

Vermont School

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

Unique reference number (URN): 116625

Monitoring inspection report:

23 and 24 June 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 appoint early career teachers from the apprentice teachers currently employed by the school but may not appoint additional 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
- Attendance and behaviour
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Inclusion

Leadership and governance

Leaders have ensured that the school continues to improve since the last monitoring visit. They have developed a clear, whole-school approach to teaching. Leaders enhance this work with a well-designed programme of mentoring for teachers. As a result, leaders have begun the work to communicate their philosophy accurately to staff. Staff are increasingly confident about this work. One member of staff said, 'We now focus on learning.' This is a view shared by all. Leaders have used external expertise wisely. This provides them with additional capacity to focus on key priorities. This helps leaders to provide staff with effective support.

The work to improve governance has continued effectively. Leaders have increasingly constructive relationships with governors. They have worked positively together to develop a systematic approach to monitoring. This helps governors to be better informed. They are increasingly confident in providing challenge and support. Leaders and governors should continue this work to establish these processes more precisely.

Leaders have been tireless in their work to establish an ambitious curriculum. They have communicated their deliberate curriculum thinking accurately. Leaders have provided staff with the professional learning they need to undertake this work. Leaders should now ensure that staff training has a precise focus on the use of assessment. They should also ensure that teachers have the skills they need to address gaps in learning swiftly.

Safeguarding

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

Inclusion

The school has used alternative provision skilfully. Leaders have selected a range of providers carefully. They use these to provide well-designed personalised curriculums for a small number of pupils. The chosen provision is well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders have clear oversight of the impact of this work. They use this to plan additional support, as needed.

Leaders have recently introduced well-designed processes to monitor pupils' progress towards their personalised targets. They have clear systems to communicate pupils' needs to staff in a precise manner. However, this work is in its infancy. Staff do not yet have enough understanding of pupils' individual needs to inform their teaching effectively.

Achievement

Pupils do not progress through the curriculum consistently well. In some subjects, pupils are beginning to build more detailed understanding of the skills and knowledge they learn. However, teachers' implementation of the curriculum remains inconsistent. As a result, this limits pupils' understanding in some subjects.

Staff have begun to address pupils' weaknesses in reading and writing effectively. Where the help that pupils receive is more established, there is clear evidence that pupils are beginning to develop the skills they need. For example, an increasing number of pupils are becoming fluent readers. However, too many pupils still have weaknesses in letter formation and handwriting. The work to address this has begun but it is still in its infancy. This means the positive impact remains limited.

Attendance and behaviour

Leaders have worked hard to raise staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour. They provide staff with clear guidelines on how to manage pupils effectively when they become distressed. Staff respond well to this. They are increasingly confident in supporting pupils who need additional help. This is typically done in a timely fashion. As a result, pupils' behaviour disrupts learning less. Classrooms have become increasingly calm. Inconsistencies in teaching mean that pupils do not always engage with learning as well as they should. However, this does not now commonly affect the learning of others.

Leaders track behaviour incidents carefully. They have a detailed understanding of potential issues. This helps them to plan a range of appropriate support for pupils who need additional help. This includes a range of strategies for pupils to manage their own emotions positively. These are becoming increasingly effective. This is evident in the reduction in suspensions of pupils and physical interventions. Staff feel empowered and more confident to manage incidents of poor behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Leaders have recently introduced a well-designed, whole-school approach to teaching. They have identified effective strategies to help pupils to learn the skills that they need. Leaders have begun to provide staff with well-targeted training to apply these strategies successfully. As a result, staff's implementation of the curriculum is increasingly consistent in some areas. However, leaders recognise that additional work is required to improve consistency further.

Staff generally explain learning clearly. They select appropriate tasks to help pupils learn the skills and knowledge they need. However, teachers' checks on pupils' learning lack precision. They do not identify gaps in pupils' understanding accurately. This means that teachers do not match learning to pupils' needs consistently well. As a result, pupils do not learn all the crucial content that they need.

Leaders have begun to refine the curriculum to reflect pupils' starting points more precisely. However, this work is in its very earliest stages. Staff are not yet systematic in the way they teach pupils key skills such as handwriting. Leaders have rightly identified this work as a key priority for the coming school year.

About this inspection

The inspector carried out this monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005. It was the second 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.

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, a group of governors, staff 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	54

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