

Norwich Primary Academy

Clarkson Road, Norwich, NR5 8ED

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The single-minded determination of the headteacher, other school leaders, governors and the academy trust, has rapidly improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement. Consequently, both are now good.
- Leaders' relentless focus on providing the best possible education for pupils, and accepting no excuse for low standards, drives the academy forward.
- Leaders track pupils' progress in minute detail and give any pupils who fall behind precisely the help they need to catch up quickly.
- Pupils enjoy life in the academy and take great pride in their achievements.
- Pupils are kept safe whilst they are in the academy and know what to do if anything worries them.
- The extended academy day and teachers' good use of extra 'prep' time at the end of the day, enable pupils to access an exceptionally wide variety of learning experiences that enable them to thrive.
- Teaching is good because underperformance has been tackled. The academy fully utilises the skills of each member of staff.
- Pupils throughout the academy make good progress because they practise key skills very regularly in ways they describe as 'fun' and 'interesting'. Pupils make particularly good progress in writing because they develop these skills in the imaginative tasks teachers provide for them.
- The early years provision is good. Children make rapid progress in the Reception classes because extra staff ensure they have the help they need.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils make good progress, standards are not as high as they could be because teaching is still having to plug some gaps in pupils' prior learning.
- Some teachers do not use their marking effectively to give pupils the feedback they need to improve their work.
- Pupils' positive behaviour occasionally lapses when staff are not consistent in the way they manage it.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 29 lessons covering all year groups and a range of subjects. Nearly all of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or an assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, members of the governing body, subject leaders, other teachers, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard a group of pupils read.
- The inspectors considered documents about the academy's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents in discussions and in the 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspectors also took account of the 46 responses to the questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Debra McCarthy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Norwich Primary Academy opened in September 2013, sponsored by the Inspiration Trust.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception children attend full time. There are two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of girls is larger than average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British or from other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6...
- The academy operates an extended school day that is open to all pupils in Years 3 to 6 from Monday to Thursday. This offers an additional period of study followed by enrichment activities.
- The academy runs breakfast club every weekday and after-school club four days a week. This formed part of this inspection.
- An independent pre-school and children's centre operate on the academy site. They are inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - remaining gaps in pupils' prior learning are quickly filled
 - staff give pupils regular feedback in how to improve their work.
- Secure exemplary attitudes and behaviour by:
 - raising attendance above the national figure
 - ensuring all staff consistently implement the academy's behaviour policy

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders contribute fully to the strong culture that promotes effective teaching and good behaviour. As a result, standards are rising very rapidly throughout the academy.
- The academy benefits from the outstanding expertise and support it receives from the academy trust. As soon as the academy opened, the trust conducted a thorough 'health-check' to determine what needed to be done. Important changes were rapidly introduced and these immediately impacted on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders, governors and staff share a strong commitment to giving all pupils an equal chance to succeed, whatever their talents and interests.
- The outstanding headteacher's single-minded determination drives the academy forward and gives pupils the best possible start to their education. In the relatively brief time she has been in post, she has been sharply focused and relentless in driving improvement.
- Academy leaders use performance management effectively to motivate and reward staff. Leaders use the appraisal system to set individual teachers clear and well-founded points for improvement. They provide training that is directly relevant to these improvement points and this develops the expertise of staff.
- The assistant headteachers support the drive for improvement by developing curriculum initiatives and strengthening teaching, for example in training staff in how to use new learning in one subject to help pupils to practise the skills originally introduced in another. They and other subject leaders manage subjects effectively.
- The academy's curriculum meets the needs of pupils effectively so they thrive, both academically and personally. The development of pupils' key skills forms the main thrust of teaching on a daily basis. These skills are taught in well-structured lessons and reinforced in most other subjects. Teachers make imaginative use of the academy's grounds to enable pupils to study topics in depth. For example, in one lesson about prehistoric times, the teacher encouraged pupils to build shelters and cook so they better understood life in those times.
- The academy packs a lot into every day. 'Prep' time follows the traditional day, offering opportunities for pupils to correct mistakes and pursue learning further. Afterwards, numerous enrichment activities, including music, enable pupils to pursue their personal interests and aptitudes. The academy takes every opportunity to open pupils' eyes about what they can achieve. For example, during the inspection some pupils were performing overseas in an orchestra.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Lunchtimes and regular events give good opportunities for pupils to socialise in 'house families'. The academy links with contrasting schools nationally and internationally so that pupils can compare their experiences with those of others of a similar age elsewhere.
- Staff prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. They make sure pupils understand the democratic process through their involvement in the academy council. The academy gives pupils good opportunities to express their views about areas of academy life that are of importance to them and affect them directly. Pupils learn the importance of values that underpin the British way of life, such as 'respect' and 'tolerance'.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding very effectively and the academy neither offers nor accepts any excuse for disadvantaged pupils achieving less well than others. The academy employs extra staff reduce group sizes so that teaching is more closely focussed on each pupil's next steps in learning. These groups constantly change as pupils master skills and move on.
- Leaders' use of the primary school sports funding is particularly effective. This ensures that greater

numbers of pupils participate, and in a wider range of activities, than previously. Activities offered to pupils include ballet and competitive sport. Pupils understand the importance of sustained vigorous exercise to their health and mental well-being.

