

Inspection of Fakenham Junior School

Queen's Road, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 8BN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Adam Mason. This school is part of Synergy multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Louise Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Natasha Hutcheson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Fakenham Junior School strive to 'be the best they can be'. They learn well and are expected to work hard, and they love that adults try to put a smile on their faces every day. The playground is full of activity, with pupils of all ages getting on well.

The school is a happy, welcoming place. Pupils know that everyone is different, and these differences are celebrated. This builds a culture of mutual respect and understanding between pupils.

Whether being part of the Fakenham duck race or singing at local events, pupils enjoy opportunities to involve themselves in the local community. They attend a range of trips, clubs and sporting events. The gardening club uses the extensive allotment area to grow produce to share with some families and the community. These opportunities allow pupils to make a difference to their school and local community.

Pupils feel safe in school. They trust that adults will help them if they have a problem. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Younger pupils know not to share personal information online, while older pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to avoid scams.

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

The school's sharp focus on the quality of education pupils receive ensures that pupils learn an exciting and ambitious curriculum. Pupils learn well and, in many subjects, develop detailed knowledge. The school, alongside the trust, has set about evolving and improving the curriculum in a careful and measured way. There remains work to do. In a small number of subjects, leaders have not yet precisely identified the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember to make sure new learning builds on what has come before.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils encounter a rich and varied diet of books as they move through the school. Adults read regularly to pupils, which opens their eyes to new and different types of stories. Pupils who need more guidance to help them read receive effective support. Staff are expert in teaching phonics, which ensures that pupils are well supported to catch up. Pupils are well guided to develop the range of words they know and use, especially subject-specific vocabulary. This vocabulary is carefully set out in the curriculum to build over time.

Teachers receive useful training and guidance. As a result, they have strong subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. They can quickly see when a pupil does not understand a concept and provide precise help for them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are generally well supported. Teachers and teaching assistants provide useful support to help these pupils access much of

the curriculum. There are times, however, when activities are not always well adapted to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well. Sometimes, their work is too hard or complicated. This means they do not always learn as well as they could.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well, both in and out of class. Lessons are generally calm. Where some pupils need additional help with their behaviour, they receive clear guidance from adults.

The well-considered personal development programme helps pupils to develop beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, and they know how to look after their mental health. The school provides effective pastoral support for pupils, such as the 'choices' club for those pupils who find the hustle and bustle of lunchtimes tricky. This provides a calm and relaxing space for them to use.

The trust board and local governing board work together seamlessly. The flow of information between the two ensures that they have a clear strategic oversight of the school. They hold leaders to account for the provision in school, balancing this with appropriate support.

Staff value the support provided by senior leaders, particularly in helping them to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum has recently undergone change. While teachers are quickly getting to grips with teaching the curriculum in many subjects, in a small number of subjects, the school has not yet precisely identified the most important knowledge pupils need to know and remember. This means new learning does not always build on what pupils already know. The school should ensure that work started is completed so that teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn in each subject.
- There are times when pupils with SEND do not have activities carefully adapted to meet their needs. Teachers do not always have the depth of information about pupils' prior knowledge to help them with these adaptations. This means these pupils do not always learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers receive the information and training they need to help them adapt activities more precisely to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	146711
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10268126
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Natasha Hutcheson
Headteacher	Adam Mason
Website	www.fakenhamjunior.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Fakenham Infant School. The headteacher oversees both schools in the federation.
- Fakenham Junior School converted to become an academy in April 2019. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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 listened to pupils from Years 3 and 4 read to an adult.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the primary executive lead from the trust and the chair of the trust board. The lead inspector also held a meeting with members of the local governing board.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through the Ofsted survey, Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Garrett

Ofsted Inspector

Lynsey Holzer

Ofsted Inspector

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