

Inspection of a good school: Cressing Primary School

Braintree Road, Tye Green, Cressing, Braintree, Essex CM77 8JE

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Cressing Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Mr Stewart Caplen. This school is part of Attain Academy Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mrs Susannah Edom-Baker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bruce Doy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Cressing Primary School because staff listen to them and value their views. Pupils feel cared for and appreciate the priority that is given to their personal development. They know exactly what it means to care and demonstrate this in their day-to-day experiences. Pupils know who to speak to if they have concerns. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils learn about differences and how to respect one another. One pupil said, 'This is a very safe place to be yourself.'

Pupils at Cressing believe that all of them can achieve well. Pupils relish their lessons and are positive about what they can learn. The air of positivity stems from the respect staff model for pupils. Pupils focus and engage at all times, for example during the shared singing assemblies or during lesson explanations.

Pupils learn a curriculum designed to prepare them to be well-rounded citizens. This builds on the academic curriculum of the school. Staff model the values they expect of pupils. As a result, classrooms are calm environments. Pupils are well prepared to be responsible members of the school community.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and helps pupils to make gradual steps as they move through the school. The school has set out what pupils need to learn and when, starting from Reception, for example in physical education where younger children honed their balancing and movement skills in their exciting playground. Staff expertly guide children to take risks and overcome challenges. Pupils build on this later as they use their balance and posture as the cornerstone for developing their skills in football, tennis and cricket.

Staff's curriculum knowledge is well developed in some subjects. This is because leaders have trained them on what to teach and how to teach it. Where this is the case, teachers explain new concepts well. Consequently, pupils' knowledge and understanding deepen, and they have opportunities to apply what they know. Many subject leaders are new to their leadership role. While they do check the quality of education, they do not always identify precisely enough where staff need further training to develop their subject knowledge. Therefore, a small number of pupils have developed misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils enjoy reading at Cressing. Staff read carefully selected books to pupils that broaden their understanding of life outside school. This plays a part, for example, in developing pupils' knowledge about other cultures. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils learn to read. The school has trained all staff on how to teach phonics. As part of this, teachers are swift to identify when pupils need extra help. Most staff have good subject knowledge in early reading and deliver the curriculum as leaders intend. As a result, most pupils learn to read well.

The school has trained staff to identify barriers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders accurately assess progress and identify where further support is needed. Staff are trained well to provide specialist support. As a result, staff know how to meet all pupils' needs. Pupils with education, health and care plans receive support which enables them to access the same curriculum as everyone else and make progress.

Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. This starts early in Reception where children begin to learn rules and routines. All pupils follow these rules in their day-to-day actions. The school carefully considers how to enhance pupils' personal development. As part of this, pupils learn how to respect the rule of law. Pupils actively apply this learning to manage their own behaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, there is no low-level disruption in lessons, and pupils are able to learn well.

Pupils learn to live the school's values. Leaders provide wide-ranging and planned experiences to support this. For example, pupils develop an understanding of how to be 'caring' through experiences such as well-being week and considering how they care for the environment. Pupils appreciate leaders' efforts to broaden the clubs available, which introduce new opportunities to pupils.

The local governing board works alongside the trustees to hold leaders to account. The trust has trained governors to develop expertise to challenge and support the school.

Staff are proud to work in this school. Most staff feel valued and appreciate the support from the school and trust. This includes valuing how their workload is carefully managed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum areas, teachers do not have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. As a result, some staff cannot deliver the curriculum as leaders intend meaning pupils develop misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure they train all staff to deliver the curriculum as leaders intend.
- Many subject leaders are new in role. They do not check the quality of education in their subject area effectively. Leaders should ensure they are given the time and training to be fully effective in their role when checking the quality of education in subjects that they lead.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Cressing Primary School, to be good in September 2011.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148306
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295130
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bruce Doy
Headteacher	Stewart Caplen
Website	www.cressingprimaryschool.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school in January 2021. When its predecessor school, Cressing Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Attain Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. He also met with the chief executive officer, as well as representatives of the local governing board and board of trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and

physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector discussed the curriculum in other subjects and met with other subject leaders. He also looked at a range of school curriculum documents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the 31 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. To understand the views of staff, the inspector reviewed the 19 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and spoke to several staff informally during the inspection.
- The inspector considered 18 responses to the pupil survey and listened to their views on inspection.

Inspection team

Conor Heaven, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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