

# Wensum Junior School

Turner Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4HB

## Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and her senior team have successfully established an inclusive, caring school in which pupils and staff are valued and thrive in their work.
- Leaders have developed a rich, innovative curriculum that fires pupils' imagination and inspires them to learn. Pupils apply their literacy skills across a range of subjects well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for exceptionally well. Pupils develop a mature understanding of the wider world as a result.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. Teachers plan learning activities that enable pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to make good progress in reading, writing and across the school's wider curriculum.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well led. Pupils make strong progress socially and academically as a result.
- Pupils behave well. Relationships are positive and based on the school's values of kindness, honesty and respect. Leaders ensure that the small proportion of pupils who find it harder to make good behaviour choices are given effective support to do so.
- Parents and carers, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school.
- Pupils' attendance has been improving and was in line with the national average in 2017. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school reduced significantly in 2017. However, in the first term of this academic year pupils' attendance fell.
- The trust provides effective support for teachers and leaders. Consequently, staff are increasingly confident and effective in their work.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was low in 2016 and 2017. As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' progress in mathematics is improving rapidly but is not yet consistently good.
- In some classes teachers are not adept at moving pupils, in particular most-able pupils, on in their learning in a timely manner in mathematics. As a result, most able pupils' strong progress in reading and writing is not consistently matched by their achievement in mathematics.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should present their work in their mathematics books. As a result, untidy work goes unchallenged.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by:
  - ensuring that pupils' progress in mathematics continues to increase so they make at least consistently good progress from their individual starting points
  - ensuring that greater proportions of most-able pupils achieve higher standards in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - equipping teachers with the skills and strategies to enable them to move pupils on in their learning in a timely way, especially in mathematics
  - making sure all teachers apply consistently high expectations of how pupils present their work in their books.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by making sure the recent fall in pupils' attendance is reversed.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The inspirational headteacher, supported well by her staff, has successfully created an inclusive school in which each pupil is well known and cared for. Pupils and staff willingly contribute to the positive ethos which is underpinned by the school's values of honesty, kindness and respect.
- Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the work taking place in the school. Comments about the 'relentlessly positive and caring attitude', that 'respect and kindness are paramount' and that pupils are 'truly well-supported, thriving and keen to learn' were typical of the sentiments expressed by parents.
- Leaders, including board members (those adults responsible for governance), have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to improve further. Staff, board members and, for some aspects, pupils, regularly monitor the quality of provision. Leaders respond effectively when something is found to be lacking or not as good as it should be. For example, leaders have recently developed additional provision for pupils who need significantly more support than the school previously offered. Pupils in receipt of this provision are more settled and confident in their learning and play.
- The headteacher has made clear her expectation that each pupil deserves the highest-quality teaching. She has combined challenge to practice that falls below the standards she expects with well-judged support to bring about necessary improvements. For example, the work of the school's lead practitioner and the trust's subject experts has ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. Staff are extremely supportive of their leaders. Many echoed the sentiments of one teacher who told inspectors how 'incredibly proud' they were to work at the school.
- Leaders, supported well by the trust, have developed a diverse curriculum that interests, excites and is inspiring pupils in their learning. Pupils told inspectors how projects such as 'working as historians' and 'working as scientists' help them get involved in learning more and 'think like a scientist'. Pupils relish the opportunities to work with external experts in dance, history and science. Evidence from pupils' books and the many bright displays of recent work bears witness to the skills pupils develop and apply well across a range of subjects. Parents are similarly positive about the curriculum, commenting that 'the Wensum way makes learning fun, not boring or regimented'. Pupils' behaviour and progress are improving as teachers have become increasingly skilled at implementing the school's curriculum.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well led and funding appropriately allocated. Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and precisely and then put in place appropriate support and monitor its impact. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress and are developing greater confidence in their learning.
- Leaders know the barriers to learning disadvantaged pupils in the school face and are making progressively more effective use of funding to support them. Through the work

of the pastoral worker, family worker and school's leadership team, pupils are helped to attend more frequently and make better, often good progress.

- Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain. They develop leadership and decision-making skills through their work on the school council. They understand the importance of working together to make a decision. Pupils also take part in elections and referenda. They are developing a strong knowledge of the world around them through the numerous project activities undertaken with local organisations.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding well. In allocating this funding, leaders take into account not only the skills teachers need to develop, but also pupils' opinions about the PE and sports they wish to take part in. Leaders' careful monitoring shows the positive impact of this approach. Inspectors saw pupils and staff making enthusiastic use of the sports equipment at lunchtime.
- The trust provides appropriate support to the school. The trust also undertakes an annual scrutiny of the quality of education and works with school leaders to bring about improvements as appropriate. For example, recognising pupils' achievement in mathematics was not improving rapidly enough, trust leaders allocated significant resources to the school. While outcomes in mathematics are not yet good, they are rapidly improving. Staff appreciate the opportunities to work with other schools across the trust. This work has been an important factor in the improvements made to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective.
- The body responsible for school governance is the school advisory and improvement group (SAIG). Members of this board provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. They are making progressively more effective use of their considerable knowledge and experience of education to ask pertinent questions about the quality of the school's provision.
- In addition to the challenge presented by the SAIG, the chief executive officer of the trust meets regularly with the headteacher to scrutinise the work of the school. This combination of support and challenge is helping school leaders bring about the necessary improvements as school leaders further their aim of creating a school that provides outstanding education.
- Members of the SAIG are regular visitors to the school. They attend curriculum showcases and parents' consultation events or carry out tours of the school to see the quality of provision for themselves. As a result, they have a detailed understanding of what is working and what needs to improve. This helps board members to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources such as pupil-premium funding.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, including SAIG board members, ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties to keep pupils safe.

- Almost all parents, staff and pupils agreed pupils are safe at school. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school because of the level of care afforded to them. Pupils also confidently explained the strategies they would use to keep themselves safe in a range of settings, for example when online or when near the sea.
- Staff receive appropriate training and regular updates in safeguarding. Adults in school are alert to any signs that indicate a pupil may be vulnerable or at risk. Staff know how to refer any concerns they have and expressed confidence these concerns would be dealt with appropriately and well. Well-kept school records confirm that leaders ensure that pupils receive timely support when it is required.
- Those responsible for governance make sure the school carries out the necessary checks on adults who work at the school. The record of these checks is carefully maintained.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- School and trust leaders correctly challenge weaker teaching practice and provide high-quality support and appropriate training for teachers. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and is resulting in good or rapidly improving pupil achievement in many subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers are skilled at implementing the school's curriculum. They make effective use of their good subject knowledge to plan learning that is well matched to the interests and capabilities of pupils in the majority of subjects. For example, as a result of their teacher's careful planning, pupils of all abilities in a lower key stage 2 class successfully developed their use of vocabulary as part of their 'working as artists' project.
- In many classes, teachers make excellent use of questioning to deepen pupils' thinking and understanding in many subjects. For example, through their teacher's careful and persistent questioning, pupils in an upper key stage 2 reading lesson gained a greater understanding of the environmental issues they were studying.
- Teachers provide feedback in line with school leaders' expectations. This feedback is often precise and offers pupils clear guidance on the steps they need to take to improve their work. Pupils know and understand what is expected of them as a result.
- Pupils are given frequent opportunities to demonstrate their literacy and analytical skills and do so well. For example, inspectors saw numerous examples of pupils editing, redrafting and finalising writing about the past, science or different countries and cultures. Pupils are equally confident when speaking about their work. They articulate the skills and knowledge they are developing well and with real enthusiasm.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at developing positive relationships with pupils. Pupils respond well to the firm, well-judged academic challenge from adults. For example, through the careful guidance of their teaching assistant, pupils in an upper key stage 2 class deepened their understanding of more complex mathematics problems.
- Leaders explained the steps they have taken to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics. Inspection evidence demonstrates pupils benefit from logically sequenced programmes of work, which enable them to understand and then apply mathematical concepts. However, some teachers are not as

skilled at moving pupils, especially those who are most able, on in their learning in a timely way. In these instances, pupils' progress slows.

- Evidence from work in pupils' books and folders demonstrates that many teachers apply the same high expectations in most subjects across the curriculum. However, some teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work in mathematics are not high enough. In a small number of classes, untidy work goes unchallenged and continues over a period of time. This can affect the accuracy with which pupils are able to carry out their work in topics such as shape and area.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults know pupils well. Staff use this information to provide high-quality support and care for pupils when they need it. Pupils know this is the case and appreciate the calm, kind ethos of the school. Inspection evidence confirmed the comment of one pupil that their school 'is not tense, it is calm and relaxed'. This absence of tension was seen in the ease with which pupils openly discussed the theme of friendships in their assembly.
- Pupils told inspectors that if they have concerns or feel unhappy teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors notice and help out. Pupils explained how much they value their 'compassionate teachers' and facilities such as 'the snug', where they can go if they need additional support or guidance.
- Pupils know what bullying is. They told inspectors that it was not commonplace in their school and that adults deal with any incident swiftly and well. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed school leaders deal well with any incidents of bullying that occur.
- Leaders place a high priority on providing a rich and diverse curriculum for pupils. In this they are successful and pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and spiritual development is provided for exceptionally well. Pupils know why it is important to learn about different cultures and faiths and have ample opportunities to do so. They explained that this work helps them 'understand other people's religions' and learn to 'respect all other people'. Through the school's chosen themes such as 'working as artists', pupils develop the skills and understanding of the history, planning and performing of opera, dance and circus.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The overwhelming majority of parents, pupils and staff agreed this to be the case. Inspection evidence supports their views.
- Pupils typically are keen to learn. They behave well in lessons, listen respectfully to their teachers and classmates and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. As a consequence, in many classes, learning takes place in an industrious, good humoured way. Pupils told inspectors this was normal at Wensum Junior School. On the occasions where pupils do not behave as their classmates or teachers expect, they respond

