

Inspection of Newlands Spring Primary and Nursery School

Dickens Place, Copperfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4UU

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

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

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

Ofsted has not previously inspected Newlands Spring Primary and Nursery School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a warm and welcoming environment. Pupils are happy and safe. They are particularly well cared for. Pupils can share any worries with staff, who they know will help them. They are confident and kind to one another.

Pupils behave well and work hard. They look forward to coming to school every day. Pupils find their learning exciting, which helps them to progress well. They know the high expectations that staff have of them. Pupils work together well and enjoy the subjects that they study.

Every pupil can access a wide range of opportunities and experiences available to broaden their development. Pupils visit the local library regularly to ensure that they have access to a wide variety of texts. All pupils learn at least three musical instruments during their time at the school. Trips are carefully planned so that they enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' independence.

Pupils can participate in sporting opportunities beyond those they may normally experience. For example, children start swimming from Reception and continue every year. All pupils get to try a variety of sports such as yoga, boccia, archery and fencing in addition to their normal lessons. Pupils understand the importance of looking after their physical health.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum from early years to Year 6. The knowledge that leaders want pupils to know has been identified precisely in many subjects. This ensures that staff can teach highly effective sequences of lessons. However, in a few subjects, staff need to know exactly what knowledge pupils need to remember. Without this knowledge, the teachers are not teaching pupils the precise and accurate information that they need in a few subjects.

In early years, there is not a consistency of practice between the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults do not plan activities as carefully in the Reception classes as they do in Nursery. This means some children are not learning what has been intended for them to learn. This hinders their progress.

Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. Staff use this information to address any misconceptions. Adults ensure that pupils receive the help and support that they need. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff ensure that most pupils with SEND receive careful adaptations and tailored support, so that all pupils make good progress. Adults who work with pupils who have SEND are well trained, which ensures pupils receive the right help and teaching.

Most pupils can read fluently and confidently before they leave the school. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. Staff have the training needed

to teach reading well. Pupils read books that let them practise using the sounds that they are learning. Pupils talk confidently about their love of reading. They can discuss the range of different authors and books that they read. Pupils' reading supports their learning in other subjects. Adults carefully choose and plan the books that pupils read to ensure that there is a breadth of texts for pupils to enjoy.

The school is a positive and calm environment. Pupils respect each other. They understand that everyone is different. On the rare occasions when unkind behaviour occurs, pupils know that adults will address this.

The school considers carefully the many opportunities offered to pupils. Staff have designed these opportunities to ensure that they meet pupils' needs and broaden their experiences. The school has designed a well-thought-through curriculum that helps pupils to deepen their knowledge of fundamental British values, equality and difference over time. This ensures that pupils learn about the world around them and life in modern Britain.

All pupils, from Year 1 onwards, can take on leadership roles. Year 6 pupils can be prefects, for example. These roles give pupils a sense of responsibility and contribute towards wider school life. The school council shares pupils' ideas with staff. These ideas are acted on, for example by improving the school environment through having more pupils as litter pickers. Pupils know that staff will listen to their ideas and consider how they can support them effectively.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They know that their workload and well-being are carefully considered by leaders. The trust and school provide training personalised to individual staff. Governors and trustees know the school well. They support where needed and challenge where appropriate. Parents are supportive of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school does take appropriate action to ensure pupils are safe from harm. However, there are instances when safeguarding records lack the detail they should have. This includes adding actions taken for the events that have been recorded and labelling records appropriately. This limits how well leaders can accurately check the impact of the actions taken or clearly see any patterns or trends that could inform future decisions and actions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's safeguarding records are not always as precise as they should be. Therefore, it is sometimes unclear as to what actions leaders have taken and the impact of these actions. The school should ensure that safeguarding records: accurately record a comprehensive summary of any concern; record details of how concerns were followed up and resolved; and record sufficient detail of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- In a few subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to learn has not been precisely identified. Some teachers do not have the knowledge and expertise to teach this knowledge as effectively as they do in other subjects. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects. The school must ensure that all staff understand securely the knowledge and skills that they are to teach and that leaders check the training staff receive is having the intended effect.
- There is not a consistency of high-quality practice between the early years classes. Therefore, children do not progress with their learning as well as they should. The school should ensure that early years practice is consistent, so that all children have a meaningful learning experience that fully meets their needs.

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	138533
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10242294
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Collins
CEO of the trust	Susannah Edom-Baker
Headteacher	Helen Penner
Website	www.newlandsspring.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of Attain Academy Partnership, which it joined on 1 August 2012. The predecessor school, Newlands Spring Primary School, was inspected in October 2008 and judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector spoke with governors from the governing body and trustees from Attain Academy Partnership.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of Attain Academy Partnership.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons, in the dining hall and at breaktimes. The 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, to gather their views of the school. The 37 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered.
- The inspectors considered 88 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Katie Devenport, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Laura Hewer	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Boyce	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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