffing challenges, leaders have maintained this ethos very well.

Governance of the school

- Despite governors' undeniable commitment to the school, they do not have a precise enough understanding about the standards pupils reaching. They focus on pupils' attainment, without acting rapidly to assure themselves that teaching and learning are securing better progress for current pupils, especially in key stage 2.
- Governors do not know enough about the effectiveness of the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils. While governors know what the money is spent on, they do not challenge leaders over whether this money makes the best difference that it can to the achievement and changing needs of disadvantaged pupils over time.
- Governors undertake routine visits. This includes checks on teaching, behaviour, subjects, suitability of staff to work at the school, the website, and health and safety. While some of these checks are incredibly precise, there are too many that are overly positive, and overtly reliant on the information that leaders provide. On these occasions, governors are not seeking to look at a range of information to assure themselves of the effectiveness of leaders' work.
- The chair of the governing body is an active governor, who has been tenacious in her championing of the school in the locality. She, alongside other governors, is working to secure the future sustainability of the school. The chair is securing further expertise to undertake the various vital roles on the governing body to support current governance arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school, meet legal requirements. Staff training is up to date with the most recent guidance, including advice about how to ensure that pupils are not vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Staff use this knowledge and understanding to make appropriate referrals when they have concerns about pupils.

- Leaders work with external agencies to protect pupils and ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is effective. Leaders also work diligently with other adults in the school to ensure that pupils are monitored well. However, on occasion, the school's records lack detail, especially about the rationale behind leaders' decisions regarding the actions that they take.
- Leaders have created an open culture where pupils feel free to express any worries or concerns. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, both online and in the wider world. Pupils access lessons and assemblies that help them to understand a range of dangers and how to protect themselves. Pupils say that they feel safe and they are very confident to speak to adults in the school if they are worried or have a problem.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Until recently, regular staffing changes have meant that teachers have not been able to support pupils well enough to make consistently strong progress in their learning over time so that they make good progress by the end of key stage 2.
- New teachers to the school have not yet secured sufficient knowledge of what pupils already know and can do. In key stage 2, this means that teachers are still trying to identify the gaps in pupils' previous learning and address them.
- In mathematics and wider curriculum subjects, some teaching does not plan learning that challenges pupils to achieve the highest standards. On these occasions, teachers do not use the subject content confidently to pre-empt pupils' potential misconceptions or think about the best way to explain complex topics.
- Teachers and adults working with pupils with SEND are not yet being given precise guidance about how to support pupils' specific needs. Staff provide varied activities for these pupils, but these are too often not in keeping with the needs identified in pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plans). Consequently, this group of pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Most teachers are developing a love of reading and writing among pupils. Leaders' work to raise standards in reading and writing has increased pupils' access to high-quality texts and given pupils opportunities to apply their skills across a range of topics. This is supporting pupils, most notably in key stage 1, where they are routinely and enthusiastically applying their reading and writing skills.
- Phonics teaching is a strength. Teachers are well trained, and teaching is routinely monitored. Teachers and adults are confident and skilled in the teaching of phonics. Adults are adept at identifying and supporting pupils who need additional help to catch up. They use a wide range of appropriate resources, texts and activities to support this learning. As a result, pupils make good progress in acquiring phonic knowledge and skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Throughout the school pupils show high levels of respect and are polite, courteous, friendly and welcoming.
- Pupils feel safe and confident. They trust adults to look after them. This is because adults, including those who are new to the school, promote caring, secure relationships both with pupils, and between pupils.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, most notably but not exclusively, in sports. Different sports clubs cater for different ages and pupils' interests which is supporting their physical development. Pupils enjoy these opportunities alongside the chance to do other things like learn musical instruments.
- Pupils thrive on responsibility within the school. Older pupils talk proudly of their 'buddy' roles with younger children. Pupils also appreciate their role as council members in the school. They feel their 'voice' is heard and that their views make a real difference to what happens in the school.
- The provision for pupils with SEND, although supportive on a day-to-day basis, is not fully considering pupils' long-term welfare needs, and whether the school needs wider professional expertise to support these needs. This is also not reflected well enough in the EHC plans and annual reviews.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to answer questions to show what they know and learn new things. Where adults' expectations are high, pupils flourish and exhibit a love of learning. It is only when pupils are not quite sure what they should be learning and wait too long for extra help that a few pupils become distracted.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site, including during breaktimes. These times are well organised and properly supervised by adults. Pupils respond appropriately to any requests and play with friends from all year groups kindly and safely.
- The small number of pupils who need the most guidance to manage their behaviour in school are supported well by adults, including the learning mentor. Adults' calm, nurturing manner helps pupils to understand and uphold the behaviour expectations. Consequently, poor behaviour is rare, and the rate of fixed-period exclusion is low.
- Pupils value their education. Consequently, attendance is high, and rates of persistent non-attendance are low. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. This is a consistent picture over the last three years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards in key stage 2 have been too variable to be good.
- Over the last three years, pupils in Year 6 have not made the progress of which they are capable. This has resulted in lower attainment in Year 6 in 2016 and 2017.

