

Inspection of a good school: Deneholm Primary School

Culford Road, Little Thurrock, Grays, Essex RM16 2SS

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Deneholm Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Christina Pumfrey. This school is part of South West Essex Community Education Trust Limited, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Munday, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Vivienne Northall. Christina Pumfrey is also the executive headteacher who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Deneholm are confident, happy and proud of their school. They try to live up to the school's values of 'empathy, aspiration, resilience and self-confidence'. Pupils can explain what these mean and how they positively affect their learning. This helps pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals.

Pupils respond well to staff's high expectations. They understand the importance of working hard and trying their best. The school is aspirational for pupils, enabling them to have a wide and rich set of experiences alongside the broad curriculum. Pupils learn more from all the experiences they have. Overall, pupils achieve well. However, in a few subjects, they are less secure in their understanding, and the school is changing the plans to further develop the pupils' subject knowledge.

Pupils listen carefully to teachers and each other. This creates an atmosphere where pupils are ready and able to learn. Pupils are polite and they have good manners. For instance, they tidy a space up after using it.

Staff and pupils have positive relationships that are built on trust and respect. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Pupils understand that differences should be celebrated and that we should all be treated in the same way.

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

The school has developed subject plans that improve pupils' knowledge in a logical way

over time. Generally, teachers show sound subject knowledge and can explain clearly to pupils the tasks they need to complete. Overall, pupils achieve well. The school carries out checks to make sure that pupils remember more and learn more in each subject. In a few subjects, leaders are improving the taught curriculum, as the plans are not precise enough. In these subjects, teachers do not teach subject-specific language in a consistent way. Some tasks that pupils carry out do not allow them to practise and learn knowledge as well as they could.

The school places a high priority on early reading. In the Reception classes, pupils learn to recognise letters and their corresponding sounds. They also learn to write the letters with rhymes and cues that help them form the letters correctly. Older pupils who find reading harder get extra help. This enables them to become confident, fluent readers. Pupils love reading and they learn to share and read a rich diet of quality books. Pupils can explain why reading is important to them and why they prefer some books to others.

Children in the early years have quickly learned the rules and routines they need to play well together and to be ready to learn. Skilled staff help children develop their language and communication skills by engaging them in exciting learning tasks. The children love working closely with adults. This shows that strong relationships are being developed.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified accurately. This enables staff to know how best to help them achieve. Most pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. During each lesson, their learning is modelled for them, or adults guide and help them. A few pupils have individual support as they learn in a slightly different way. Staff and teachers help all pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils behave very well. They love to talk about their learning, and they show self-confidence when talking politely to visitors. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions and understand how these can positively and negatively affect others. They know the importance of showing kindness and compassion to others.

The school highly prioritises pupils' broader development. There is a well-organised programme to promote pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils love the wide variety of clubs that cater for many of their interests and their talents. They enjoy the school trips and can explain how they help them learn more about what they may want to be. For instance, a careers fair helped them to gain a broader knowledge of the jobs that adults do.

The school and the trust collaborate well so that expertise is shared. The separate roles and responsibilities are clear, but leaders know where to go for guidance if they need this. The trust enables collaboration with other schools. Staff appreciate the professional development that this provides. Staff are supported well with their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, curriculum plans do not accurately identify the language teachers need to use and some tasks identified do not help pupils to learn important subject knowledge. Consequently, staff do not consistently teach the pupils the subject-specific language they need and do not plan focused tasks pupils need to become subject experts. The school needs to ensure that curriculum plans in each subject identify precisely the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils must learn and support teachers to plan learning activities.

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 March 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' 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	141897
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10295080
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	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Vivienne Northall
CEO of trust	Stephen Munday
Headteacher	Christina Pumfrey (Executive Headteacher) Clare Bradfield (Head of School)
Website	https://deneholm.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the South West Essex Community Education Trust Limited on 1 April 2015.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions with the curriculum lead, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to some pupils about their learning.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of staff, leaders and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and teachers.
- The inspector met with two trustees, including the CEO of the trust.
- The inspector examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' school development plans and the school self-evaluation document.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and in lessons.
- The inspector considered the 66 responses and 46 free-text responses made by parents to the survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered the 47 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 42 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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