

Vermont School

Vermont Close, Off Winchester Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 7LT

Unique reference number (URN): 116625

Monitoring inspection report:

10 and 11 March 2026

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

The governing body does not provide effective oversight, support or challenge to the school to ensure that pupils receive a quality education. This means that pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Governors must make sure that they have the knowledge and information that they need to hold the school to account for the quality of education that it provides, so that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Governors do not fulfil their statutory obligations. This means that stakeholders do not have access to the information they should through the school's policies and procedures. The governing body should ensure that it understands and implements its statutory duties fully.

The school's curriculum lacks structure and ambition. The teaching of reading lacks a systematic approach. This means that pupils are not achieving as well as they should across a range of subjects, including reading. The school must ensure that it designs an ambitious and clearly sequenced curriculum. It should also ensure that staff receive the support that they need to implement the curriculum effectively, therefore, ensuring pupils accumulate the knowledge and skills that they should.

In most subjects, the school does not have effective assessment systems. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are not addressed. The school should ensure that assessment procedures are established and used to provide information about how well pupils are learning and what they need to learn next.

The systems for managing pupils' behaviour are not followed consistently well. This means that some pupils do not know what is expected of them or they do not receive the support that they need to manage their own behaviour. The school should ensure that all staff are equipped to manage pupils' behaviour in a consistent way, in line with school procedures.

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

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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
- Curriculum and teaching, achievement, attendance and behaviour.

Leadership and governance

Since the last inspection, leaders have made swift and effective decisions that have stabilised the school. This includes prioritising the most urgent areas for development. As a result, leaders have ensured there is a well-designed curriculum that clearly identifies the skills and knowledge that staff want pupils to learn. Leaders have also ensured that staff have increasing confidence to deliver the curriculum through a comprehensive programme of professional learning. Staff are positive about the changes made and feel well supported by leaders. Leaders recognise that the next priority is to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching that all staff are confident in using.

Leaders have worked well with the local authority to improve governance. The school now has a governing body, which understands its statutory duties and has begun to fulfil them diligently. Governors are professional and reflective but understand there is further work to be done. Together with leaders, governors should work closely to develop systematic monitoring processes that help them to develop a more detailed understanding of the school's context and its curriculum.

Leaders have worked with a range of external partners effectively. This has provided the school with the additional capacity required to stabilise the school. Leaders should now use this in a more targeted way to help develop a clear and consistent strategic vision for the school.

Safeguarding

At the previous graded inspection, safeguarding was evaluated as being effective.

Achievement

Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured there is an ambitious and coherent curriculum that helps pupils to build on their learning over time. As a result, pupils are beginning to build their skills and knowledge so that they progress through the curriculum. However, due to inconsistent implementation, this progress is too variable. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Many pupils arrive with significant gaps in crucial skills and knowledge. For example, many pupils do not have accurate handwriting or knowledge of key mathematical concepts. Leaders have ensured that pupils are beginning to receive the support they need to become increasingly fluent and confident readers. However, the impact of the reading scheme is limited because some staff are not confident to deliver it well. Pupils' transcription of written work is not at age or stage appropriate levels. Pupils' letter formation is typically inaccurate and this does not improve over time. Leaders recognise the need to address this swiftly.

Attendance and behaviour

Leaders have continued their work to improve attendance effectively. They ensure they track pupils' absence carefully. This helps leaders to offer a range of support that helps pupils to improve their attendance. As a result, attendance has improved and persistent absence has significantly reduced. The school compares favourably in relation to similar schools.

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked closely with staff to raise expectations for behaviour. They have ensured that staff have the training and confidence to apply expectations more consistently. This means that typically staff manage behaviour well. Staff say that behaviour has improved significantly. This is reflected in the reduction of serious incidents over the school year. However, due to inconsistencies in teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning are varied. In a number of lessons, pupils become distracted or lack concentration. This limits their engagement and learning over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Leaders have worked quickly to design a broad and balanced curriculum. This broadly matches the breadth of the national curriculum. Leaders have selected an appropriate scheme for the teaching of phonics and have ensured that staff have the training to deliver this accurately. This is in its earliest stages and leaders recognise there is further work required to establish this. Leaders also recognise there is additional work needed to develop a systematic approach to the teaching of letter formation and spelling.

The implementation of the curriculum lacks consistency. While teachers generally have appropriate subject knowledge, there is not a consistently agreed approach to explaining learning and the selection of tasks. As a result, teachers do not always explain learning clearly and the tasks they design do not always help pupils to deepen their learning. The checks teachers make on learning are not yet effective. While teachers have a clear picture of pupils' progression through the curriculum, they do not use checks to address inaccuracies consistently well. As a result, pupils do not know how to improve their work.

Additional next steps

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

About this inspection

The inspector carried out this monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005, and it was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded inspection that took place in June 2025.

The school's previous inspection was 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.

School leaders and the chair of governors have changed since the last inspection. The interim head of school has been in post since February 2026.

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim head of school and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the Specialist Schools Trust, the chair of governors and school improvement officer of the Aspire Community Trust, other staff, governors and the local authority to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection.

Lead inspector

Gavin Thomas

His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

School capacity	55
Number of pupils on roll	55
Resourced provision or SEND unit	No

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