- Relationships with parents are strong. Parents say they appreciate the way that academy leaders and other staff, such as mentors, greet them and their children at the start of every day. Parents regularly support their children's participation in events.
- The academy benefits from a close working relationship with other academies in the academy trust and is well supported by the trust itself. Staff from across the trust's academies share expertise, for example to assess pupils' progress. Staff from a secondary academy teach pupils more advanced science in practical lessons, widening their knowledge and deepening their scientific understanding.
- The academy also works effectively with other local schools. For example, pupils participate in local schools sports events and takes advantage of the specialist expertise these schools make available, such as speech therapy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is very effective. Governors contribute fully to the academy's improvement. They are highly ambitious for their pupils and refuse to accept any barriers to pupils' aspirations and achievements.
 - Governors closely analyse a wide range of useful information and performance data to check how the academy compares with other schools and academies, and that it is moving in the right direction. They ensure that plans already implemented have the desired impact. Governors utilise their many skills to fulfil their roles efficiently.
 - Governors have a very accurate picture of the quality of teaching at the academy. They make sure teachers' pay rises depend on their pupils making good progress. They know about the management of staff and check that leaders tackle any underperformance quickly.
 - Governors' careful checks of financial spending ensure value for money. Governors check the impact the pupil premium and sports funding have on pupils' achievements and well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils from all different backgrounds work and play together well. Nearly all parents spoken to during the inspection feel behaviour is better now, and that it continues to improve.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They say lessons are much more interesting than in the past. They like the regular practical activities in lessons, and the way staff make learning relevant to their lives. They say it gives learning a purpose and encourages them to concentrate and learn.
- Pupils demonstrate pride in their academy and their achievements. Pupils spoken to said they try harder now because they understand the importance of a good education to their future, especially in finding a good job.
- Staff encourage and reward good attendance. Attendance has steadily improved to broadly average levels, and pupils arrive on time. The popular breakfast club contributes to pupils' good punctuality.
- Staff encourage good behaviour. They give the small number of pupils who sometimes misbehave every opportunity to make the right choice. Although the behaviour of the great majority of pupils is consistently good, it is not exemplary because a small number of pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour. Academy leaders exclude pupils only as a last resort and for appropriate reasons.
- Pupils enjoy lunch and break time in the excellent academy grounds, whether choosing their own game or participating in supervised activities such as football. To utilise the extensive grounds fully, academy leaders have created a system to ensure constant supervision of all areas.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. The vast majority of parents responding to Parent View agree.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare, and they feel confident staff would quickly resolve any concerns or worries they might have.
- Pupils understand the potential dangers of the internet, and know what to do if anything worries them. Older pupils particularly understand the difference between bullying and the occasional falling out among friends.
- Pupils recognise the potential dangers around them. Their awareness of how to stay safe in a variety of places, such as on the roads or in the kitchen, is good.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils are well taught across all subjects, including mathematics, reading and writing. Most parents responding to Parent View agree that their children are taught well. In discussion with inspectors, they particularly appreciated the purposeful learning and wide range of opportunities their children receive.
- Adults provide good role models of courtesy and respectfulness, their actions effectively promote the academy's values and expectations to pupils. Pupils respond positively. The academy appoints significant numbers of extra staff to keep group sizes small so pupils have very good levels of adult guidance and help. This helps pupils to make good progress.
- The academy ensures staff receive thorough training in the different approaches they use when teaching different subjects. In general, this promotes effective teaching. Staff with particular specialisms and expertise in one subject often teach in more than one class, especially in the older year groups. As well as maximising teachers' effectiveness, this helps prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Whether in class or assembly, pupils receive frequent opportunities to speak. They confidently express their ideas, listen to one another's views, and readily consider the need to change their own. Through their questions, teachers encourage pupils to articulate their thinking well.
- Reading is taught well. Staff teach phonics (how letters link to the sounds they make) effectively because they all use an identical method so pupils know what to expect as they move through the groups.
- Good teaching enables pupils to develop secure writing skills and styles that they practise in a range of subjects. Teachers set pupils imaginative tasks, such as writing an account of a meeting with Isaac Newton, and this enthuses them to write.
- The teaching of mathematics follows a clear structure that develops pupils' understanding and enables them to practise their skills regularly. Teachers in other subjects provide exciting and relevant activities to build on pupils' mathematical skills, such as in a technology lesson, where pupils used the notions of ratio and proportion to make a model of the Eiffel Tower. These imaginative and interesting opportunities deepen understanding.
