

# Avenue Junior School

Avenue Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 3HP

## Inspection dates

27–28 March 2019

<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>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have taken proactive and effective action since the last inspection to rapidly improve the quality of education, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders have put in place and implemented a high-quality programme of professional development and support for teachers. This has ensured that the approach to teaching mathematics is fully embedded and successful.
- Leaders have developed a broad curriculum. The arts are highly emphasised, and all pupils receive specialist music tuition. Most also learn to play an instrument. Pupils take part in many cultural activities which enhance their life experiences.
- Teachers successfully enthuse pupils about the topics they are studying in subjects such as history and geography and are beginning to make sure that pupils can apply their knowledge and wide vocabulary in different contexts.
- Pupils behave well. They work together in class, particularly in mathematics, discussing ideas and supporting each other to reason about problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils have previously had attainment and progress well below those of other pupils. Leaders have provided effective support that has resulted in the gap in their attainment diminishing.
- Good support from the pastoral team and school leaders for families and pupils has resulted in attendance rising.
- In some classes, where the sequence of teaching writing is strong, pupils make good progress. In other classes, where teaching is not as effective, progress is slower.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are often of mixed quality. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how work should be presented or model this to their classes.

## **Full report**

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

- Enhance the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that there is greater consistency in the teaching of writing so that it is strong in all classes
  - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work as a close team to lead the school well. This partnership has been effective to lead the school through a period of transition in leadership. They were highly reflective following the short inspection of the school in March 2018 and put in place effective actions that have resulted in rapid improvement in the teaching of mathematics, pupils' attendance and the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Mathematics is led by a team of teachers. They have led regular training for all staff members through this year and followed this with support for individuals from the mathematics team and also from an external adviser. Staff appreciate the good-quality training they have received.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is of a high standard. They are clear on where the school's strengths currently are and know what is needed to further improve the school. They are not complacent and are ambitious for pupils to make more progress.
- Leaders identified that their previous assessment system was not providing them with clear, reliable information. They have begun using standardised tests to inform teachers and leaders about progress and attainment. As a result of this and work undertaken after analysis of this information, pupils are now making good progress.
- New teachers are well supported by colleagues. They have opportunities to request support where they identify they need it and receive helpful feedback from observations. Those who are early on in their career are given the chance to be part of subject teams to build up their leadership skills. Staff are appreciative of leaders' awareness of workload when introducing school improvement projects.
- Leaders have ensured there is an exceptionally high emphasis on the arts at the school. They are working to make greater use of the pupils' use of knowledge and vocabulary developed in subjects such as history and geography in their English lessons. Equally they are working to increase the opportunities to apply their writing skills in the wider curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a good awareness of pupils' individual needs, and her high expectations are shared with staff. Support staff receive high-quality training to enable them to help pupils to make good progress.
- The pupil premium funding is used well. Last year, there was a large gap in both attainment and progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2. Leaders were reflective and took action. They evaluated the impact of the spending and found that interventions to support pupils' learning did not lead to long-term gains in their attainment.
- Leaders sought external advice and have adjusted their approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils to make the progress that they should make, whether high, middle or low prior attainers. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils have made very strong progress in this academic year. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is now very small in most year groups.

- The sports premium funding is used effectively. Leaders have enhanced teacher subject knowledge and skills in delivering the physical education (PE) curriculum, resulting in good-quality PE teaching. Funding has also made it possible for more pupils to engage in competitions out of school and extra-curricular activities. Many of these are oversubscribed, and pupils show high skill levels. In the past, for example, pupils have progressed to join the national korfbal squad.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have undertaken a complete review of the way they operate over the last two years. They sought external support to improve the way they monitored standards of attainment and progress. They have now incorporated this good practice into their regular committee meetings.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school. They are more challenging to leaders in school than in the past. Governors take a close interest in the detail of data presented by school leaders. Individual governors have distinct areas of responsibility and monitor these well. Governors have undertaken monitoring visits and have identified improvements in the school from repeating the same focus after a year.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained and kept informed through regular updates in staff meetings. The designated leads describe the culture as one of 'healthy vigilance', and staff pass on all concerns in a timely manner. These are followed up effectively by leaders.
- The pastoral team and external agencies have provided additional support and counselling for pupils. A parent-support worker is shared between the feeder infant school and Avenue Junior. This enables close working where there are siblings on both sites and during pupils' transition at the end of Year 2 to Year 3 in the junior school.
- Pupils are clear that they feel safe in school and most parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, agreed.
- Leaders have ensured that all appropriate checks are made on those adults regularly in the school and these are checked by the governing body and external auditors.

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

**Good**

- Teachers in each year group work closely with each other. This ensures sharing of good practice and a consistent level of challenge and work for pupils across each year group of four classes.
- In mathematics, teachers emphasise reasoning and encourage pupils to apply their mathematical skills. Pupils discuss mathematics and support each other if they are stuck, before asking an adult. There are daily fluency sessions to develop this aspect of mathematics. All pupils of the same age access the same learning objectives – those who might struggle are supported by adults and use of practical equipment to make sure that they do not fall behind. Pupils who need more challenge receive this in a variety of tasks.

