

Inspection of a good school: Magdalen Academy

Park Crescent, Magdalen, Magdalen Academy, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3BU

Inspection date: 29 June 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Magdalen Academy is a happy school where everybody is valued. Pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils have several adults they can talk to if they have any worries. Bullying does happen but pupils know who to report incidents to. They are confident staff will deal with the issue.

Pupils are taught a broad range of subjects. In some subjects, however, the curriculum is not taught effectively or adapted appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. Some pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those in early years, do not achieve consistently well.

Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive for positive attitudes and good behaviour, such as 'house points'. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. On occasions, teachers do not have high enough expectations of a few pupils in lessons who have consequently developed poor attitudes to learning.

Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities on offer and like going on trips. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent visit to take part in a community opera called 'The Moon Hares'. Additional opportunities such as these help to broaden pupils learning experiences.

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

Leaders provide pupils with a suitably broad and balanced education. Curriculum plans are in place across all subjects and are adapted to take account of the school's mixed age classes. Leaders plan educational trips, for example to Norwich Castle, to provide 'strong starts' to new topics to enthuse pupils for learning. However, the curriculum is not taught

consistently well. There is variation between classes and across subjects. There is some low-level disruption and a lack of interest shown from a small number of pupils. This is because teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low, both in terms of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. Teachers do not choose the right activities to support learning.

Where the curriculum is taught effectively, for example in mathematics, teachers plan appropriate activities. These activities help pupils to learn important content and teachers then check that pupils have remembered their learning. Pupils have a sound recall of key mathematical knowledge. Pupils enjoy applying what they know during maths lessons.

The use of assessment information is better developed in some subjects than others. Where information is used well, teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning and where additional input is needed. In other subjects, assessment methods have been introduced more recently and are less effectively used.

Leaders prioritise reading. Younger pupils vote regularly to decide which books they want their teachers to read to them. Adults choose a range of interesting and high-quality texts which are linked the curriculum to help pupils gain an enjoyment of reading. However, the teaching of early reading and phonics does not always help pupils learn to read well enough. Pupils who find learning to read more difficult receive additional help, but this is not always well-planned. The books used for these pupils are not matched well to the sounds they know. Some pupils find their books too difficult to read accurately and fluently. Leaders are not clear about how well their interventions are working.

There is high-quality social and emotional support for pupils with SEND. Pupils receive help to manage their feelings when they need it. This builds their confidence and wellbeing. The quality of learning support provided in their classrooms varies. There are some pupils whose individual plans are not good enough. Some support plans lack appropriate detail to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. Some pupils with SEND find it hard to remain interested in lessons.

Pupils learn how to develop positive relationships, be tolerant and respectful citizens. Leaders provide additional opportunities for pupils to learn what life may be like for people who are different to themselves. Pupils are provided with leadership roles, such as being part of the school council. Pastoral support is a strength.

Leaders, including those on the academy review committee, have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. Leaders from the multi-academy trust provide regular professional development and training for all staff which is closely aligned to the school's improvement plan. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being.

In discussion with the co-headteachers, inspectors agreed that the reading curriculum, including early reading, the consistent implementation of the wider curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are vigilant. Staff are well informed about safeguarding and receive regular safeguarding training. They are alert to the signs of potential abuse. Leaders have efficient systems for reporting and reviewing safeguarding concerns. They ensure that concerns are dealt with swiftly. Referrals to external agencies are made in a timely manner. The academy review committee members carry out their statutory duties diligently.

Pupils learn what to do to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not delivered consistently well across classes and subjects. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and how they should behave are sometimes too low. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they should and there is a small amount of low-level disruptive behaviour in classes. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to teach the full curriculum well. Leaders should also ensure that all staff have high and appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave.
- The early reading and phonics programme, including the use of intervention sessions, is not implemented well enough. Some pupils do not get off to a strong start in learning to read as they lack the reading knowledge required to read fluently. Leaders must ensure that the phonics programme is implemented effectively so that all pupils can quickly become accurate, fluent and confident readers.
- The identification of pupils' needs and the effectiveness of targeted support is still not good enough. This means that some pupils with SEND are not achieving as well as they should. Leaders must continue to implement strong processes and systems so that all pupils with SEND are swiftly identified and receive the support they need as quickly as possible.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Magdalen Village School, to be good in November 2013.

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	145532
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10227560
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Randall
Headteacher	Suzannah Hayes and Louise Arrowsmith
Website	www.magdalenacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school was previously federated with two other primaries, Magdalen Academy and Wimbotsham and Stow Academy. These schools continue to share leadership across the three schools.
- The three schools have two co-headteachers. This school is managed on a day-to-day basis by one headteacher. The co-headteacher still has leadership responsibilities for aspects of the school's work.
- The school is part of the Unity Education Trust. It was previously part of KWEST multi-academy trust. This was merged into Unity Education Trust on 1 June 2021.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, maths and history. 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. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers, other senior leaders and a wide range of staff. They met with representatives of the academy review committee, trustees and multi-academy trust leaders.
- A range of school documentation and policies was reviewed. This included records of meetings from the academy review committee, the school's self-evaluation and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads, considered the central record of recruitment, and reviewed a sample of safeguarding records.
- Inspectors spent time observing and speaking with pupils, including at breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by reviewing the free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and by reviewing the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tim McLoughlin

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022