- Staff check pupils' work and follow up almost immediately on mistakes and misconceptions to correct errors while they still fresh in pupils' minds, often during 'prep'. While marking mostly identifies what pupils do well and identifies the next steps they need to take in their learning, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement has improved considerably since the academy opened in 2013, and is now good. However, the achievement of older pupils reflects the weaker teaching they received in the past which meant their progress was slow. As a result, although they make good progress and go some way towards catching up, many remain below the level expected for their age.
- Leaders' forensic attention to detail is key to the academy's success. They analyse information about pupils' progress in minute detail, particularly to spot any gaps in their learning. This information is used to plan extra help, precisely matched to those areas so pupils catch up and move forward rapidly.
- When the academy first opened, many pupils were behind in their learning and, in the last two years, effective teaching and good support have enabled them to catch up quickly. Year 6 pupils' progress has accelerated and is now good in reading, mathematics and particularly in writing. As a result, the academy is rapidly closing the achievement gap between its own pupils and pupils nationally.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level by the end of Year 6 was above the latest national average in writing, but below in reading and mathematics. In the short time since the academy opened, standards have improved significantly. In reading, for example, the proportion reaching the expected level has more than doubled.
- The most-able pupils make progress similar to other more-able pupils nationally. Like all pupils, the most-able benefit from the smaller groups, so they have more adult guidance, and benefit from the more practical, problem-solving approach to subjects such as mathematics.
- Progress is equally good, and accelerating across all year groups in the academy, largely because of improvements in teaching in many subjects. Pupils' workbooks show good improvement over the last year, with the breadth and depth of pupils' work increasing well. In Year 5, for example, the academy's own assessments and inspection findings confirm at least nine in every ten pupils are on track to meet or exceed the expected rate of progress by the end of Year 6. In Year 2, while pupils remain behind where they should be, they have made good progress, often from low starting points.
- Pupils' results in the 2015 Year 1 national screening check of phonics are similar to last year's national average. Given pupils' low starting points, this represents good progress.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made better progress than other pupils in the academy. In reading, they were about a quarter of a term ahead, in writing about half a term, and in mathematics about a term ahead. They remain, however, about a term behind other pupils nationally in reading and half a term in writing and mathematics. Even so, this is a very significant improvement on the past.
- Disadvantaged pupils throughout the academy make similarly good progress to other pupils because leaders at all levels, including governors, do not allow disadvantage to be a barrier to learning. Staff organise what is taught, and how it is taught, very effectively to engage these pupils and raise their achievement.
- Disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, do well and make good progress from their varied starting points. This is because staff tailor extra help to each individual's unique needs, and regularly check their progress to see if the support is working, and changing it if not.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below those that are typical for their age in reading, writing and number.
- The academy's smooth arrangements for transition from local nurseries enable children to settle quickly and feel at home. Children respond positively to class routines and expectations, and learn purposefully as a result. Teachers make accurate and regular checks on children's progress and these enable staff to provide children with tasks that closely match the next steps in their learning.

- Good quality teaching ensures children engage fully with their learning. As in the older classes, adults carefully teach key skills, such as the sounds that letters represent. Staff ask open-ended questions to promote and encourage children’s talk. Teachers use short, focussed daily sessions to good effect to reinforce children’s grasp of phonic skills, and this enables children to practise what they know and grow in confidence. Children are well prepared for Year 1; they make rapid progress and about two-thirds of children will enter Year 1 this year having reached a good level of development. This is double the proportion last year, which itself was a large increase from when the academy began.
- Children behave well, listen to staff and follow instructions closely. They persevere with difficult tasks. Children enjoy the wide variety of interesting activities across all areas of learning. Their motivation to try things for themselves is high.
- Leadership is good. The generous number of well-trained staff ensure children receive the help they need. Leaders manage other staff well so they form an effective and cohesive team. Each individual member of staff knows what is expected of them and this ensures teaching is lively, challenging and well planned at all times.
- The academy’s clear procedures for safeguarding keep children safe are effective because staff follow them closely. Every morning, staff check all learning areas for potential risks. Staff teach children how to use equipment properly and stay safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139929
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	450096

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dame Rachel de Souza
Headteacher	Tessa Holledge
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01603 454423
Fax number	01603 451898
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