

Inspection of Wells-Next-the-Sea Primary and Nursery School

Polka Road, Wells-Next-the-Sea, Norfolk, NR23 1JG

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Wells-Next-the-Sea are curious about learning. They are happy and safe. Their teachers are caring.

Pupils learn about the wider world. For example, pupils experience what it is like to be an artist through the school's links with a local art gallery. Woodland activities and visits to the beach help pupils learn about the local natural environment. Leaders' invitations to inspiring visitors help pupils to learn about the wider world.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They want pupils to aim for interesting careers. Pupils concentrate in class and there is a calm atmosphere around the school. Bullying is rare. Pupils told us that leaders act quickly when bullying happens.

Pupils grow in confidence during their time at the school. Teachers teach the youngest pupils how to use equipment, how to share and how to make good choices. This prepares children in Nursery and Reception Year for Year 1. Older pupils take part in drama workshops and poetry recitals. They gain the self-assurance to perform in front of others.

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

Leaders and teachers have worked together to design an interesting curriculum to inspire pupils. They have set out the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils will learn. Teachers check pupils' readiness to learn. They also check how much pupils can remember. Teachers are careful with their explanations of concepts. They model the vocabulary they would like pupils to learn. They ensure that pupils have enough practice. As a result, pupils can remember a lot of what is taught.

Some aspects of the curriculum are new. Although the changes to the curriculum are having an immediate positive impact, work to review and refine the order of the curriculum is at an early stage. Leaders are in the process of bringing about the further refinement that may be needed. Similarly, while assessment provides useful information on what pupils have learned in the short term, systems to check how well pupils have remembered key content in the long term are not fully developed.

Pupils become proficient and confident early readers. Leaders have chosen a range of books that teachers read to children to help pupils develop a love of reading. Children who are new to reading have books that match the sounds they have been taught. This helps them practise what they have learned and improve their reading.

Leaders and teachers help children to behave well. They promote pupils' self-control and teach pupils social and emotional skills. Teachers reward pupils for achievements both in and out of school. As a result, pupils behave well in class, are polite and have positive attitudes to learning.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to learn outside the classroom, for example through regular visits to the local church. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships curriculums teach pupils about different kinds of people, how to eat healthily and how to stay safe on the internet. Leaders place great emphasis on pupils' mental health within the curriculum and pastoral provision. Leaders want all pupils to be able to experience moments to be calm and to reflect. Pupils learn how to meditate and all teachers have been trained to deliver mindfulness sessions.

In early years, teachers are ambitious for children to achieve. They work together so that pupils are ready to move from nursery to school. Children like the books and songs that staff share with them. These books and songs help children to develop their language and communication.

Leaders ensure that staff provide what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need. Staff are responsive to the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders work with families so that they can better support pupils with SEND to be ready for the next stage of education.

The trust and school leaders know the school well. Members of the local advisory body regularly visit to gain an understanding of what the quality of education is like. They check whether pupils are safe and how enthusiastic they are about learning. Trust leaders are developing support networks for subject leaders.

Some staff told us that they have experienced an increase in workload as a result of recent changes to the curriculum. Leaders are aware of this. They are keen to support staff with more communication and training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff prioritise safeguarding. All staff, and regular visitors, receive appropriate training. They are alert to the signs of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Leaders are quick to secure help for pupils and they work closely with outside agencies.

Leaders, including trustees and members of the local advisory body, fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They check the suitability of new staff before they start at the school.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils know how to share a concern with adults at school. Pupils know that adults at the school will help them if concerns arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment does not give enough information about what pupils can remember in the long term. This means that leaders do not know exactly which aspects of curriculum, teaching or pupil tasks need to change. Leaders should improve their systems of assessment, so that they have a better understanding of how much pupils can remember and, therefore, where the curriculum may need further refinement.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is at an early stage of development. Leaders have not fully checked how well subject curriculums are achieving what leaders intend. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken in planning the curriculum and training staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing about the further refinement that may be needed. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied. Leaders should continue to check their subject plans to ensure that pupils gain cumulatively sufficient knowledge.
- Leaders have managed a period of significant change over the last year. As a result, some staff have experienced an increase in their workload. Leaders are aware of this and are keen to support staff in dealing with change. Leaders should continue to monitor the impact of change and ensure staff are adequately supported in further school development.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	144975
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10212054
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Smith
Headteacher	Rachel Stroulger
Website	https://www.wensumtrust.org.uk/wells-next-the-sea
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wells-Next-the-Sea Primary and Nursery school converted to become an academy school in September 2017. When its predecessor school, also called Wells-Next-the-Sea Primary and Nursery school, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of Burnham Market Primary school.
- The school uses the services of two alternative education providers. One is unregistered, and one is registered with the school that it is based at.
- The school runs a nursery for 3- and 4-year-olds on the site of the main school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the board of trustees, the chair and vice-chair of the local advisory body and the primary strategic lead for the trust.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to discuss the school's arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils and to review the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading, art and design, and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 20 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered responses to the pupil survey and the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Keay

Her Majesty's Inspector

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