Essex County Council

Inclusion review report

Date of review: 24th September 2026

Reviewer

- Victoria McConnell, Education Inclusion Programme Co-Ordinator

Review activity undertaken

- Leading inclusion meeting with senior leaders
- Meeting with teachers and support staff
- Meeting with pupils
- Meeting with families
- Climate walk (x2)
- Meeting with governors

Key findings

- Leaders have established a clear vision that every child should participate and thrive. The RAISE values of Respect, Aspiration, Integrity, Safety and Empathy are understood by governors, staff and pupils and are increasingly driving decision-making across the school. Stakeholders consistently describe a culture of high expectations under the current leadership team, alongside a genuine commitment to belonging and inclusion.
- A significant Gosfield Primary strength is the quality of relationships that exist throughout the community. Families, pupils, governors and staff repeatedly describe a culture where children are known well, understood as individuals and genuinely cared for.
- Families are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents consistently describe leaders and staff as approachable, compassionate and responsive. Many highlighted the visible presence of the headteacher and the trust they have developed in the school's ability to support children with a wide range of needs. One parent described the school as having ‘changed our life’, while others spoke of children who now happily attend school after experiencing difficulties elsewhere.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of the individual needs of their pupils and work effectively with external professionals to remove barriers to participation, with leaders adapting opportunities to ensure that pupils remain fully included in class activity, enrichment opportunities and wider school life.
- Governors have a secure understanding of inclusion and speak knowledgeably about the school's priorities. They recognise the significant cultural improvements made over the past year and understand leaders' ambition to ensure every child accesses a high-quality education through the school's Ordinarily Available offer.
- Inclusion is increasingly characterised by high aspirations, strong adaptive practice and a determination to ensure pupils access meaningful learning experiences alongside their peers wherever possible.

- The school actively seeks and responds to stakeholder voice. Pupil leadership opportunities continue to develop and pupils have influenced decisions including library resources, school environments and wider aspects of school life. Leaders have also strengthened parental engagement through surveys, newsletters, workshops and community events.
- Staff morale is positive. Staff describe a collaborative team culture in which colleagues support one another and share collective responsibility for all pupils. Many acknowledged the positive impact of the current leadership team in creating a stronger sense of community, professional trust and inclusion amongst adults as well as pupils.
- Participation across the wider life of the school has been considerably strengthened. Leaders have expanded the enrichment offer in response to family feedback and now provide an increasing range of clubs, sporting opportunities, musical experiences and Forest School provision. Pupils value these opportunities and talk positively about their involvement.
- Leaders have appropriate systems in place to support attendance and are working proactively with families where attendance is a concern. Breakfast club provision further supports engagement and punctuality.
- The school's commitment to supporting pupils with SEND is evident. Staff work hard to implement advice from external agencies and ensure pupils receive appropriately tailored support. The school's SEND Inclusion Partner recognises the positive relationships within the school, the effective support offered to many pupils with SEND and leaders' commitment to professional development and training.
- Transition arrangements are thoughtfully planned. Leaders work closely with nursery providers, proactively engage with receiving settings and take additional steps to support vulnerable pupils.
- Whilst pupils speak positively about their school, some highlighted occasional low-level disruption and indicated that approaches to supporting pupils when they become ‘stuck’ in lessons are not always consistent. There is an opportunity to further strengthen independent learning routines and classroom support strategies.
- Staff recognise the positive impact of recent inclusion-focused training but expressed a desire for further professional development opportunities, particularly for support staff and newer members of staff, to ensure consistency of practice across the school

<u>Recommendations</u>

1. Develop a structured programme of ongoing professional development ensuring all staff, including newer colleagues and support staff, access training that supports universal approaches to high-quality, inclusive teaching.
2. Review and strengthen classroom routines so that pupils consistently understand the strategies available when they encounter difficulty in learning, reducing reliance on adult support and promoting greater independence.
3. Ensure that pupils, know, understand and can articulate more clearly the difference their contributions make to the school and its community.

ECC colleagues will build support for, and review of, these recommendations into the ongoing cycle of Strategic Planning Meetings and termly review meetings with Inclusion Partners.