

Inspection of a good school: Sprowston Junior School

Recreation Ground Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8EW

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

Sprowston Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say the best things about Sprowston Junior are their friends, the teachers and their lessons. Parents also speak very highly about the school and would recommend it to others. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. Bullying happens rarely. Pupils are confident that teachers will act swiftly if anyone is unkind to them.

Pupils demonstrate good behaviour in classrooms, on the playground and around the school. They respond well to teachers' high expectations for their learning. Pupils value opportunities to work with subject experts, who help to make their learning more memorable. For example, Year 5 pupils worked with a local dance teacher, which greatly enhanced their understanding of Mayan influence on Mexican dance, music and culture.

Pupils enjoy participating in the wide range of clubs on offer. These include science, art, chess and various sporting activities. These opportunities help pupils to learn new skills and develop their talents.

Pupils can take on roles of responsibility. Pupils feel valued and know that the ideas they share contribute to decisions made in the school. For example, members of the school council asked leaders to update the playtime resources in 'The Shed,' on the playground. These are now in place.

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

Leaders have ensured that a well-planned curriculum is in place. Curriculum plans for each subject ensure that pupils build their knowledge and skills from Year 3 to Year 6. Leaders have identified the vocabulary pupils should learn for each subject. This helps pupils to talk about their learning. In most subjects, teachers use effective methods to check that pupils have understood new learning and that they can recall, and build upon, previous knowledge. In a few subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not as

effective. Consequently, in these subjects, teachers do not always help pupils to build upon previous knowledge and skills, and pupils' progress is not as strong.

Leaders ensure that the teaching of reading is prioritised and mostly well planned. Most pupils learn to read accurately and fluently. Staff are swift to identify and support pupils who are struggling to read. In Year 3 and Year 4, phonics interventions enable pupils who have fallen behind with their reading to catch up. Support for a few older pupils is not always sharply focused enough on addressing gaps in their phonic knowledge. This means that these pupils do not improve their reading and writing as quickly as they could. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the texts they read. One Year 6 pupil's comment that 'reading inspires people's imagination and takes you to a different world' reflects the views of others.

Pupils typically learn well because their behaviour is good. They appreciate the reward systems in place that support positive behaviours. Lessons are calm and focused. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils. This means that pupils are confident to ask and respond to questions.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) participate fully in the school community. Teachers adapt tasks skilfully so that pupils with SEND get the extra help they need to access the same curriculum as their classmates. Where pupils need extra help to meet their specific targets, this is provided. This helps pupils with SEND to make strong progress.

Leaders provide well for pupils' wider development. A high-quality programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps pupils to learn about physical and mental health and what makes respectful and healthy relationships. Pupils are kind to each other and accepting of differences. Year 6 'pupil ambassadors' support the Norwich food bank by packing food parcels and organising stock.

Leaders ensure that teachers and support staff take part in regular, planned training. Staff do not feel that their workload is excessive, and they value leaders' support. Governors have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. This enables them to support school improvement by monitoring progress being made and holding leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that there is always someone to talk to if they are worried. They know how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world.

Leaders ensure that effective safer recruitment systems are in place and that all required checks are made on adults working in the school. Staff are trained to identify and respond to concerns, swiftly and appropriately. Leaders work effectively with other agencies, when required, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Interventions for a few older pupils who need to catch up with their reading are not always sharply focused on addressing gaps in their phonic knowledge and skills. These pupils do not improve their reading and writing fluency as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that reading support for older pupils is informed systematically by any phonics learning needs and that books chosen for these pupils are matched directly to the sounds they know, to enable them to achieve consistently well.
- In a few subjects, teachers' use of assessment to support pupils to build upon previous learning is not as effective as in most other curriculum areas. This means that, in these subjects, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Leaders should ensure that, overall, subjects teachers check carefully on the key knowledge and skills pupils need to remember in order to learn more complex knowledge and content.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2017.

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	120852
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10268680
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Weeks
Headteacher	Matt Walton
Website	www.spowstonjunior.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with senior leaders and subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke with teachers and other adults. He also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at their work.
- Meetings were also held with subject leaders for geography, design and technology and PSHE. The inspector discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector checked safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of safeguarding records. He spoke with governors, the designated safeguarding lead and other staff about safeguarding practices at the school.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including the school improvement development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, behaviour records and attendance records.
- The inspector considered the 16 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 17 free-text comments. He also considered the 16 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and 47 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. The inspector also observed the behaviour of pupils during breaktime and around the school. He also spoke to several parents and carers informally during the inspection.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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