

Inspection of Cold Norton Primary School

St Stephens Road, Cold Norton, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6JE

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

The school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspections, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils commend their school highly. They trust adults because they are fair and treat everyone equally. Adults listen to pupils and value their opinions. Pupils and adults get on well together. Pupils feel safe and cared for at school.

Pupils are encouraged to lead on important issues that matter to them. They know the benefits of eating healthily and keeping fit. School and eco-councillors lead the campaign for healthy snacks with less packaging. Pupils are proud they can make a difference to school life.

Playtimes are joyful. There are lots of activities to suit everyone. All pupils play happily together with older pupils looking out for younger ones. They help them in the lunch hall and organise games for them, such as with the parachute. Behaviour in some lessons is not always as good as it could be. Some pupils get distracted and do not work as hard as they should.

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve very well. Leaders have identified aspects of the curriculum that need to improve. They are making changes, some of which are very recent. There is still some work to do before pupils benefit fully from these changes.

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

The school has undergone significant changes in staffing and leadership. Leaders have taken some bold decisions to improve the curriculum. In some subjects, there are well formed plans. They help staff to understand how pupils' knowledge and skills should develop from Reception to Year 6. In most cases, pupils remember and understand what they have learned. This is not the case in subjects where curriculum changes are very recent. Some teachers have not yet had time to become experts at delivering the new content. They do not yet know how to adapt tasks and activities to meet all pupils' needs. Pupils are not given enough time to revisit and embed important knowledge. This affects how well they learn in these subjects.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need. There are systems in place to identify these pupils quickly and accurately. The school works closely with families so they understand what is best for these pupils. Staff receive detailed information which sets out the exact support pupils need. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school recently introduced a new phonics programme. Staff deliver the programme consistently well. Children in Reception enjoy learning new sounds. They use the sounds to read and write sentences independently. This enthusiasm continues into key stage 1. Pupils read books accurately and fluently. Adults frequently listen to pupils read. This helps them spot any emerging gaps quickly. When needed, additional support is put in place to ensure all pupils keep up. Pupils enjoy the 'reading buddy' system. It is a chance to share books with friends from

other classes. The daily story time is also popular with pupils. It helps foster positive attitudes towards reading across the school. The well-stocked libraries provide pupils with a wide choice of books to share at home.

Reception children focus well on tasks and try their best. Adults support children well when they play. Children know the routines and follow instructions. Sometimes, when changing activities, children lose focus and behaviour becomes a little boisterous and noisy. Some children struggle to settle back to their learning quickly. This sometimes happens in other areas of the school. When staff's behaviour expectations are explicit, pupils respond positively. They are very attentive and work hard. When this is not the case, low-level off-task behaviour is not routinely picked up.

The school has given careful thought to pupils' wider development. Pupils say the school values of 'safe, caring, aim high, resilient, friendly' remind them how to act. Pupils talk kindly about others who are different. They learn about many religions and understand what racism is. Residential trips and visits to places like the British Museum help develop pupils' character. Pupils develop their interests through clubs like choir and gardening. They understand about online risks and how to stay safe when out and about. Older pupils talk maturely about how they are ready for the changes as they move to secondary school.

Staff are behind the recent changes and feel well supported. Leaders are sensitive to staff well-being and workload. Governors know the changes will need time to embed. They have the skills to support the school through these changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not yet have the training and expertise to be able to teach the new curriculum as well as they might. This hinders pupils' progress. Leaders must ensure staff have the subject knowledge and skills they need to teach the curriculum effectively.
- Not all staff have sufficiently high expectations for pupils' behaviour during lessons. Sometimes pupils show low-level off-task behaviour and do not pay attention to their teachers. Leaders must ensure all staff address any incidents of off-task behaviour swiftly and effectively.

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	114904
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323616
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gloria Gold
Headteacher	Emily Penkett
Website	www.coldnorton.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2012

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- There is before- and after-school wraparound care available, but it is not managed by the school.
- The school does not make use of any 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 the 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders,

visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at work in pupils' books. Inspectors also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders and teachers to talk about the curriculum, workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. They also met with groups of pupils to talk about learning and well-being and to hear about their views of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with governors, including the chair of governors. A separate discussion was held with the local authority school effectiveness partner.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, pupils and parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement and minutes of meetings of the local governing board.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons, around the school, in the lunch hall and in the playground. Inspectors looked at behaviour and attendance records and considered leaders' analyses of these.
- Inspectors considered the 49 online responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including 29 free-text comments. They also considered the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the 34 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Karen Stanton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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