

The Cornelius Vermuyden School

Dinant Avenue, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 9QS

Unique reference number (URN): 140308

Monitoring inspection report:

3 and 4 March 2026

At the most recent graded inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

- There were flaws with the curriculum and its delivery. In some subjects, pupils' starting points are not sufficiently taken into account. This limits learning and leads to boredom and, in some cases, misbehaviour, as pupils do not want to do the work. Some pupils are absent too frequently, which impacts on their achievement. The school must speed up its plans for improving the curriculum and its delivery so that pupils enjoy their learning and attend school.
- There were multiple failings with safeguarding practice, and the school lacks a robust safeguarding culture. School leaders and staff are not consistently following statutory guidance to keep children safe. The school should address urgently the areas of weakness, making sure that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities for the safeguarding of children, and follow clear and robust procedures.
- The behaviour policy and its delivery were not working. The school's core values of 'respect, responsibility and resilience' are often ignored. Too many pupils have a lack of respect for one another and for adults who work at the school. Some behaviour is unsafe. The school must strengthen the behaviour management systems that are in place, setting clear expectations for staff and pupils, so that behaviour improves rapidly.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was weak in a range of lessons. Some support plans for pupils with SEND are unhelpful as they contain limited guidance or no guidance at all for staff. This means that pupils with SEND struggle to access the curriculum. The school must address the weaknesses in SEND provision so that this group of pupils learn effectively and are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.
- The school had not addressed longstanding weaknesses in the quality of provision. Some decisions have not been made in the best interests of pupils. The curriculum has been narrowed for some pupils, reduced timetables are used inappropriately and pupils undertake some courses that serve no useful purpose for them. The school must strengthen systems of accountability so that weaknesses are addressed effectively and decisions are made in pupils' best interests.

Leaders and trustees are taking effective action to improve the school but continued work is needed to remove the special measures designation.

HMCI is of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any further monitoring inspection we carry out.

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following evaluation areas:

- *Leadership and governance*
- *Safeguarding*
- *Inclusion*
- *Curriculum and teaching*
- *Attendance and behaviour*

Leadership and governance

Leaders have embedded an inclusive culture where everyone is valued. A shared vision helps everyone understand what is expected. Finally, pupils have a school that they are proud to belong to. Positive relationships have been forged between staff and pupils. Pupils now trust staff to help them when they have worries or concerns. Around the school, there is a collegiate feel. Older pupils have chosen to take responsibility to look out for and support younger ones. Pupils are now beginning to thrive. Leaders' actions have secured an ethos of a warm, caring community. The 'US' in Cornelius shines bright.

Leaders continue to work with the South East Essex Academy Trust. This support continues to bring welcome experience and expertise. Subject leaders are well supported to curate the curriculum. Staff benefit from being part of this wider community. They share expertise in subject groups, also supported by local mathematics and science hubs. This helps staff to develop the expertise they need to teach well.

Trustees have an accurate understanding of where the school has strengthened and where further work is still needed. They use their expertise to hold school leaders to account. Trust executives provide additional support and appropriate challenge to ensure that all decisions are made in pupils' best interests.

Safeguarding

At the previous graded inspection, safeguarding was evaluated as being not effective.

Safeguarding policies and practices have continued to evolve. Leaders have aligned the work of separate pastoral, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding teams into one inclusion team. This means that there is a consistently high-quality approach to safeguarding. Safeguarding has developed from the structural aspects of systems and structures noted in the first monitoring visit to a deeply embedded culture of safeguarding for all. All staff understand their responsibilities. They are proactive in identifying and reporting concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders carefully triage any safeguarding reports and rapidly implement actions to support pupils. Leaders continue to track pupils'

emotional, academic and pastoral needs. This means that pupils get the effective support they need when they need it.

Strong bonds of trust have been built between staff and pupils. This means that pupils have confidence to report their concerns and that it will be dealt with. Pupils feel safe.

Inclusion

Leaders have ensured that the needs of pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. They have used the gains previously noted to further increase the precision of identifying pupils' individual needs. Teachers are provided with detailed information that helps them consider how best to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. In many cases, this has led to carefully crafted learning experiences for pupils with SEND. These help them learn key knowledge. As a result, pupils with SEND enjoy coming to school. They are attending more regularly and are making progress through the curriculum as intended.

Leaders have gradually reintroduced the use of external provision to help meet pupils' needs. Leaders have ensured that any alternative provision is carefully chosen. Leaders continually monitor the provision to make sure it remains suitable and to successfully reintegrate pupils back into the main curriculum.

Achievement

Pupils are beginning to achieve better. The improvements to the curriculum and how it is taught are starting to help pupils learn key knowledge. Younger pupils in particular are now securing key foundational knowledge in English and mathematics. The effective reading programme has helped those pupils who are at the earliest stages of reading to catch up and secure a higher degree of fluency.

Leaders have ensured that teachers have the expertise to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some of these gaps are being successfully addressed. However, more time is needed to enable teachers to help pupils close these gaps fully and achieve as well as they should.

Attendance and behaviour

Leaders have ensured that all pupils understand their high expectations. Staff routinely model these expectations and help pupils know how to meet them. As a result, pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful. Classrooms are calm spaces where learning can happen without disruption. If staff need to intervene, they do so swiftly and consistently. Pupils attend their lessons on time and are no longer deliberately missing learning. Between lessons and at social times, pupils move about carefully. They are considerate of other pupils' personal space. The school has changed from a boisterous melee to a calm, orderly and pleasant space.

Leaders know why some pupils find it difficult to attend school. They have put in place bespoke actions to support pupils to overcome these barriers. This has successfully seen more pupils attend school more regularly. Pupils enjoy coming to school and so lateness

has significantly reduced. Leaders know there is still work to do to improve attendance further. However, the actions they have already implemented have been successful.

Curriculum and teaching

The curriculum has continued to develop. It is ambitious. At key stage 3, pupils access a broad programme of study that meets the expectations of the national curriculum. At key stage 4, pupils have options that enable them to follow an academic path or balance core academic studies with vocational learning. Subject experts in school and from the supporting trust have logically ordered teaching so that it helps pupils use what they know to secure new learning.

Leaders have continued to increase teachers' pedagogical knowledge. This has seen a continual improvement to the quality of teaching. Explanations of new content are generally clear. Teachers check on what pupils know, but sometimes these checks do not help teachers fully understand where some pupils have misconceptions. Adaptations to teaching, on the whole, help pupils with SEND access learning and progress through the curriculum. However, the adaptations made for other key groups are not always as effective. Regular assessments have been sharpened to test what pupils know in relation to the curriculum. This provides teachers with valuable information that is often used for future planning. However, sometimes, pupils do not access helpful feedback at the point of learning new content. This can enable misconceptions to become embedded and hinder pupils' understanding of important concepts.

Additional next steps

Leaders and trustees should continue to work to address the priorities for improvement identified in the last graded inspection report.

About this inspection

The inspectors carried out this monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005, and it was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded inspection that took place in November 2023.

The school's previous inspection and the first/second/third monitoring inspections were carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the school's graded inspection have been cross-referenced to the relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the school inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the school's progress in addressing priorities for improvement since the school's previous inspection.

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, executive headteacher and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the supporting trust, the special educational needs coordinator, representatives of the trust board and members of staff to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection.

Lead inspector

Dave Gibson

His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

Sharon Pritchard

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About this school

School capacity	900
Number of pupils on roll	727
Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable)	No

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