

Inspection of de Vere Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Children in early years make an exceptional start to their education in this warm and welcoming school. Children's communication skills develop rapidly through the precise support they receive. They respond well to staff's high expectations.

Pupils eagerly make the most of the opportunities on offer. They are passionate about being sustainable. They check there is no food waste in the canteen and grow their own vegetables to eat. Pupils are strongly encouraged to make a difference. They are proud of the new library they helped design and their responsibilities as play leaders.

Pupils behave well and respect each other's opinions. They have a good understanding that people are different. Peer mediators help during play times, so that pupils quickly make up should they fall out. There is a strong rapport between pupils and adults. Pupils trust staff to deal with any concerns promptly and fairly.

Pupils' physical and mental health are prioritised by leaders. Through mental health lessons, pupils develop an impressive understanding of how the brain works. They know how this influences their emotions and reactions.

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

Leaders have driven forward significant improvements. This is a different school to that seen at the last inspection and prior to the pandemic. The early years curriculum sets children on the journey to realising leaders' high ambitions. Already at a young age, children are confident learners who talk knowledgeably about a range of topics. Many pupils attain a good level of development ready for Year 1. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff skilfully support children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. They access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have carefully set out the key knowledge they want pupils to learn over time. For younger pupils there is a sharp focus on communication. Pupils learn the tools they need to express their opinions and to debate. Staff in early years and key stage 1 expertly guide pupils to deepen their thinking and extend their answers. Leaders build upon this strong foundation by making sure that pupils make connections with their learning. Pupils are taught subject-specific vocabulary, which they use effectively when explaining their work. In a few classes, pupils are less well versed at translating their ideas into their written work. In some areas of the curriculum pupils are not given enough opportunities to write and to write at length.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff are highly skilled in teaching pupils how to read. They make sure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Staff systematically check what pupils know, so they can see quickly if pupils need extra help. They make sure pupils who find reading difficult get the help they

need to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading and are proud of their book choices for the new library.

Leaders have taken action to improve pupils' independent learning. Leaders have considered carefully how to achieve this for pupils with SEND. They have altered the way in which adults give support in the classroom. Staff undertake regular training, so they are responsive to pupils' needs. Teachers' adaptations to lessons work well. Staff regularly review the steps in pupils' support plans, so they can be successful in their learning.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently and fairly. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils sustain focus as they want to do well. Children in Reception are coping well with concentrating for lengthier periods of time in readiness for expectations in Year 1. Social times are full of fun and laughter. Children are happy to share their toys. Pupils enjoy using the playground equipment.

Leaders have introduced a comprehensive programme to develop pupils' characters and confidence. Pupils learn about positive mental health and how to make the best of their strengths. Staff encourage pupils to be proud of who they are. Pupils learn about diversity and different religious beliefs. They respect views that are different to their own. Pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values, creating resources for other schools on how to follow the law. Pupils also have access to a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular trips.

Trust leaders and governors know the school well. They check first hand how well pupils are engaging with the curriculum. They keep a close eye on staff workload and well-being. Governors have challenged leaders to improve attendance. This is having impact. They check parents are clear about expectations, attending parents' evenings to hear views.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils very well. This means they readily spot when a pupil may be 'out of sorts'. Staff receive the latest advice and government guidance on how to keep pupils safe. They clearly understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders respond promptly to concerns. They involve external agencies where necessary to keep pupils safe. Record-keeping is thorough.

Trust leaders and governors discharge their safeguarding duties diligently. They are well informed through the use of timely audits. They carry out the necessary pre-appointment checks when employing staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not consistently deliver leaders' expectations of how to teach writing and how often. There has been some confusion over expectations for the foundation subjects. This means that the quality of writing varies for some pupils in some classes. Leaders should re-establish expectations, making sure that pupils have meaningful opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences, and at length, so they are prepared for the writing demands in secondary school.

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	148139
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10267769
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bruce Doy
Headteacher	Carolyn White
Website	www.devere.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- De Vere Primary School joined the Attain Academy Partnership in September 2020. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its own pupils.
- The school does not use 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.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of the trust, trustees, the chief executive for the trust, the chair of the local governing body, governors and the improvement adviser for the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and pupils to talk about the school's provision.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents when they dropped their children at school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, history, mathematics and music. 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.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- To ascertain the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour and bullying. In addition, they reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with trust leaders, governors, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Hewer

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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