

Inspection of Spring Meadow Primary School & School House Nursery

Pound Farm Drive, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex CO12 4LB

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that their school is a happy place to be, and everyone is kind. They say that there is no bullying, and that if there was, it would be dealt with well. Pupils are safe and confident.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Staff work hard to help pupils enjoy their learning and keep up. Pupils learn and achieve well. Pupils access lots of excellent books, poetry, magazines and other reading material. They love the new school library and their library sessions.

Most pupils behave and concentrate well, including the youngest children. A small number of pupils need help to regulate their behaviour. They are incredibly well supported by staff and other pupils. Pupils talk very positively about the support they get in the school's lighthouse provision when they need it.

Pupils eat and play happily together during breaks and lunchtimes. They enjoy the increased play opportunities and equipment that adults have provided this year.

Lots of pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs available to them. Many take part in the annual school performance and are rehearsing seriously for this year's performance of 'Matilda'. Pupils value the trips and visits that they get to attend. They have experiences that they have never had before.

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

The school has created a curriculum from Nursery through to Year 6 that is, in the main, planned well. The approach to reading is woven through this curriculum. Pupils access a range of high-quality texts to enhance the learning in each subject.

Starting from the Nursery, pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy rhymes, stories and reading. Staff deliver the school's chosen phonics programme effectively. Books and resources that pupils read closely match the sounds they are learning. Staff are adept at identifying and supporting pupils who are struggling. Pupils who need extra help to read receive additional and effective support. Most pupils go on to read fluently and independently.

Pupils' educational needs, including the youngest children, are identified and supported well from the earliest opportunity. The school has invested in high-quality and wide-ranging staff training to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most staff are adept at supporting pupils' everyday needs, especially in speech, language and communication and social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils with the most complex needs access an effective range of additional specialist support and intervention.

Staff, many of whom have been at the school for some time, teach areas including early reading, English and mathematics effectively. They use additional reading

material very well to engage pupils in a wider understanding of the subjects they are learning. As a result, pupils access a range of good-quality learning opportunities. They learn and achieve well.

There are a small number of subjects where staff and leader subject knowledge are less well developed. In these subjects, pupils complete tasks and enjoy learning but they do not develop a deep understanding of the topics they are studying.

Leaders and governors invest heavily in pupils' wider well-being and behaviour. This includes extensive and regular training for staff. Pupils value the calm and thoughtful approach that leaders and staff have. Pupils get timely, highly individualised and effective support to regulate their behaviour and access their learning.

Pupils learn effectively about how to keep themselves safe. They talk confidently about the importance of core values such as democracy and what this means to them. Pupils learn about this through a range of activities and opportunities, including a well-structured programme of daily assemblies. Pupils exhibit what they learn in how they treat each other. They say that differences are 'a superpower' and are to be respected and valued. Pupils are particularly proud of the extra opportunities they get to be role models, such as in the pupil parliament.

Most staff, parents and carers are very positive. They feel that the leaders always make themselves available to help them. Staff value leaders' calm and measured approach to their workload.

Leaders have developed their approach in supporting specific pupils and their families to improve their attendance. This is helping pupils with the lowest attendance to increase their attendance and punctuality quickly and effectively.

Governors bring a wide range of expertise and undertake many aspects of their work with rigour. They are increasingly challenging leaders to provide them with more precise information about some aspects of the school's work over the longer term, for example related to attendance and behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors manage the day-to-day running of the school very well. However, in some aspects of their work, there are gaps in leaders' and governors' strategic monitoring about their longer-term effectiveness. For example, leaders and governors do not make full use of the information they hold on pupils' behaviour. Leaders and governors need to establish monitoring systems to ensure

that they can review where they could make provision even more efficient and effective.

- Leaders' subject-specific knowledge and monitoring in some subject areas are less well developed. The school is not securing pupils' learning in these subjects as well as they intend. The school needs to ensure that leaders' knowledge and monitoring are supporting staff to deliver the intended curriculum effectively, so that pupils learn as well in these subjects, as they do in other areas.

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	114834
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10287085
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Andrew Johnson
Headteacher	Nicky Patrick
Website	www.springmeadow.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school clubs. These are run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- The school and local authority opened an enhanced provision on site for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) in October 2023. At the time of the inspection, five pupils were attending the provision. This provision is not a registered alternative provision or a specialist resource base. It is not listed under the school's unique reference number on Get Information About Schools (GIAS).
- The school is making use of one unregistered alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects; early reading, mathematics, geography, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the subject with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to adults teaching and/or supporting pupils, reviewed pupils’ work and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors also heard a selection of pupils read with an adult.
- Inspectors held discussions with leaders. Inspectors also spoke to two local authority officers and met with several members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- 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.
- Pupils did not receive the link to Ofsted’s survey for them. To gather evidence about pupils’ experiences, inspectors observed them at different times during the school day, spoke to them during free times, and met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 48 responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspector took account of 19 responses to Ofsted’s survey for staff and spoke to groups of staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca McCutcheon	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Carey	Ofsted Inspector

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