

Inspection of Fakenham Infant and Nursery School

Norwich Road, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 8HN

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September, and 11 and 12 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	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 benefit from warm relationships with adults. From a young age, they are well supported to recognise and manage their feelings. This makes them feel cared for and safe. Pupils stick to the school rules. Classes run with little disruption, meaning pupils can concentrate on their work.

Pupils like the changes that have recently been made to the curriculum. They know adults expect and want them to do well. Pupils are responding positively to these high expectations, especially in reading.

The 'outdoor adventurer' programme provides exciting opportunities for pupils of different ages to work together. They enjoy taking part in activities such as pizza making, den building and natural art projects. These opportunities allow pupils to develop resilience and teamwork. Educational trips, such as visits to historical sites and conservation centres, make learning interesting. Pupils appreciate gaining experiences beyond the classroom to deepen their understanding of the world around them.

Pupils who sit on the school council are proud to do so. They help to make the school a better place, such as in their work to develop the pond area. The school council ensures that all pupils have a voice. The council regularly gathers the opinions of other pupils to find out their views.

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

The school's curriculum has been carefully designed. Leaders have considered what pupils already know and built on these foundations. In music, for example, younger pupils keep a steady beat to a simple tune. As pupils move through the school, they build on what they know, developing and deepening their knowledge of tempo and rhythm. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They explain new learning clearly and check regularly during lessons to make sure pupils remember key knowledge. Teachers address any misconceptions pupils may have within lessons well. However, the school does not always have an accurate view of how well pupils learn in some subjects over time. This means the school is less certain of how well pupils are retaining detailed knowledge in these subjects.

Pupils have benefitted from the school's recent steps to strengthen phonics teaching. Most pupils are now confident in knowing how to use their phonics knowledge to read new words. Many adults teach the phonics programme well. Pupils read books that are closely matched to their ability, which helps them to become fluent readers. Most pupils keep up with the phonics programme. Those who fall behind are generally well supported to catch up. Even so, the support given to some pupils who find reading particularly tricky is not as precise as it should be. Not all staff have the expertise to make sure those readers needing the most help do as well as they could.

Children in the early years learn and use many new words. They listen to a range of carefully selected stories, poems and songs. Children enjoy high-quality interactions with adults. Adults intervene thoughtfully in children's play and ask many questions that further children's thinking. Two-year-olds have their emotional and care needs met very well. As children move into the Reception classes, they continue to develop their independence. Many now leave Reception with the reading skills they need to tackle Year 1 successfully.

The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is carefully adapted to meet their needs. Many of these adaptations involve adults working alongside pupils to build their confidence in how to tackle a task. Adults set clear targets for pupils with SEND and use a range of learning techniques to support them to learn well.

Staff guide pupils well to build a growing understanding of themselves and the world around them. Pupils benefit from being able to attend a number of clubs. In addition, the regular singing assembly exposes pupils to a range of different music styles. Pupils understand, at an age-appropriate level, about the differences between themselves and others. They learn about who they are and about managing feelings. Pupils show respect for others.

The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils usually follow the clear guidance set out by adults. Their attendance is high. In the instances where a pupil misses too much school, leaders are quick to support pupils back into learning.

Trust leaders, trustees and members of the local governing body work closely together. They hold leaders to account through a well-judged balance of challenge and support. Members of the local governing body know their delegated responsibilities and carry these out well. They make regular checks to ensure pupils learn well and are safe.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all adults have had enough specific training to provide high-quality support for pupils who find reading difficult. This means that some pupils do not receive the precise support they need and do not catch up quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that staff receive training to develop their expertise.
- In some foundation subjects, checks on how well pupils are retaining key knowledge over time are not well developed. This means the school does not have a sufficiently accurate picture of how securely pupils are learning the whole curriculum in the detail intended. The school needs to adapt and strengthen

assessment processes in these subjects to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and plan future curriculum adaptations to ensure pupils learn well across the full range of subjects.

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	146684
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10268122
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Natasha Hutcheson
Headteacher	Adam Mason
Website	www.fakenhaminfant.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Fakenham Junior School. The headteacher oversees both schools in the federation.
- Fakenham Infant School converted to become an academy in April 2019, as part of Synergy Multi-Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school has a Nursery class, which includes provision for two-year-olds.

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 first visited the school on 19 and 20 September 2023. Ofsted deemed that further evidence was required to secure the inspection judgements. As a result, this inspection was deemed 'incomplete'. Two of His Majesty's Inspectors visited the school on 11 and 12 October 2023 to gather evidence in all areas of the education inspection framework.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and science. During the visit to the school on 19 and 20 September 2023, deep dives were also carried out in geography and art. 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 and 2 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 CEO 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 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

Tessa Holledge

His Majesty's Inspector

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