

Inspection of Unity Primary Academy

Hickory Avenue, Greenstead, Colchester, Essex CO4 3QJ

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Pieter Labuschagne. This school is part of REAch2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is highly ambitious for every pupil. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils develop a love for learning, which begins in the early years.

Pupils and staff are proud to be part of this vibrant school community. It is full of happy smiles and thoughtful words. Pupils feel safe because of the positive relationships that they form with caring staff. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are friendly and polite. Pupils show care and consideration for each other. They behave well and the classroom environment is calm and purposeful.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This goes beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and tolerance. They possess a deep awareness of how the law protects people, ensuring equality both in schools and workplaces. Art, sport and music play an important part of school life. Pupils learn to play a range of instruments. They eagerly take part in various sports matches and competitions.

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

The school's leadership team has completely overhauled the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. It is now ambitious and interesting, opening pupils' eyes to the world around them. Staff make regular checks on what pupils know and can remember. They successfully adapt work to ensure pupils have access to the curriculum. Pupils benefit from opportunities to recall prior knowledge. This helps them to apply previous learning in new contexts. However, in some subjects, the curriculum does not outline precisely what knowledge pupils should learn. Where this happens, pupils do not build on prior knowledge securely enough.

The school's early years provision ensures that children have a strong start to their education. Staff are highly skilled and have an in-depth understanding about child development. They use this knowledge to create an exciting curriculum. Children are enthusiastic and motivated learners. They work collaboratively to problem-solve, showing developing levels of concentration, independence and perseverance. They benefit from the school's clear focus on developing their language and communication skills.

The school's work to support pupils with SEND is a strength. Pupils with SEND receive effective, individualised support to ensure that they achieve success. Where appropriate, pupils with SEND experience a bespoke curriculum that allows them to build on prior learning from their various starting points. More typically, staff make skilful adjustments that enable pupils to learn effectively alongside their peers. The in-house development of 'The Cove' classroom has been a success. This allows pupils with SEND who experience more challenging barriers to their learning to thrive.

Pupils become confident and fluent readers. This is because the school prioritises the teaching of reading. Staff are trained to deliver the phonics scheme in a consistent and effective way. Pupils use their phonics knowledge well. They break down words into letter sounds and use this knowledge to read and write across the curriculum effectively. Pupils who need extra help with their reading receive it through a successful, targeted approach.

Pupils' character development is exceptional. They learn about personal safety, healthy relationships and what they must do to keep themselves safe online. The school meticulously designs experiences to support pupils. For example, pupils benefit from a range of school trips and visitors to the school. These help pupils to develop a strong awareness of culture and diversity through discussion about topics such as religion. The school's sense of community is a strength, and it sits at the centre of its local area. The development of the community kitchen is indeed bringing 'unity to the community', and supporting pupils to see the benefits of eating healthily.

The school closely analyses the patterns of pupils' attendance. Staff can therefore work closely with families to gain an understanding of the causes of pupils' absence. This has seen an improvement in individual cases. Consequently, levels of attendance have risen in recent years. However, some pupils still miss school too often and do not benefit from the strong offer available to them.

Trustees and governors understand their responsibilities well. They support and challenge the school effectively. With the support of the trust, the school ensures that staff benefit from highly effective training. Staff overwhelmingly agree that leaders consider their workload and well-being. Parents and carers speak positively about the school. As one parent said, 'Unity Primary Academy has truly been a great choice for my children.'

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 subjects, there is not enough clarity about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This makes it difficult for teachers to know when specific subject content should be delivered and affects what some pupils know and remember. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about the important knowledge that pupils need to learn, and when they should learn it, in these subjects.
- Some pupils do not attend school as well as they should. These pupils do not benefit from the high-quality academic and personal development provision that the school offers. The school should refine and develop its approaches to working with these pupils and their families so that any barriers are overcome and that pupils attend school with increasing frequency.

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	141113
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10378538
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
CEO of the trust	Cathie Paine
Headteacher	Pieter Labuschagne
Website	www.unityprimaryacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of REAch2 Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school offers a daily before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with senior school leaders and with representatives from the governing body and the academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Rowena Simmons	Ofsted Inspector

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