

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

School Road, Monkwick, Colchester, Essex CO2 8NN

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Monkwick Infant and Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Charlotte Cumming. This school is part of The Sigma Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lyn Wright, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Hammond.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this school. The school works hard to meet the needs of its diverse community. As a result, pupils share the view that everyone is welcome here. Pupils are polite, curious and friendly to each other, staff and visitors to the school. Pupils look out for each other and ensure everyone is included in class and at social times. If pupils have worries or concerns, they know there is always someone who will help them.

The school has high expectations for pupils and children in the early years. It constantly reviews and refines its approaches to ensure all pupils are challenged to achieve well. Pupils rise to this challenge. They learn the curriculum successfully. Pupils behave well both in class and during breaktimes. Low-level disruption is rare.

The school provides a range of clubs and activities for pupils to attend both after school and during lunchtimes. This includes football, archery, drama and arts and crafts. These are rotated across the year at different times to ensure there is always something for pupils to pursue an interest in. Pupils enjoy these activities. They are well attended.

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

The school has created a curriculum rich in language and subject-specific knowledge. It has been expertly designed. This ensures pupils regularly revisit and connect their knowledge within and across different subjects. For example, pupils use what they learn about continents, latitude and adaptation in geography and science to accurately describe the climate in the Kalahari Desert and the animals that live there.

Staff are well trained to teach the curriculum. They emphasise important knowledge and help pupils build on what they have learned before. Teachers use a range of approaches to check that pupils are learning the curriculum well. In most subjects, these are effective in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in a few subjects, some methods to check what pupils have learned do not help teachers know how well pupils are learning the curriculum.

The school prioritises reading and language from the moment children start in Nursery or the Reception Year. Teachers use every opportunity to bring reading to life and develop pupils' knowledge of books, stories and characters. Pupils have regular opportunities to read aloud and expressively. Consequently, pupils are excited to read. The school's curriculum for early reading and phonics is securely embedded. Staff teach this effectively. They make checks to establish if pupils are keeping up. If pupils fall behind, staff ensure they are given effective help to catch up.

In recent years, the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has increased. The school has adapted well to meet this changing need. This has included the development of the 'Nest' speech, language and communication provision. Staff accurately identify and review pupils' needs to ensure pupils with SEND receive timely help. Staff are well trained to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils. However, on very rare occasions, strategies are not always used consistently to ensure that pupils with SEND learn the curriculum as well as they can.

Pupils' behaviour is positive and focused on learning. This includes children in the early years. When pupils' behaviour falls short of the school's expectations, staff help them to reflect and refocus. The school analyses behaviour trends effectively, leading to changes such as the introduction of 'legendary lunchtimes' which include various activities for pupils to play and socialise together. This and other initiatives are leading to improved behaviour.

Some pupils do not attend as well as they should. The school has made attendance a key priority. The school works tirelessly to challenge pupils' absence. This includes the work of a family support worker who provides extensive support to families. As a result, the attendance of many pupils is now improving.

The school has created a wide personal development offer. It has improved its high-quality personal, social, health and economic education curriculum by adding a character curriculum. As a result, pupils develop a clear understanding of what it means to be kind, work together and contribute positively. A range of activities and other opportunities such

as trips and local walks help pupils understand their community and become well prepared for life beyond school.

The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Governors and trustees are provided with the information they need to support and challenge the school effectively. Staff are positive about their work and how the school engages with them and provides for their training and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, approaches to assessment are new and not yet fully embedded. In these subjects, the school does not precisely check what all pupils have learned. This means that teachers do not always have the information they need to adapt the curriculum or their teaching. The school should continue to refine its approaches to assessment to ensure it knows how well all pupils are learning the curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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	140735
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345393
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Hammond
CEO of the trust	Lyn Wright
Headteacher	Charlotte Cumming
Website	www.monkwick-inf.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Sigma Trust.
- The school's Nursery has provision for two-year-olds.
- The headteacher took up the post in September 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with school leaders, the CEO of the trust and representatives from the trust board and local governing committee.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Marc White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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