- There were improvements in overall attainment in 2018. However, despite improvements in the progress that pupils made in reading in 2018, this was still not securely good. Equally, the same Year 6 pupils' progress in mathematics was weak.
- Although improving, current pupils in Year 6 are still not making consistently good progress from different starting points, most notably but not exclusively in mathematics. This is confirmed by the school's own assessment information and inspection evidence from pupils' work.
- Actions taken by leaders are now starting to raise expectations in key stage 2. Current teaching, learning and assessment is now starting to identify gaps in pupils' outcomes earlier in key stage 2. However, there is limited capacity to provide extra teaching to support pupils and address these gaps.
- In 2018, all Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Current pupils are also achieving very well, including those whose starting points are very low. Teachers and adults work precisely to support these pupils so that they make strong gains in their learning, even though they do not necessarily achieve the standard required.
- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 is a much stronger picture in the school. These outcomes have been checked externally by the local authority. The proportions of pupils who achieved and/or exceeded the expected standard was at least in line, and often above, the national average in 2018. Current pupils are making equally strong progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are well supported to make the transition to the next stage in their schooling, whether they are moving to the next key stage, another primary school, or moving to secondary school at the age of 11. However, despite a strong start in the early years and key stage 1, too many pupils leave at the end of key stage 2 without having made the good progress they are capable of.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years team provides high-quality support to children when they first start school. Effective communication with feeder nurseries, home visits and numerous well-thought-out induction days, ensure that adults know children well when they first arrive at the school. Consequently, children settle quickly and are ready to learn.
- Adults accurately check children's starting points when they enter the early years. Most children join the school in the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is above the national average. Children make good all-round progress in all areas of learning and are ready to start in Year 1.
- Children have many opportunities to use the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics in the activities that staff plan for them. Children enthusiastically undertake these tasks and continue to develop their skills.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years. Children enthusiastically participate in reading tasks. They develop an early interest in books, reading and words.

- Children are kind to each other and learn how to listen and share. Staff maintain consistently high expectations about children's behaviour and children respond well to these positively. As a result, the behaviour of children in early years is good.
- Strong leadership, including continuous reflection and evaluation, promotes ongoing improvement in teaching and learning. Work to engage parents has been well thought out and has resulted in a rapid engagement with increasing numbers of parents. Improvement planning includes ways to engage boys even more effectively with reading and writing in the outdoor area in new and creative ways.

School details

Unique reference number	115166
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10084587

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Franklin
Headteacher	Pamela Smart
Acting Headteacher	Sarah Meares
Telephone number	01245 233206
Website	www.terling.essex.sch.uk
Email address	smeares@terling.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school under the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- The school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) under section 48 of the Education Act was on 1 May 2018. The school received a good judgement at this time. It had previously been outstanding.
- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. There are four classes in the school: Reception, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The school has had four headteachers since the previous inspection.

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2016. The headteacher was absent during this inspection and has been on leave of absence since January 2019.
- A new deputy headteacher started at the school in September 2018 on a part-time basis. She is temporarily working full time as the acting headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector undertook learning walks and reviewed pupils' work joined by the acting headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and a wide range of governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding pupils, their welfare, achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed the 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and noted the views of those who wished to speak to her.
- The inspector spoke to pupils and staff throughout the inspection and met with a group of pupils. She also spoke with pupils informally around the school and observed pupils' conduct both during and in between lessons.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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