

Inspection of John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

Hungate Street, Aylsham, Norwich, Norfolk NR11 6JZ

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School. From the start of Nursery, children begin to learn what it means to behave 'the John of Gaunt way' and to 'always choose kindness'. As they progress through the school, pupils learn the school's five Rs – respect, resourceful, resilient, reflective, responsible and reasoning.

Pupils enjoy learning about lots of different things in lessons and through other activities. Pupils particularly love learning about the wider world in geography. They enjoy their outdoor learning time and going on trips, such as to the beach and the country park. Despite these strengths, teachers do not expect enough of pupils. Teachers do not ensure that what they teach matches the needs of pupils in their class. Pupils do not learn as well as they should, especially in mathematics.

Pupils behave well in the school. They cooperate in classes and play together sensibly in the playground. Adults help by starting games outside and encouraging pupils to join in. In some classes where the curriculum is not well matched to their needs, some pupils become uninterested. Pupils say bullying is rare and know that if they are worried or upset they can always tell an adult.

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

The quality of education is variable, because curriculum planning is not well thought out across subjects.

Where curriculum planning is weaker, planning does not take account of the knowledge and skills that pupils need to have, for example in mathematics. Here, teaching moves from one mathematical topic to another too quickly, before pupils have grasped what has been taught. Those pupils who are ready to learn more are not given enough opportunities to deepen their mathematical knowledge.

Some subjects have been improved by recent changes, such as in the curriculum for reading. Leaders have made sure that all teachers know the sounds they should be teaching and teach them in the correct order. Leaders have raised the profile of reading in the school. They have produced online videos to help parents and carers understand the school's approach to teaching phonics. The writing curriculum for key stage 1 ensures that pupils learn about different genres and revisit these regularly to consolidate their learning. Pupils' reading and writing are improving. However, teachers do not support pupils well enough in learning how to form letters correctly and in spelling.

Some subjects are well planned and sequenced, such as geography. Pupils enjoy learning about different places. They retain what they have learned and build on learning over time.

The curriculum is not modified to meet pupils' different needs in some classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive additional support which is well matched to their individual targets. The quality of support they receive in class varies. Some pupils are not helped to develop increasing independence, when they are ready. Instead they become too reliant on adult support.

Most pupils behave well. They are keen to learn. They know the school's behaviour rules. They know that 'moving to red' is to be avoided. When pupils cannot access tasks or are not challenged sufficiently, a few lose interest and talk among themselves when they should be working.

In the Nursery, staff provide a range of activities which children find interesting and stimulating, but in the Reception classes the curriculum lacks structure. Teachers' planning does not take enough account of what children already know and can do. Teachers do not use the information they have consistently well to identify and address where children have gaps in their learning.

Leaders provide many opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils write kindness slips for others, which are shared in weekly assemblies. They take on responsibilities, such as being special helpers, school councillors and librarians. They learn about other faiths in religious education and other countries in geography. Leaders encourage pupils to challenge stereotypical views, for example through studying Black women in history.

Leaders recognise that pupil achievement has not been good. They have implemented changes which are starting to improve the quality of education. Many are very recent and are yet to show impact. Leaders' checks on the quality of education do not link what they find to pupil achievement. Leaders do not pinpoint well enough what is needed to improve the teaching and curriculum in some classes and subjects. Governors and the executive headteacher for the federation are holding leaders increasingly to account. Leadership capacity has increased by sharing expertise within the federation. Still, some new leaders in the school are not given the support needed to enable them to play their part in improving the subjects they are responsible for.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone in the school knows that keeping children safe is a key priority. Staff know what to look for that may show a child is at risk. This is because they receive thorough training. Leaders follow up concerns about pupils rigorously and work with other agencies to keep pupils safe. Checks on staff are carried out and recorded appropriately.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn about road safety. They know not to give personal information to strangers, including online. Pupils feel safe in the school, and parents agree.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The sequencing of the curriculum for Reception-aged children lacks coherence. Teachers do not use enough of the information that they collect to intervene where some children are falling behind. Leaders need to ensure that there is a sequenced plan in place, so that children leave the foundation stage better prepared for Year 1.
- Some subjects, including mathematics, are not sequenced well enough. Pupils are not able to progress in the curriculum as fluently as they should. Teachers do not have the guidance they need to ensure that pupils learn subject-specific concepts in the order they need to and in enough depth. Leaders need to implement the planned changes to the curriculum, including in mathematics, to ensure that teaching builds on what pupils already know and deepens the knowledge of those who have already grasped concepts.
- Many curriculum changes are new or yet to be implemented fully, and many subject leaders are new to position. Leaders' monitoring is not pinpointing where they need to precisely support teachers more effectively to ensure that pupils access the curriculum as well as they should, including those pupils with SEND. Subject leaders need to ensure that all teachers are implementing the curriculum effectively. Senior leaders need to ensure that subject leaders are supported so that they play their role fully in securing improvements in their subjects.
- Pupils' writing, while improving in content, is hampered by pupils' weak handwriting skills and spelling. This is because there is too much variance in how teachers are planning this area of their work. Leaders need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching handwriting and spelling, so that pupils can write more fluently.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	120988
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10134663
Type of school	Nursery and Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenny Youngs
Headteacher	Clare Toplis
Website	http://www.johngaunt.norfolk.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school joined the Aylsham Learning Federation in March 2018. This is a federation with the local junior and high schools. The three schools share an executive headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo).
- The school’s nursery has moved to a purpose-built building separate to the main school since the previous inspection. It now has 104 places in total, operates from 7.30am to 6pm and offers flexible hours for 50 weeks of the year.
- The school provides before- and after-school care for pupils.
- The number of pupils in the school has increased. There are now two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 2.
- Several teaching staff have joined the school since the previous inspection, and the current headteacher was appointed in 2017.
- The school was judged outstanding at its previous inspection. It was therefore exempt from routine inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with senior leaders, teachers, the executive headteacher, the federation SENCo and six members of the governing body. We met with a range of pupils and talked to them about their learning. We observed a small number of pupils reading with an adult.
- We scrutinised pupil records and files relating to safeguarding, looked at records of staff recruitment and looked at records of training relating to safeguarding.
- We considered deeply the school's work in reading, writing, mathematics and geography. Inspectors met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders. We visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils from the lessons visited and looked at pupils' work.
- We gathered information relating to other areas of the framework by visiting classes, speaking with pupils and looking at pupils' work in a range of subjects, talking with leaders, teachers and other staff, and talking with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We spoke with parents at the start of the school day and spoke to pupils in the playground at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Prue Rayner

Ofsted Inspector

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