

Inspection of The Norman Church of England Primary School, Northwold

School Lane, Northwold, Thetford, Norfolk IP26 5NB

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

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	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Anna Fisher. This school is part of the Diocese of Ely 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, Adrian Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Jackson. There is also a hub director, Jo Brown, who is responsible for this school and six others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils enjoy attending this school. They are happy and feel safe here. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The school's ethos of valuing every child and every staff member shines through.

Pupils study a broad and stimulating curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning. The school and the trust have worked hard to ensure that learning is interesting. The school has high expectations. The vast majority of pupils rise to these expectations and now achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength. They treat everyone kindly and with respect. The school's behaviour code of 'respectful, ready and safe' is promoted effectively in all aspects of school life. Pupils' learning is rarely disturbed. Pupils respond well to the various behaviour rewards that are available to them. They strive to earn the points awarded to them for their positive attitudes and behaviour. Older pupils help the younger children. They enjoy being lunchtime buddies, for example.

Pupils help to decide how some areas of the school are organised. They hold various fundraising activities. Pupils value being able to help others in their local community. They elect members to represent their views on the school council.

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

The school, supported by the trust, has worked hard to improve the curriculum. Pupils now study an ambitious and well-designed curriculum. This sets out precisely the knowledge pupils will learn year on year. It starts in the early years. The school has an effective and consistent approach to implementing the curriculum. It has established clear routines which help pupils to learn and to make progress. Pupils understand these routines well.

Teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding during lessons. They check whether pupils have remembered important knowledge. They use this information to adapt their future teaching and planning. This helps them to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are closed.

Teachers skilfully adapt learning to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables pupils with SEND to learn similar knowledge to their peers. As a result, pupils are helped to know and do more.

The school prioritises the learning of reading and phonics. They are taught consistently well. Staff are provided with effective training. The school's phonics programme is well structured. Children start learning the basics of reading in the early years, including in the nursery. Reading books are matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. Teachers provide parents with useful information about reading.

This enables younger pupils to practise reading at home. As a result, pupils learn quickly. They remember the sounds they are expected to. Teachers spot pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. They make sure these pupils get the help they need to catch up.

After phonics, pupils move on to learn a well-organised reading curriculum. The school has improved older pupils' experience of rich-quality texts through introducing a well-considered collection of books. This means pupils now acquire knowledge about a more diverse range of authors and cultures. They are motivated by the reward systems that encourage them to read at home, such as 'reading rockets'. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in class. This helps them to become confident readers.

The school has set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. They move around the school sensibly. In lessons, pupils listen well to each other and to their teachers. As a result, learning generally flows smoothly. Pupils play sensibly and safely in the playground. Children in the early years learn routines quickly. The older children provide strong role models for the younger children.

Pupils are polite. They treat visitors and each other with respect. Pupils take turns when speaking in a group. They understand and respect people's differences. They understand and firmly believe in fairness, equality and democracy.

Pupils enjoy the occasional trips, rare clubs and activities that are provided. However, pupils would like more of these. There is not a wide enough range of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests. Pupils do not have a good enough understanding of the wider world. They are not as prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

The school engages well with parents and carers. Most parents are positive about the education their children receive.

Governors from the trust check regularly and effectively on how well the school is progressing. They listen to, and act on, the views of parents through well-attended school forum meetings.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils experience only a small number of visitors, trips and clubs. This means that opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge of the world and widen their interests are not being maximised. Pupils are not being as prepared for life in modern Britain as they might be. The school should provide pupils with increased opportunities that improve their cultural knowledge and personal development.

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	140914
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10288532
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Jackson
Headteacher	Anna Fisher
Website	norman.demat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in 2022. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is part of The Trinity Partnership with two other local schools.
- The school uses one off-site alternative provider within The Trinity Partnership, called 'The Nest'.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds as part of its early years foundation stage.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, they met with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other areas, including art and personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the provision for pupils' personal development. They spoke with leaders with responsibility for the early years, 'The Nest', and for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with the hub director and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Rod Warsap, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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