

Inspection of Hilgay Riverside Academy

Church Road, Hilgay, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 0JL

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone knows each other well at Hilgay Riverside Academy. Pupils all become a 'family leader' in Year 6 and help to look after younger pupils. Pupils are kind and show respect for each other and the staff.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk confidently about what they have learned. The curriculum helps pupils to make links from previous lessons and across subjects.

Pupils behave well in lessons and successfully meet the consistently high expectations in place. Pupils listen to each other's opinions and respond sensitively. Younger children learn the routines of the school from their older peers in the mixed-age classes.

Bullying is rare, but if there were any incidents of bullying, pupils are confident that staff would sort it out. Pupils know that disagreements can happen when they are 'a bit dramatic about things'. Their teachers help them to learn about expressing their emotions, such as through setting up clubs such as 'girl up' to help older female pupils.

The motto of the school is 'opportunity, challenge, respect'. Pupils understand what this means and are proud of their school community and all it has to offer.

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

Leaders have designed an appropriate and ambitious curriculum. Learning is planned step-by-step from Reception to Year 6. Leaders have considered what pupils have missed in their learning and this is included in the curriculum thinking and what leaders intend for pupils to learn. This is ensuring that any gaps in curriculum knowledge are taught so pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers regularly help pupils to revisit previous learning. They help pupils to understand new vocabulary and new content. Older pupils are given opportunities to apply knowledge and choose how to present their learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils are encouraged to use their historical knowledge to understand how sculptors and artists are inspired.

Assessment is used well across the school. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding, what they remember in lessons and how they apply what they know in their future lessons.

The reading curriculum is a strength of the school. Staff have been well trained and have secure subject knowledge to teach reading. Children start learning their sounds when they start in Reception. Leaders have ensured that the books that pupils read are well suited to their stage of development. Pupils who need extra support have additional sessions with skilful adults. This helps pupils to catch up quickly.

The early years curriculum is well-considered. Children in the early years benefit from effective focused teaching sessions with the teacher and are then supported to be able to independently practice and apply their learned knowledge and skills.

Leaders accurately and swiftly identify the support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need in order to access the full curriculum. For example, pupils with SEND have adjustments to teaching materials or small group assistance. As a result of this support, pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers and achieve well.

Leaders have reviewed and introduced a new behaviour policy. Staff help pupils to understand expectations. As a result, behaviour is calm in lessons. However, behaviour at other times of the day is more variable. For example, a few pupils play physical games which can result in unintentional incidents. Currently, some pupils do not understand the right way to behave during break and lunchtimes and staff do not step in quickly enough.

Leaders have planned a range of wider opportunities for pupils to expand their experiences outside of Hilgay. These activities include visiting the theatre and helping in the community. Pupils embrace these challenges and opportunities. The personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils to show empathy about personal and social issues. This is preparing them to better understand the wider world.

Some members of the governing body are new to the school. The pandemic has impacted upon the amount of time new governors have had to learn how the school operates and consider what leaders need to do to improve. As a result, some areas of monitoring, particularly pupils' behaviour, have not been carried out as robustly as other areas. Trust leaders have plans to improve the consistency and effectiveness of monitoring in this area, so new governors better know and understand the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that throughout the school there is a vigilant approach to keeping pupils safe. Regular training sessions ensure staff are informed by the most up-to-date guidance. Staff know what signs to look for if a child is at risk of harm or neglect. Records are detailed and actions are followed up swiftly. Additional services are accessed if pupils or parents need extra support.

Pupils feel safe and know how to report concerns. The curriculum is well mapped out. Personal and internet safety are taught in an age-appropriate way. Pupils are encouraged to share their feelings and ask any questions they want to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured the rules, routines, and expectations of how pupils should behave when not in lessons is clear and are consistent throughout the school. As a result, on occasions, pupils' behaviour during breaktimes is not as consistently good as in class. Leaders should set out the rules, routines, and expectations of pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and ensure all staff are trained and supported to implement them.
- The newer members of the governing body have not been able to visit the school to carry out their monitoring responsibilities. Trustees should provide further opportunities, training, and support for new governors to ensure the rigorous approach to monitoring the curriculum is applied in other areas of school life, such as behaviour, to better understand the school.

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	142526
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10227403
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Younger
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Turner
Website	www.riversidefederation-norfolk.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has been part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust since 1 January 2016.
- There has been a significant change in staffing since the previous inspection in 2018.
- The executive headteacher is also the headteacher at Ten Mile Riverside Primary Academy which is part of the federation.
- Some other members of staff also work across both schools in the federation.
- The majority of the governing board have recently been appointed.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision was last inspected on 10 June 2015 under section 48 of the Education Act.

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.

- The inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior teachers, subject leaders, staff, and pupils. They also met with the chair of governors, the director of education, the school performance director and the chief executive officer for the trust.
- Deep dives were carried out in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, science, and geography. For each deep dive inspectors met with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to teaching staff.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and looked at case files.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documentation including behaviour logs, minutes of governing body meetings, governor and trust visit notes, school improvement plans and school policies.
- There were 13 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View that were considered by inspectors alongside 13 free-text responses. The inspectors also reviewed eight responses to the staff survey and six responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Beale

Ofsted Inspector

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