

Inspection of Tollgate Primary School

Tollgate Lane, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6DG

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 October 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	Good

The headteacher of this school is Hannah Brookman. This school is part of Unity Schools Partnership 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, Tim Coulson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christine Quinn.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, well cared for and learn well. From the early years, they start to build firm foundations to set them up for their time in school. They love the opportunities to broaden their horizons through experiencing trips and visits. Pupils are proud to carry out their roles for the school council or eco council.

Pupils are safe in school. They are confident that adults will listen and help make things better when they have worries. Pupils learn well because adults have high expectations of them. In lessons, and around the school, most pupils pay attention and work hard. Older pupils provide strong role models for younger pupils to look up to.

Whether singing in the choir or practising their brass instruments, pupils fill the corridors with music. Those who perform their musical talents at the cathedral in Bury St Edmunds are proud to do so. Pupils grow their own vegetables and fruit for eating in school dinners. Opportunities such as these help pupils make a real difference to their school and local community. Staff guide pupils to become responsible and active citizens of the future.

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

The school has an ambitious and wide-ranging curriculum. This equips pupils with the important knowledge and skills they need to be able to learn well. As they move through the school, pupils deepen their knowledge and skills in many subjects.

Adults skilfully support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The needs of these pupils are accurately identified by adults. Teachers make careful adaptations to activities which help pupils with SEND succeed in their learning. The school know the pupils and families extremely well. The pastoral support is well tailored to help pupils and their families when they need additional help.

Making sure pupils learn to read confidently and communicate well are the school's top priorities. Adults are expert at interacting with children in the Nursery and Reception classes. They help them to practise their growing vocabulary and make sure children speak correctly. Staff ensure that children develop a love of stories, poems and songs. The school's phonics programme is well delivered by adults. They support pupils to become fluent readers. Those pupils who need extra help with reading receive highly effective support to help them catch up.

Teachers check carefully that pupils remember what they have learned. If a pupil makes a mistake, teachers are generally quick to correct these. In a few subjects, some teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge to help deepen pupils' understanding. Where this occurs, staff are not adept at providing extra support and challenge.

Pupils listen carefully to adults and follow the 'rules of the road' as they walk around the school. Where some pupils need more guidance to help them behave, adults provide this. The youngest children quickly understand the rules and routines of their classrooms. They play happily and learn together effectively. For example, they share equipment with kindness and consideration. Many have pride in their work and enjoy sharing their learning with adults and visitors. Children in early years develop independence. The school's forest area allows them to take well-calculated risks when exploring the equipment and resources provided.

The school has a well-thought-out programme to support pupils' personal development. Pupils have a clear understanding of what makes them unique. They celebrate difference. Whatever a person's background or belief, pupils treat everyone equally. Pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy, including how to look after their mental health. They learn about different relationships through the school's highly effective relationships and sex education provision.

Members of the local governing board hold a clear and accurate oversight of the strengths and development areas of the school. They make regular visits to school to see for themselves how well pupils are learning. While they provide challenge to leaders to ensure they continue to improve the school, governors balance this challenge with support for staff. They carry out their duties delegated to them by the trust board effectively.

The school does much to look after staff, particularly around managing their workload. Staff receive regular and useful training to help them continue to improve their practice. Much of this is through the trust, which works closely with the school to ensure staff receive high-quality support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers are still developing their subject and pedagogical knowledge to implement the school's curriculum. They do not always adapt activities or explain information as clearly as they could. This means that sometimes pupils do not develop deep and detailed knowledge of their subjects. The school should ensure it continues to provide training to support teachers in developing the skills and knowledge they need.

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	140998
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10288533
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
CEO of the trust	Tim Coulson
Headteacher	Hannah Brookman
Website	www.tollgateprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Unity Schools Partnership multi-academy trust.
- The school has expanded over the past few years and now accommodates Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. September 2023 is the first year the school has had pupils in Year 6.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery class which provides education for children aged three and four years old.

Information about this inspection

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.

- 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, music, science and history. 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 1, 2 and 3 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 director from the trust and other trust leaders. 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 surveys. 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
John Crane	Ofsted Inspector
Glenn Russell	Ofsted Inspector

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