

Inspection of a good school: Alresford Primary School

Ford Lane, Alresford, Colchester, Essex CO7 8AU

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Outcome

Alresford Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at Alresford Primary. They are kind and welcoming to their friends, teachers and visitors. Pupils know that there are adults in the school who can help them if they are worried about something.

The curriculum provides a range of experiences for pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons because leaders have thought carefully about what they want them to learn and remember. Lessons are interesting, demanding and memorable. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from teachers' high expectations. Pupils enjoy reading and know that it is an important part of their school life and future.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of after-school activities. Many take advantage of the breakfast club. Pupils appreciate the importance of participating in the 'eco' or 'play leader' work for the school.

Pupils behave well in class and focus on their learning. Expectations of their behaviour are clear and easy to understand. Pupils help to design the rules for how to behave. They benefit from how teachers model what is expected. Bullying is not tolerated. If it happens, staff resolve it quickly. A typical pupil comment was, 'What sometimes starts out as sad is often happy in the end.'

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that sets out clearly what pupils will learn. It is well ordered to take account of what pupils need to learn in the subjects and is broken down into small steps of knowledge. There are opportunities for pupils to use what they learn and to make links between topics and across most subjects. This helps pupils remember more. Additionally, the 'deeper thinking' tasks in lessons help pupils understand what they know and can apply to new learning.

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum for foundation subjects. They have put in place one that is well designed. In most subjects, teachers have an appropriate understanding of how the curriculum develops pupils' learning. However, some teachers do not have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum successfully in all areas. This sometimes means that they do not check that gaps in pupils' understanding are addressed before moving on to new content. Consequently, pupils do not always develop the detailed knowledge that they might.

Leaders value reading highly. The reading and phonics curriculum is well planned. As a result, pupils become increasingly enthusiastic, fluent and accurate readers. Leaders plan additional support for weaker readers carefully. Staff are well trained to teach reading. As a result, the teaching of reading, including phonics, is of a high quality. This ensures that pupils achieve well both in reading and subsequently in other areas of the curriculum.

At Alresford, leaders and staff value all pupils highly. They are determined that all are cared for, and will have a full range of opportunities and be given the specific support they need to do well. Leaders have trained staff successfully to make adaptations to activities so that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others. As a result, these pupils enjoy school, achieve well and become more confident. Parents and carers value the involvement they have in planning for their child's needs. Typically, parents comment that the school goes 'above and beyond in their support' for their children.

Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and as they move around the school. Leaders have worked closely with staff to ensure that any issues are dealt with quickly and consistently. Staff carefully reward good behaviour. When pupils behave less well, they help them improve. As a result, pupils rarely disrupt learning.

Leaders provide plenty of opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibility around the school. Pupils help to run lunchtime clubs, encouraging their peers to be active on 'the track'. Through the buddy group, pupils work with leaders to improve the school, for example by discussing developing the play equipment. From early years, children learn about healthy bodies, minds and relationships and they value the support they receive from the well-being hub. Pupils have tolerant and respectful attitudes towards others and practise the school's values.

Staff feel valued and supported. They are proud to work at the school. Leaders care about staff's well-being. Leaders have worked to reduce unnecessary burdens on staff.

Governors are active in providing support and challenge to leaders. Governors are ambitious for the school to succeed and they carry out regular checks on the curriculum. The local authority has supported the school by providing training and development for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. Staff know and follow school systems to report and record concerns. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as social services, when needed.

Leaders know families well. This helps them to identify safeguarding concerns early and to intervene.

Pupils are safe at school. They know that if they report a concern, it will be dealt with. Pupils learn how to keep safe, including when they are online.

Clear processes are in place to check that staff are safe to work with pupils. Governors regularly check that agreed safeguarding procedures are in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few curriculum areas, teachers are not always confident in their subject knowledge and skills. This means that pupils do not develop the detailed knowledge they might. Leaders need to ensure that opportunities to improve teachers' subject knowledge and skills through training and monitoring are identified, planned and provided effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	114734
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10288435
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dave Roscoe
Headteacher	Sarah Bryson
Website	www.alresford.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- Leaders provide before- and after-school clubs on site.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Members of the school's governing body met with the inspector. She had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around the school. She met with groups of pupils. The inspector considered 51 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 41 free-text comments. She also considered 16 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector reviewed school documents relating to the curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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