- Particularly in mathematics, but also in other subjects, teachers make effective use of 'extra time', where support staff or teachers work with pupils who have not fully understood the day's learning before the next lesson, again ensuring that they do not fail to keep up.
- In English, pupils' reading is developed by using high-quality texts linked, where possible, to the wider topics they are studying. The few pupils who start the school with poorer phonics knowledge are given additional support, and leaders are working with the feeder infant school to ensure that the same approaches are used, to avoid dips in learning. There is a well-stocked library situated at the heart of the school and which all pupils access regularly.
- Teaching focuses on using sophisticated vocabulary and correct sentence structure in English lessons. Where this is structured effectively, teachers enable pupils to make strong progress in their writing. However, this is not the case in some classes, and in these classes pupils do not have clear guidance to enable them to write effectively for the intended purpose. Some pupils do not have enough stamina for writing or opportunities to write in different contexts. Expectations vary too much for the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation in their written work.
- Many trips and experiences support pupils' enthusiasm for the topics they study in subjects other than English and mathematics. They are starting to be more confident to answer questions such as 'Why?' and explain their findings from investigations. Leaders have plans to further staff skills to develop this further during this school year.
- Pupils are encouraged to apply their knowledge to different contexts, for example in religious education, comparing their knowledge of the Hajj, learned the previous term, to that of pilgrimages for Christians, based on a trip to Walsingham.
- The school intentionally promotes music as a major subject in the curriculum. All pupils have weekly specialist music tuition, learning piano, drums, specific music vocabulary, skills and knowledge. Many pupils also learn an individual instrument and take part in ensemble or orchestra-type groups.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Spiritual opportunities encourage children to reflect and think. Leaders emphasise philosophy work. Pupils are becoming more confident with explaining their thinking. Pupils are very understanding of the differences between each other and do not accept any discrimination or intolerance.
- The school's work on supporting others is a strength and develops a high sense of moral purpose in the pupils. The school is a 'School of Sanctuary' and pupils talk clearly about how they should welcome new pupils and visitors. They respond to current events, recently holding an afternoon dedicated to protesting climate change. A real sense of moral duty is clear from pupils' description of this.
- Pupils are well prepared to be active citizens through involvement in many groups, such as the eco-council, the equalities and well-being group, Amnesty International

and the school council. A group recently visited the Houses of Parliament to present on their work on refugees. British values are developed through the school's work on respect, resilience and aspiration, and pupils can easily explain what these mean and look like in practice.

- Pupils' cultural development is a priority through the high-quality music provision. They perform at local music festivals. They have a large hall, with stage and balcony for parents watching, and make full use of this to stage performances on a regular basis.
- Pupils' creative side is enhanced by other local links, such as those with the Norwich Writers' Centre and the Plantation Gardens. Pupils have produced guides for the latter that are now used by other schools, bringing value to the pupils' work.
- A small breakfast club has space for up to 10 disadvantaged pupils. This has increased their attendance and provides a good start to the school day. Pupils said that they like the food and enjoy playing board games.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils generally work hard in lessons. There is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms, with pupils supporting each other and discussing their work. At times when they are less involved in learning or finding work difficult, there can be some low-level disruptive behaviour, but this is managed well by staff.
- Where there have been more serious incidents of challenging behaviour, evidence shows that these have been well dealt with, supporting all involved and their families. No behaviour of this level was observed during the inspection.
- Pupils value the rewards awarded in the school for good behaviour and effort and wear badges as part of this with pride.
- At playtimes, pupils are energetic but well supervised. They enjoy playing with their friends in a wide range of play spaces. They take part in active sports or quiet activities, climb on a variety of apparatus and build dens.
- Attendance is good. In the past, too many disadvantaged pupils were persistent non-attenders. Leaders and the pastoral team take early action where pupils are at risk of missing school too much and work closely with their families. As a consequence, more disadvantaged pupils are attending regularly.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2018, pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in line with national standards, but below that of reading and writing. Pupils' progress was below the national average. Leaders took effective action, and as a direct consequence the progress of pupils' work in mathematics during this school year has been extremely strong. Teachers have implemented the revised approach to teaching the subject effectively and pupils have become highly confident in reasoning and using number.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading and writing was well above the national averages for both the proportion of pupils at the expected standard and the

higher/greater depth standards. Pupils in the school currently continue to make good progress, but this is greatest in the classes with the most effectively structured approaches to teaching writing.

- Previously, there has been a large gap between the progress made by (and overall attainment of) disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Leaders have put in place effective support that has enabled disadvantaged pupils to make better progress, and the large gap in attainment is no longer there.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.

## School details

Unique reference number	120928
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10054387

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nania Poulson
Headteacher	Debbie Dismore
Telephone number	01603 441034
Website	<a href="http://www.avenuejuniorschool.org">www.avenuejuniorschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@avenuejunior.norfolk.sch.uk">head@avenuejunior.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than average for this phase of education.
- An externally run and separately registered provider, Peapod Pre-School, runs a nursery school in part of the school building, which is accessed separately.
- An externally run and separately registered provider, Avenue Out of School Club, provides a breakfast club and after-school care in the school buildings.
- The school has its own small breakfast club for targeted individuals, to support good attendance and a good start to the school day.
- The school is a hub 'School of Sanctuary' for local schools involved in the scheme.
- The school holds the gold Artsmark from the Arts Council for its provision in the arts.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in every class. Some of these observations were undertaken alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by the inspection team.
- The inspection team met with representatives from the governing body and the local authority adviser. They met with senior leaders, middle leaders and recently trained teachers. The 31 responses to the staff survey were considered.
- A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtimes.
- An inspector visited the school-run breakfast club.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including assessment information and the school's self-evaluation.
- Pupils read to inspectors and talked about their reading preferences.
- The 128 responses made by parents to Parent View were considered. The inspection team also spoke to some parents before school.

## Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Mellors

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Templeton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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