

Inspection of Elm Tree Primary School

Ranworth Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 9HN

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong community ethos and pupils are very proud of their school. Pupils feel safe because teachers have pupils' welfare at the centre of all they do. Pupils are able to talk to an adult should they need to. They know how to keep themselves safe out of school. Pupils are very happy.

Pupils say that behaviour is exceptionally strong because adults have instilled in them very positive attitudes. Pupils work hard and enthusiastically without prompting by teachers. They listen carefully and respectfully to the views and ideas of others. They are polite and kind. They play well together and solve disputes, often without needing a teacher to intervene. They care about each other and show tremendous empathy for those in need of help and support. Pupils report that bullying rarely happens. If it does, teachers deal with it immediately.

Pupils love learning and achieve well. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in trips and learn outside of school. They visit historic cities, East Anglian beaches, and marshlands, and they go to the theatre. This helps them to build knowledge about the world around them. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education their children receive.

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

Leaders ensure that the teaching of reading is a high priority. They have provided teachers with relevant training. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, which is very effective. Children in Reception therefore learn sounds quickly and soon begin to read words and sentences. By Year 1, pupils can decode unfamiliar words with accuracy and fluency. Older pupils read more complex texts confidently, using appropriate expression. Teachers enthuse pupils with a love of reading. Pupils read a wide range of books, which helps them to learn about people from different cultures and backgrounds. Teachers check how well pupils are reading. Pupils who are less confident readers receive precise help so they can catch up.

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum. True to the school's motto of 'growing enquiring minds' pupils become inquisitive and confident learners. They are reflective and apply their knowledge to solve problems. What pupils learn builds on what pupils have learned before. Teachers explain new information well and very clearly. They ensure that pupils fully understand the important knowledge required so pupils can be successful in learning. Teachers carefully check what pupils know and what they do not. In some subjects, teachers regularly go back over what pupils have learned before. This helps pupils to remember and use knowledge very well. This is not so consistent in other subjects. As a result, pupils do not recall knowledge or demonstrate their understanding as well as they might across all subjects.

The early years curriculum is well structured so that children learn to make sense of the wider world. Teachers choose activities carefully. Children have many opportunities to practise speaking and develop new vocabulary, which provides secure foundations for the curriculum in Year 1.

Leaders cater well for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide teachers with bespoke training and clear documentation so that they fully understand how best to support pupils with SEND. Leaders check how well teachers adapt their teaching to help pupils with SEND learn.

Leaders have established a warm, caring ethos. Pupils become highly compassionate individuals. They sensitively look out for others. They encourage and support each other, which builds self-esteem. Pupils make significant contributions to their local community. They pick up litter on the beach. They raise money for the local hospice and for those who do not have enough to eat. Pupils are open-minded and embrace difference.

Older pupils are mature role models who reinforce high expectations. They contribute to the wider life of the school. They organise assemblies, sporting events and help younger pupils to read. Pupils understand that positive relationships are based on trust and respect. They have a thorough understanding of how their behaviour can have an impact on how others feel. They modify their actions accordingly. Pupils know how to negotiate when their friends disagree. Pupils attend well and leaders regularly check that pupils' attendance remains high.

The trust and the local governing body have established reliable systems to hold leaders to account. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to continue to improve. Leaders have fostered a very supportive ethos. Teachers enjoy their work. They appreciate that leaders have everyone's well-being at the forefront of their minds. The trust has provided very effective support. This has brought about improvements in every area of the school since the last inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff know how to identify any pupils who may be at risk. Leaders have established robust systems to report any concerns. Leaders respond quickly to any concerns raised. They liaise with a range of other agencies to ensure pupils receive appropriate support. All pupils feel safe. They fully understand the potential dangers of being on the internet. They know how to respond appropriately to these.

Leaders carry out checks on all new staff. They make sure that everyone is safe to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils do not recall as much of what they have previously learned as well as in others. This is because pupils do not have sufficiently planned opportunities to practise and demonstrate what they have previously learned across all curriculum subjects. Leaders should continue to ensure the quality of the curriculum gives pupils regular opportunities to revisit important knowledge.

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	142580
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10227400
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Drew Whitehead
Headteacher	Julia Halliday
Website	www.elmtreeprimaryacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Evolution Academy Trust.
- The school makes use of a registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.

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 met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the director of education for the trust, the chair of the local governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to

lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation.

- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding leader. They scrutinised safeguarding records and spoke with pupils and with staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. Inspectors met with parents in school and when they came to pick up their children. There were 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered 28 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Adam Cooke, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen McCarney	Ofsted Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

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