

# Inspection of Countess Wear Community School

Glasshouse Lane, Countess Wear, Exeter, Devon EX2 7BS

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They ensure everyone is included in the life of the school. However, considerable changes in staffing since the last inspection have impacted the rate of improvement. As a result, the quality of education is not good. The curriculum in some subjects, including reading, remains underdeveloped.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They value their friendships. Pupils describe Countess Wear as their 'second' home'. They talk positively about the wider opportunities they receive, including the range of after-school clubs that are available. Staff form strong relationships with pupils.

Most pupils in the school behave well. They are polite and demonstrate respect for others. At times, low-level disruption occurs when learning is not closely matched to pupils' needs. When this happens, some pupils get distracted from their work. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say that it does not happen but agree that if it did, staff would act on it quickly.

Leaders understand the importance of developing pupils as individuals. Pupils appreciate the forest school provision that provides opportunities to enhance their life skills, including their social interactions and confidence building.

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

The executive headteacher has high expectations of what all pupils in the school can achieve. She is working with determination to ensure that the quality of education improves quickly. Staff new to the school, including those new to the profession, appreciate the support leaders provide. However, leaders know that turbulence in leadership has slowed curriculum development.

Leaders have started to focus on improving the quality of reading across the school from the early years. However, this is in the early stages of implementation. Staff do not teach the reading programme consistently or with confidence. They do not all have the expertise to teach reading. Those pupils who have fallen behind do not receive the precise support they need to become confident and fluent readers. As a result, pupils, particularly those in key stage 1, have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. They are not catching up quickly enough.

Leaders have started to address gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. Clear plans are now in place that order the key knowledge and vocabulary teachers want pupils to know and understand. Checks on what pupils know and can do have started to highlight where pupils require further consolidation. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics. They are starting to make links with their prior learning and apply what they know to new situations. However, across other subject areas, assessment is not used well to check on learning. Teachers are not clear if pupils have understood what has been taught.

Work to develop subjects within the wider curriculum is in its infancy, including in the early years. Many members of staff are new to their roles. Staff have not clearly identified essential knowledge and the order in which that should be taught. As a result, pupils struggle to recall what they have learned before. This slows their build-up of knowledge over time. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils do not make connections with previously taught knowledge and how they can use this to help them master new learning.

Leaders know pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), well. They have clear processes to identify these pupils' needs. Pupils with the most complex needs are included in school life. For example, the school community uses sign language when singing in assemblies.

Over time, some staff have not been supported well enough to deal with pupils' poor behaviour. However, this is changing. Leaders have begun to address inconsistencies in the behaviour policy. As a result, staff are becoming more consistent in their approach to ensure all pupils are ready for learning.

Pupils develop a positive understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. They enjoy taking on areas of responsibility such as school council members and play leaders. Regular assemblies support pupils' understanding of what they are learning in class. However, the curriculum to enhance their personal development is still evolving. Pupils struggle to make links between this learning and how they can apply their understanding across the rest of the curriculum.

Governors have not held leaders consistently to account. However, this is starting to change. The newly formed board understands the school's priorities. They are well placed to strategically support and challenge leaders as a cohesive team.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding seriously. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training, so they know how to identify any signs of concern. Staff know leaders prioritise their concerns. Systems for reporting and recording are effective. Leaders carry out the necessary employment checks on staff to ensure they are safe to work with children.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know that trusted adults will listen and help them if they have any worries. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. The curriculum supports pupils' knowledge of staying safe in various situations, including the importance of healthy relationships.

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

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

- Pupils in key stage 1 have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. Consequently, some pupils do not read as accurately or as fluently as they should. Leaders need to ensure that all staff receive the relevant support and guidance. Leaders should implement a fully consistent approach to the teaching of phonics from the early years so all pupils across the school learn to read well.
- Pupils who struggle with reading do not receive the precise support they need. As a result, pupils do not read with fluency and accuracy. Leaders should ensure that all staff provide effective support for those pupils who require extra help, so they catch up quickly.
- Not all curriculum subjects are well sequenced, including the curriculum in the early years. As a result, pupils are not able to build on what they already know and can do. Leaders need to ensure subject leaders make explicit what order key knowledge is taught and revisited in all subjects so that pupils build on their prior learning over time.
- Assessment information is not precise enough to check what pupils know and understand. In some subjects, pupils have gaps in subject-specific knowledge and planned learning is not systematically adapted. Teachers need to check pupils' understanding in all curriculum subjects, including personal, social and health education, so that all pupils secure and embed the essential knowledge they need to know and have opportunities to apply this knowledge across the curriculum.

## 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](#)' 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>	113079
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241230
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Claire Foster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Pattison (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.countesswear.devon.sch.uk">www.countesswear.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Countess Wear Community School is part of the Exe Estuary Federation with Clyst Heath Primary School and Marpool Primary School which formed in June 2022. All three schools share an executive headteacher and governing body.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership, including a new executive headteacher, head of school and special educational needs coordinator who now make up the senior leadership team.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with a hearing impairment.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision on their own school site.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leads, groups of staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector also discussed the curriculum in science and art with subject leaders.
- Inspectors considered the documentation around safeguarding, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act upon concerns about pupils' welfare. Inspectors talked to staff, governors and pupils about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors considered the 36 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 19 free-text responses, and 26 responses to the staff survey.

### Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Gould	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Lees	Ofsted Inspector

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