quickly to adults' instructions. For example, a teacher's simple reminder of 'the rules of the circle please' was enough to ensure that pupils listened carefully as their classmates took turns to speak about the school council's work.

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is similarly positive. While many play with energy and gusto at break and lunchtimes, others develop different skills and knowledge in supervised activities such as pond dipping and table tennis. These activities further consolidate pupils' learning and communication skills and add to the positive atmosphere evident around the school.
- Some pupils take longer than others to adapt to the high expectations modelled by their classmates and staff at the school. This has led to a small number of incidents which have resulted in pupils being excluded from school. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to make sure the small minority of pupils who find making the correct behaviour choices difficult are given the right support. In very many cases this is helping pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance has improved consistently since 2015. By the end of 2017 it was in line with the national average. The proportions of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who are persistently absent from school fell dramatically in 2017. In the first term of this academic year attendance has fallen. Leaders are taking effective steps to make sure this improves.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2 in the key subject of mathematics was low in 2016 and 2017. As a result of school and trust leaders' effective actions, pupils currently in school are making considerably better, but not consistently good progress in mathematics. This is why outcomes for pupils require improvement.
- Pupils made good progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017, while most-able pupils made particularly strong progress. Inspection evidence, including the school's accurate assessment information and work in pupils' books, demonstrates that pupils continue to achieve well in writing.
- Pupils' progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 was low in 2016. As a result of leaders' and teachers' effective work, pupils' progress improved considerably and was in line with pupils nationally in 2017. Pupils read confidently and have frequent opportunities to do so across the curriculum. Pupils in each year currently in school make good or improving progress in reading.
- In 2017, by the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils made progress that compared favourably to that of other pupils nationally in reading and especially in writing. Their progress in mathematics was better than in 2016, but remained lower than it should have been. In line with other pupils currently in school, disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics continues to improve rapidly.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities' progress in each subject improved considerably in 2017. As result of the skilfully planned curriculum and well-judged support, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress socially and academically.

- In common with other pupils in school, most-able pupils' progress is stronger in reading, writing and in other subjects across the curriculum than it is in mathematics. The progress most-able pupils currently in school make in mathematics is improving.
- Pupils make good and sometimes better progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum. This is because leaders and teachers have ensured that the school's curriculum is implemented effectively. Pupils respond well as teachers provide them with frequent opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the wider curriculum.



## School details

Unique reference number	141356
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10041741

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Tony Hull
Headteacher	Victoria McConnell
Telephone number	01603 620 877
Website	<a href="http://www.wensumjunior.co.uk">www.wensumjunior.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@wensum.norfolk.sch.uk">office@wensum.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized junior school. It became a sponsored academy in February 2015 as part of the Evolution Academy Trust. Since 2015 the number of pupils on roll has increased by 25%.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for which the school is in receipt of the government's pupil premium funding is above the national average at 50%.
- The percentage of children and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class at least once. Several of these observations were undertaken alongside the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils learning in small groups around the school site. An inspector also visited an assembly.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and when moving around the school site at breaktime and lunchtime. During these times, inspectors held informal discussions with pupils about their learning and play.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and folders in lessons and in the displays in the school library. Members of the school's senior leadership team also undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work alongside the inspection team.
- Meetings were held with: three groups of pupils; the headteacher; other senior leaders; a group of subject leaders; a group of teachers and teaching assistants; three members of SAIG; the chief executive officer of the trust; the chief executive officer (designate) of the trust; and the trust's numeracy and literacy leads.
- Inspectors considered 29 responses to Ofsted's free-text service alongside 36 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The lead inspector also considered the views expressed in one letter and one email to Ofsted. Inspectors also evaluated 27 responses from staff. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's documentation including that relating to: safeguarding and child protection; curriculum development; pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; school development and improvement plans; leaders' self-evaluation; external audits of the quality of provision; school leaders' allocating of pupil premium funding; leaders' plans and evaluation of the PE and sport premium funding; and the school's own surveys of parent and pupil opinions.

## Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

James White

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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