

# Inspection of de Vere Primary School

Kirby Hall Road, Castle Hedingham, Halstead, Essex CO9 3EA

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Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy the school and feel safe. Pupils' attendance is good. They particularly enjoy physical education and the breaktimes, where there are lots of activities for them to do. Relationships are positive between adults and staff.

Despite these positives, pupils do not achieve well enough. They are too far behind in their reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science. The curriculum is not planned or taught well enough to make sure that pupils have the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need.

Some parents and carers commented to us and on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, that they have concerns about pupils' behaviour. Although we observed pupils playing well together, pupils and parents are rightly concerned about the poor behaviour and attitudes of some pupils. A significant number of pupils, from three different year groups, told us that bullying does not happen at this school. But pupils reported that pupils do push and shove each other and frequently use derogatory language in the playground. Pupils shared examples of homophobic insults exchanged between their peers.

In discussions with pupils it became clear that they lack understanding of diversity, equality and cultures other than their own. Their understanding about different religions is also extremely limited. As a result, pupils are not prepared for life in modern Britain by the time they leave the school.

In lessons, most pupils engage well, but some become boisterous and shout out, and do not focus well on the activities. Pupils told us that some pupils regularly disrupt their learning in class.

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

Since the previous inspection, the local authority has supported school leaders to improve pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment improved at the end of key stages 1 and 2 at the end of 2018/19. However, leaders' plans and the difference that their actions make to ensure that this improvement continues are not good enough.

Governors have not clearly understood the needs of the pupils in the school. The curriculum does not support pupils to achieve as well as they can. In addition, the governors have failed to hold school leaders to account. They have not ensured that pupils receive a curriculum that develops pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural knowledge and understanding.

Leaders' curriculum plans for all subjects do not give pupils the opportunities they need to learn more and remember more. Teaching does not help pupils make connections between old and new learning so that they gain a deeper understanding

in each topic or subject. There is no clear justification for the topics chosen, particularly in history and geography. Leaders have not considered what the pupils in the school need to know by the time they leave.

Leaders are designing a reading curriculum that prioritises reading while developing a love of reading among pupils and staff. Plans are not yet specific enough to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school. As a result, not all teachers are following plans and therefore the love of reading among pupils is not apparent.

The teaching of phonics is weak. It is sometimes unclear what teachers want pupils to learn. Pupils do not consistently pronounce sounds correctly. Plans are not specific or ambitious. Consequently, pupils who fall behind do not catch up quickly enough.

Religious education (RE) is not taught well. Pupils could not talk about different religions, many of which represent modern Britain. Pupils have a lack of knowledge and understanding about respect and equality. Pupils do not present their work neatly and the learning that has taken place is unclear.

The teaching of science does not build on what pupils already know. Teachers' expectations are too low, and pupils do not learn enough. Pupils' work books from last year and this year are of poor quality. They show that pupils complete tick lists and worksheets at a very basic level. This is not developing pupils' understanding.

Children in early years are keen to learn. They mostly listen well to instructions. Routines and teachers' expectations of behaviour are not helping children to settle as well as they should. Teachers do not plan activities to help children develop confidence and independence quickly. This is because teachers do not match activities to children's abilities.

Parents are very positive about what the school provides for their children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders check carefully what pupils need to help them learn successfully. However, there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations, such as in the use of visual timetables in each class. Leaders do not check how well leaders use the additional funding for SEND and so cannot say how well it is helping the pupils to achieve.

Leaders of English, mathematics and early years are determined to make the improvements needed and have the skills to address the weaknesses in the school's curriculum. These leaders have been instrumental in improving attainment in reading, writing and mathematics quickly over the last year.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders carry out the required employment checks on all adults who work with children at the school. All staff receive safeguarding training and follow the school's processes for reporting

safeguarding concerns. The headteacher follows up concerns swiftly.

Support staff work well to help pupils with their social and emotional needs so that they are ready for learning. However, governors have not checked the school's records of behaviour, as outlined in their own monitoring schedule. Not all teachers are consistently recording behaviour incidents when they should. This means that leaders are not aware of the extent of poor behaviour in the school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Curriculum plans are not logically sequenced across subjects and year groups. Teachers plan lessons by choosing the activities rather than considering what pupils need to know in each subject over the course of their primary education.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils grow into well-rounded British citizens. Pupils are unaware that people in Britain practise religions other than Christianity. Their use of derogatory and offensive language shows a lack of respect or understanding of equality. Leaders' plans need to focus explicitly on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social character and an understanding of cultural diversity.
- The governors do not have a clear understanding about how to challenge leaders about the school's curriculum so that it explicitly meets the needs of the pupils. Governors must ensure that they have the skills to hold leaders to account so that all pupils receive a good quality of education.
- Governors and school leaders have not checked that systems for recording and reporting pupils' poor behaviour are rigorous and effective. There needs to be consistency in practice across the school, so that pupils' behaviour improves.
- Leaders do not measure the impact of additional funding for pupils who have SEND. This needs to take place so that they can be certain that pupils are achieving as well as they can.
- Pupils achievement in reading and phonics, although it is improving, is not prioritised well enough. Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check do not catch up as quickly as they should. Details of what pupils should know and by when must be clearly defined in leaders' plans and implemented effectively by teachers.
- Teachers expectations of what pupils can do is too low. Pupils' work is not completed or presented to a high standard. Teachers are over reliant on worksheets, which does not allow for pupils to extend their thinking, particularly in science and writing.
- Some teachers and leaders demonstrate good subject knowledge and pedagogy. Although it is evident that staff training has taken place, it has not consistently addressed weaknesses in the quality of education across year groups, including early years.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114726
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110228
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Matthew Savage
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shelley Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.devere.essex.sch.uk">http://www.devere.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 June 2018

## Information about this school

- Ofsted conducted a section 8 inspection on 7 June 2018. Since then, the local authority commissioned an improvement board for oversight of school improvement.
- Most pupils in the school are white British. There is a higher than average number of pupils who receive SEND support.
- There are very few pupils who are disadvantaged and who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding.
- There have been significant changes in teaching staff over the last academic year.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- We met with the headteacher, three senior leaders, the leader for SEND and groups of pupils to talk about their learning. We also met with two members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- We considered reading, mathematics, RE and science in detail as part of the inspection. We spoke to leaders of the subjects, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, and carried out work scrutinies to understand the quality of education.
- We held meetings with the designated safeguarding leader, and spoke with midday supervisors, pupils, staff and the local governing body to check the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. We also checked the school's processes for checking the suitability of adults who work with pupils and who visit the school.
- We considered 21 parent responses to Ofsted's online and free-text survey Parent View, 14 responses to the staff survey and 16 responses to the pupil survey. An inspector also spoke with parents on the playground at the beginning of the day.

### **Inspection team**

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Cloke

Ofsted Inspector

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