Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Aldeburgh Primary School

Park Road, Aldeburgh, Suffolk IP15 5EU

Inspection date: 23 April 2025

Outcome

Aldeburgh Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Heidi Norman. This school is part of East Anglian Schools 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), Angelo Goduti, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stella Mackenzie. There are also two executive headteachers, Helen Murray and James Ratcliffe, who are responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend a small school that offers some big opportunities. Happy and engaged, they learn to sail as part of their local heritage and record animated films to show at a local film festival. Reception-age children also visit a farm to learn where food comes from. Older pupils take the train into the capital city to visit museums. These exciting experiences build on the curriculum. They help pupils grow in knowledge and confidence.

Generally, pupils achieve well across the curriculum and in national tests at the end of key stage 2. Pupils benefit from the school's work to curate a curriculum that builds their knowledge of words, ideas and skills. Pupils who find reading hard receive patient, helpful guidance to encourage their confidence and capability with reading the books they receive.

Pupils demonstrate cheerful and friendly behaviour. They enjoy earning rewards like house points, stickers, raffles, certificates and the headteacher's cup. These celebrate both individual effort and teamwork. Lunchtimes are lively, with lots to do. Some pupils enjoy the quiet Oasis Club. Here, they can make models or play board games with friends. Having staff who know how to cater to their needs helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

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

The school's carefully curated curriculum gives staff clarity about what to teach and when. It helps pupils to build knowledge step by step and revisit important ideas, so they remember more over time. This structured approach also supports staff, keeping workloads manageable and enabling them to focus on developing their expertise. The trust enhances this by connecting the school with subject specialists who help shape and refine teaching. For example, in early years, expert input has supported the creation of an environment where children build their independence and engage in activities with purpose.

Teachers typically present content clearly. In many lessons, pupils build their knowledge securely over time. However, at times, pupils are not given enough chances to practise applying what they have learned before moving on to independent tasks. When this happens, teachers can miss signs that pupils are unsure, leading to mistakes or slower progress. This can reduce the chance to step in quickly and address any misconceptions.

The school's team of staff and volunteers work closely with children to help them become confident readers. They break words down into smaller parts to help children understand the sounds before putting them together. Quick checks, like seeing how many words a child can read in a minute, help adults spot who needs extra help and give it without delay. In recent years, the school has also offered one-to-one sessions with a reading expert, so parents and carers can learn how to support their child's reading at home.

Sensible actions are strengthening the support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive. It means they are increasingly able to access learning alongside their peers. Trust-led audits contribute to this work by recognising what is working well and highlighting areas for development. These insights are used to refine staff training, leading to better support for pupils. The 'Have you tried...?' system helps teachers to identify specific barriers to learning and implement targeted strategies, which are improving pupils' engagement and achievement. Where appropriate, external specialists provide additional guidance, agreed with parents, to meet individual needs.

The school helps pupils to develop their character by using clear rules, routines and rewards. These are supported by lessons that teach pupils how to look after themselves and treat others with kindness and respect. When pupils find it difficult to behave well, staff step in quickly and deal with any issues fairly. Pupils know they can talk to staff if something is bothering them. There is strong pastoral support that gives pupils a safe space to share their feelings and learn from their experiences.

Pupils' wider development is enriched through exciting experiences, including residential trips, fashion shows and arts-based projects. These opportunities are thoughtfully integrated across subjects, building confidence and imagination. Whether exploring the sea, performing on stage or curating their own work, pupils flourish through purposeful and varied participation.

Leaders are taking purposeful steps to improve key areas. However, some of their aims lack clarity regarding how success will be measured and by when. For example, while efforts are underway to raise attendance, leaders have not defined what success looks like or set clear timeframes. This makes it challenging for governance to monitor progress and evaluate impact effectively. Nevertheless, the trust's online systems provide trustees with valuable insights to inform professional development and encourage collaboration across schools to raise standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their learning independently, particularly when consolidating new concepts. This can make it harder for teachers to identify misconceptions or to adapt their teaching in a timely way. The school should support staff to ensure that pupils' learning benefits from sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge.
- Aspects of leaders' improvement planning are too broad or lack clearly defined outcomes. This makes it difficult for those responsible for governance to evaluate progress reliably over time and reduces clarity about the impact of leaders' actions. The school should ensure that its approach to improvement planning supports clear review so that progress can be understood, communicated and acted on where needed.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	144211
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10378568
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	89
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stella Mackenzie
CEO of the trust	Angelo Goduti
Headteacher	Heidi Norman
Website	www.aldeburghprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers and oversees before-school childcare for its pupils.
- The school utilises alternative provision to support pupils' needs, working with one registered and two unregistered providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings that involved leaders from the trust and the school, including a trustee, three local governors, the CEO, two executive headteachers, the head of school and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and wider school experience, reviewed samples of pupils' work, and listened to a small sample of pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed school documentation, including the school priorities action plan, self-evaluation document, minutes of meetings of the trust board and minutes of meetings of the local governing board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey, and responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lynn Ayling	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025