

Inspection of The Alderton Infant School

Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton, Essex IG10 3HE

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They love to learn and participate in new experiences. Older pupils are good role models for younger pupils, as they are kind and caring. All pupils understand the school's golden rule, 'be kind and friendly'. They can explain how this means they should act towards others.

Pupils follow routines and respond well to leaders' high expectations. In lessons, they show good speaking and listening skills and work hard. Pupils take pride in their work and achieve well.

Pupils behave maturely by, for instance, standing aside in the corridor to let adults pass and lining up after lunch in a calm and orderly manner. Bullying happens rarely. Staff deal with concerns quickly and effectively. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils get many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They are proud to be part of groups in the school by, for example, acting as library monitors or being elected to the school council. Members of the eco-club are passionate about improving the environment and have even written to their local member of parliament to ask for help.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious, broad and well-sequenced curriculum. It builds pupils' knowledge and helps them to understand how different subjects cover interconnected content. Subject leaders are knowledgeable, and they support staff to deliver the curriculum well. Across the school, language development has a strong focus. Leaders have carefully identified the key vocabulary and knowledge pupils need to learn and understand in all subjects. This helps pupils to produce work of a high standard, and they achieve well over time.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know and can do. They recap on important learning and change their teaching to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have selected 'The Fantastic Five' books for each half term. These support pupils with learning across many different subjects. For instance, one book teaches pupils about a child's life in a different country. This creates a context that pupils can understand when learning about the geography of that country. Leaders also provide pupils with extra opportunities to improve their understanding of different subjects, such as through trips and visitors to the school, which pupils enjoy.

Leaders prioritise reading, and pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books they read. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. This strengthens

further the effective teaching of phonics. Staff have the expertise to teach this programme well. Children learn phonics from the start of Reception. Pupils who fall behind get the help they need to catch up. However, a few pupils read books that do not closely match their phonics knowledge, making it hard to read words confidently. This means they may take more time to become fluent readers.

Staff identify if pupils have any barriers to learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Some have individual targets for their learning and progress. For a few pupils, these targets are not precise enough. As a result, teachers do not always get clear enough information about how to best support pupils with SEND.

In the early years, children show high levels of interest and engagement. They understand the class routines and behave well. Teachers concentrate on improving children's communication skills. Adults model speaking in full sentences and encourage children to do the same. Children are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a carefully constructed personal development programme. Staff teach pupils how to recognise and manage their emotions so that they can explain how they are feeling. Pupils learn about tolerance and respect for different cultures and beliefs. Pupils learn to appreciate and value difference. For example, one child explained that 'we are all unique.' Pupils are highly respectful towards each other. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils know the routines well and follow instructions carefully.

Leaders, governors and the trust are working well to improve the school further. They know the school well and check that leaders' actions improve outcomes. Parents and staff are positive about how the school is led. Staff appreciate how leaders are considerate of workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors, school leaders and staff receive regular and up-to-date safeguarding training to understand their roles and responsibilities. Leaders work well with external agencies and make sure that pupils receive the support they need to be safe.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in a variety of situations. They understand how to stay safe online in an age-appropriate way.

Appropriate checks are in place for adults working or volunteering in the school. Governors scrutinise leaders' safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are used effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils with SEND are accurately identified. However, some targets on pupils' individual plans are not precise enough to maximise their progress. Leaders need to incorporate precise and measurable targets into pupils' support plans so staff can provide the individual support pupils need.
- Pupils' reading books do not always match their phonics knowledge closely enough. This means they spend too much time breaking down individual words, limiting their word fluency. Leaders need to ensure that pupils access reading books containing words that match their current ability in order for pupils to develop reading fluency.

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

Unique reference number	145989
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255104
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Susie Worthington
Headteacher	Tara Bristow
Website	www.alderton-inf.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Alderton Infant School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, The Alderton Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust.
- The school has a separately registered breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, design and technology and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding and reviewed records of safeguarding. Inspectors spoke to staff about the training they have received and how this helps them identify potential safeguarding concerns. Inspectors spoke with pupils to establish the extent to which they feel safe in school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtime. Inspectors reviewed the support and training that staff receive to help pupils manage their behaviour. The lead inspector reviewed records of behaviour, including bullying.
- Inspectors considered the 52 responses and the 26 free-text responses made by parents to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils to find out their views of the school.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharon Waldron

His Majesty's Inspector

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