

Inspection of North Walsham Infant School

Manor Road, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 9HG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 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?

At North Walsham pupils are encouraged to dream big. The school starts to prepare them for their future lives as soon as they join Reception.

Pupils are polite and friendly. Their relationships with each other and the adults are respectful. Pupils thrive in their calm classrooms and are enthusiastic about school life. They behave well and rise to the adults' high expectations. If any pupils struggle to manage their feelings and behaviour, staff act quickly to support them. This is an inclusive school where everyone is supported to learn and aim high, whatever their starting point.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know they can share their worries with adults and trust them to sort out any problems that arise. Bullying rarely happens and the atmosphere inside school and on the playground is happy and positive.

Pupils enjoy going on trips, such as a day at the beach or a visit to a nearby lifeboat museum. Many of them attend after-school clubs where they can learn new skills, from fencing to arts and crafts. The '50 things to do before you leave North Walsham' programme gives them a wide range of exciting experiences inside and outside the classroom.

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

Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum. It is designed to give pupils the knowledge and skills they need and build their learning over time. Pupils are taught essential vocabulary for each subject. They recap on what they have already learned frequently and this helps them to remember key concepts. There are clear links between what children learn in early years and Year 1, so they are well prepared for what comes next when they leave Reception.

Teachers check how pupils are getting on throughout lessons in a variety of ways. They see who needs extra help and put this in place quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders' system for identifying pupils' needs early is robust. These pupils have detailed support plans, sometimes with input from other professionals. They are well integrated and learn alongside their classmates most of the time.

Some parts of the curriculum are new this year and teachers are still developing their knowledge of how to deliver plans in a few subjects. They do not always design activities to suit the range of pupils' abilities. This means that, occasionally, some pupils do not fully meet the staff's objectives. Leaders check what is happening in the classroom regularly, so they are aware of this and have plans to address it.

Early reading is a priority. Teachers read to pupils every day and use high-quality texts to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. In Reception, for example, a lovely picture book, 'Timeline: a visual history of our world' by Peter Goes, introduces pupils to historical events and time periods. It teaches them essential vocabulary they will come across later on.

Pupils start to learn phonics as soon as they join Reception. The adults who teach them are skilled and use a consistent approach. Pupils know the routines and are engaged during phonics sessions. They take home books that are matched to their phonics levels and progress through the programme steadily. Any pupils who fall behind are quickly spotted and get extra help. Leaders have put an effective programme of support in place for pupils who did not reach the expected standard in phonics last year.

The school encourages parents to support their children's learning. For example, parents recently attended a 'Reading Café'. They sat with their child during a phonics session, finding out how early reading is taught.

Pupils listen attentively and follow adult instructions well from Reception to Year 2 and in all areas of the school. Staff use a consistent approach to managing behaviour and there is rarely any disruption to learning.

The school has designed its own 'Life Skills' curriculum. Through it, pupils learn about positive relationships, healthy lifestyles and living in the wider world. The school council gives them a say in what happens at school and they learn about British values in assemblies. A carefully chosen set of books teaches them about different cultures, races and family types.

The leadership team is united in its drive for continuous improvement. It is supported in this by the trust and local governing body. Leaders are mindful that staff are their most precious resource. They take account of staff workload and well-being when introducing new initiatives. Leaders ensure training helps staff do their jobs well. Staff appreciate this and there is a strong sense of teamwork at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are well trained in safeguarding. They are vigilant to the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff know the pupils well and report any concerns immediately. They are confident these will be acted upon appropriately. There are detailed records of concerns raised. Leaders who are responsible for safeguarding respond swiftly when a vulnerable pupil or family needs help. They liaise often with external agencies to ensure the right kind of help is provided.

Pupils learn about various forms of personal safety and know what to do if they have any worries about themselves or their friends.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The work pupils do is not always adapted to suit their different needs. This means some pupils are not able to fully access the intended learning outcomes. Leaders should support teachers to design thoughtfully adapted tasks and activities. All pupils will then have the chance to fulfil their potential and meet the aims and ambition of the curriculum.

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.

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	145442
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10242280
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Gibson
Executive Headteacher	Joanna Read
Website	www.nwjun-infsfed.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in February 2018 and was formerly part of the Yare Education Trust. It became part of the Broad Horizons Education Trust (BHET) in July 2022.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was making use of two local alternative providers of specialist support for pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded 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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader, one early career teacher, a representative and a trustee of the BHET, and two members of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors looked at evidence from other subjects, including art and geography.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and three other members of the safeguarding team. She scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke to governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governor meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- To gather parents' views, the lead inspector reviewed the 22 responses and 15 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Imran Khan

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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