

Inspection of Valley Primary Academy

Gentry Place, Norwich, Norfolk NR5 8XZ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

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?

Pupils are proud of their achievements and love receiving house points. They are keen to learn and are happy and safe at school. Adults give pupils the support they need to work well independently as well as in groups. Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities, such as bushcraft and music lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are very supportive. Pupils value the care they receive from adults.

Most pupils behave very well. Bullying is rare and quickly resolved if it occurs. Pupils are thoughtful and show secure levels of respect for others. Sometimes, if a pupil struggles to manage their behaviour, adults are very good at helping them to regulate their emotions. Some pupils make use of focused support in school. This is very helpful in supporting them to remain settled and happy throughout the day.

Children in Reception are well prepared for Year 1, both academically and socially. Older pupils are beginning to benefit from recent improvements to the curriculum. However, this is not yet fully developed and so pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they should.

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

Leaders are working diligently to bring about necessary improvements to the school curriculum. These changes are in the process of being implemented and some are further on than others in their development.

In areas where changes are more established and have had time to develop, such as science, pupils are doing well. The curriculum is very specific about what pupils need to learn and when. Staff are well trained and confident to deliver lessons that help pupils understand the topics that are taught. In some other subjects, the curriculum lacks clarity about what pupils need to learn. In these instances, staff are less clear about the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. They are not using assessment precisely enough to identify what pupils have not grasped. They are not always clear to what extent pupils have understood what has been taught. Therefore, pupils do not routinely achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have ensured that reading has a rigorous focus in the school. Adults are very well trained to deliver effective phonics lessons. There is a sharp focus on ensuring pupils learn to read fluently. Any pupil who falls behind is quickly supported to keep up. Adults read with pupils every day. There is a wide range of books that pupils read either at home or in school. Pupils talk about their reading with enthusiasm.

Trust leaders have worked effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and given appropriate support. Leaders work closely with external agencies and ensure that these pupils are well supported to access their learning. Due in part to the newness of the

curriculum planning in certain subjects, some pupils with less complex needs do not routinely receive timely support to do as well as they should.

Children in Reception benefit from a high-quality education. Adults are clear about what they want children to learn. Staff in early years have a clear understanding about what the children know - or struggle with - and adapt their lessons carefully. Children hear and use a wide range of vocabulary. Adults regularly revisit learning and build on what children have previously been taught. This means that children, including those with SEND, remember their previous learning and achieve well from their starting points.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Adults ensure that pupils are explicitly taught how to behave. Pupils move around the school very calmly. They are focused in the majority of lessons. Sometimes, routines are less well established. In these instances, pupils receive additional support to meet staff's expectations.

Leaders have ensured that pupils' well-being and personal development is prioritised. Pupils respect each other's differences. They understand about managing their money and know how to stay safe. Leaders ensure that there are a range of trips and clubs that pupils enjoy. Chess club and a visit to Banham Zoo are particularly popular.

Changes to school leadership have ensured a secure and robust focus on improving the curriculum and this is resulting in many improvements. Leaders know there is more to do. However, there is evidence that the work leaders are doing is making a difference and is impacting positively on improving important aspects of the school, for example the quality of education and behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Appropriate checks on adults who work with pupils are in place.

Leaders have clear and well-understood policies in place to safeguard pupils. Staff are confident in raising concerns about pupils and do so where needed. Regular checks from the trust ensure that actions taken by safeguarding leaders are timely and appropriate.

Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils who need additional support receive it.

Pupils learn how to be safe both online and offline. Specific adaptations to the curriculum ensure pupils with SEND have a good understanding of personal safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders know that some subjects are not planned sufficiently well and, consequently, they are reviewing these curriculum areas. In these cases, there is a lack of detail about what pupils need to learn. Subsequently, the work expected of pupils does not routinely meet their needs and support them adequately to develop their knowledge and skills. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum planning is consistent across all subjects.
- Due in part to previous weaknesses in curriculum plans, assessment is not being used precisely enough to check on pupils' learning. Where gaps are identified, pupils are not always given the opportunities to improve their knowledge or understanding. Leaders need to make sure that assessment is used effectively, so pupils achieve well in all subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Clear plans are in place for staff that provide appropriate strategies for how best to support pupils with SEND. Pupils with complex SEND are supported very well. However, pupils with less complex needs do not always receive appropriate support after their needs are identified. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the appropriate training to follow the plans that are in place and support all pupils with SEND to do well.

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	142818
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10255117
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	182
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Winyard
Headteacher	Sara Bush
Website	www.valleyprimaryacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An acting chief executive officer was appointed in summer 2022.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in April 2022.
- The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school makes use of specially resourced provisions for pupils with SEND. These units are run by the trust and are located across the four trust schools. They cater for pupils from early years to Year 2 and from Year 3 to 6.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also scrutinised the English and geography curriculum and scrutinised pupils' English and geography books.
- Inspectors met with staff responsible for the administration of the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They also met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and spoke to trustees regarding safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experience of school, including clubs, behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's curriculum plans for pupils' personal development and early years.
- Inspectors met with trustees and scrutinised a range of documents relating to school improvement.
- Inspectors considered seven responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. Inspectors took account of nine responses to Ofsted Parent View, including six free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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