

Inspection of Admirals Academy

Admirals Way, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2JT

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Since the school opened, pupils have not received a high-quality education. Although they are now experiencing a better-quality education in English and mathematics, other subjects are not yet taught as well.

Most pupils work hard in lessons and play well with others at playtimes. They take pride in their work. They enjoy reading. However, there is some disruption in lessons where pupils talk when they should be listening. This makes it harder for all pupils to learn what they need to.

There are sometimes incidents where pupils perceive that they have been bullied. Pupils are confident that if this does happen, teachers sort things out quickly. Pupils feel that all are welcome in the school.

Opportunities for pupils to engage in activities beyond the core curriculum are at an early stage of implementation. There are some extra-curricular activities but not as many as before COVID-19 restrictions.

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

The school has been through a considerable period of turbulence since opening as a new school in 2017. Leaders did not quickly establish and secure high standards from opening. Improvement is at an early stage. A new executive headteacher is in place, together with a new senior leadership team who work across both this school and the next-door infant school.

Reading is being given high importance in the school's curriculum development. The few pupils who still need support with early reading have additional reading support, including reading with adults and practising their sounds. Every classroom has a selection of quality books. Pupils are enthusiastic about the stories they read with teachers. Pupils are taught clear strategies for decoding and interpreting text. Staff feel well supported by how leaders have helped them develop their practice.

In writing and mathematics, pupils make regular use of a range of resources to support their thinking, for example word mats and hundred squares. Vocabulary is emphasised in both, together with developing rapid recall of number facts in mathematics. Pupils' written work is of good quality and well presented. Ongoing assessment means teachers know what pupils need to do next.

However, in subjects beyond English and mathematics, what pupils learn does not always match the intentions laid out in the long-term plans. Some teachers are not confident in the subject knowledge that they need to know to deliver these curriculums effectively. Some subjects do not have enough coverage over time to deliver the intended curriculum content.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified. The speed of this process has sometimes been slower than it could be. Pupils with SEND have additional adult support in class to access the curriculum. All pupils with SEND have support plans. However, these are not detailed enough for staff to fully understand how to support each pupil's needs well.

Equality and respect for all are encouraged through lessons and assemblies. Pupils are sure that any new pupils would be welcomed. They feel safe in school because they know adults will sort out problems. However, they do not like it when other pupils disrupt their learning.

There have been many staffing changes. The multi-academy trust is focused on supporting leaders to recruit staff, and this process is well on the way. However, the rapid changes have led many parents to be disillusioned with the school. Too many do not feel satisfied with the level of communication they have received.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders from both schools work closely together to ensure joined-up working with families. Record-keeping is highly detailed and shows that where there are concerns, these are followed up rapidly. Training for staff in effective safeguarding has also been a high priority for school leaders.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, both out and about and online.

All appropriate checks are made on adults regularly in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for subjects beyond English and mathematics is not yet fully embedded. Teachers do not all have the confidence or subject knowledge to deliver the intended outcomes. Consequently, pupils do not learn and remember as much as they should over time. Subject leaders need to be supported to be able to coach and/or train colleagues to deliver the curriculum well.
- Plans for pupils with SEND are in place, but the detail of pupils' needs and actions proposed are not precise enough. As a result, pupils with SEND are not supported precisely to make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders need to support staff to improve the quality of planning and implementation.
- Over the last few years, relationships with parents have deteriorated. A number of parents are dissatisfied with the school and so the links between school and home are not as positive as they should be. Leaders need to find ways to improve this situation and communication so that parents have confidence in the improvements being brought about.

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

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| Unique reference number | 145028 |
| Local authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 10212052 |
| 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 | 271 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Julie Perry |
| Headteacher | Michelle Kouni |
| Website | www.admiralsacademy.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the predecessor school, of the same name, was inspected in May 2014. At that time, the school was judged to be good.
- The school reopened as a new school, part of the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, in September 2017.
- The executive headteacher and other members of the leadership team work across both this school and Raleigh Infant School, also part of the same multi-academy trust.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke to members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and other members of staff. They also spoke to the chief executive officer and other representatives from the multi-academy trust, including members of the academy council (local governing body).
- Inspectors did deep dives into English (including early reading), mathematics, history and geography. 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.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and a sample of safeguarding records. They spoke with leaders, other staff and pupils.
- Inspectors also visited lessons in personal, social and health education and science.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school policies, plans and documents.
- Inspectors took account of the four responses to the staff survey and the 31 responses to the parent survey.

Inspection team

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