

Inspection of a good school: Magdalen Gates Primary School and Nursery

Bull Close Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1NG

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging at Magdalen Gates. All pupils are fully part of this inclusive school. The school has high expectations. However, pupils learn more successfully in some curriculum subjects than others.

Pupils and staff form positive relationships. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well. They feel safe and are confident that staff can resolve any disagreements. Pupils follow the school rules to 'be ready, be respectful, be safe'. They demonstrate this in lessons and at social times.

Pupils have many enrichment opportunities. They embrace outdoor learning. Thoughtfully planned trips, such as a recent visit to the Royal Opera House, help provide pupils with new experiences. These raise the aspirations and broaden the horizons of pupils.

Pupils learn about different cultures and traditions. These reflect the diversity in the school community and ensure that there is a sense of community cohesion. Pupils develop their tolerance and understanding. They are clear that everyone is welcome at their school.

There are a range of opportunities for pupils to effect change through roles such as the school parliament. The democratically elected members meet regularly. They report to school governors about the changes they are bringing about in their school.

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

The school has designed a carefully considered curriculum. It has thought about the knowledge pupils need to learn. However, the effectiveness of the curriculum varies. It is working more successfully in the core areas of learning, such as reading, writing and mathematics. It is not as effective in other curriculum subjects.

Across the core subjects of learning, teachers deliver the curriculum as the school intends. For example, in mathematics, teachers use practical resources which bring learning to life and help pupils understand well. Learning builds each year. Pupils' progress in these subjects is secure.

Reading is a priority at this school. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they start in early years. Skilled staff deliver the school's programme well. They regularly check pupils' understanding. Pupils who have gaps in their knowledge get targeted extra practice. Teachers read to their classes daily. Pupils have access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Teachers skilfully choose texts that broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils learn to read fluently and develop a love of reading.

In the foundation subjects, such as history, the curriculum is not delivered as well. Teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge and expertise to teach the planned curriculum. As a result, lessons often lack purpose. Pupils often complete activities that do not help them to learn the planned lesson outcomes. Their knowledge does not build successfully. Pupils have significant gaps in learning.

Additionally, pupils and teachers are not clear about how well pupils achieve. This is because pupil progress in foundation subjects is not routinely checked. Therefore, teachers are not able to adapt learning to meet the specific needs of pupils. This means some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Determined leaders ensure that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience the full breadth of the curriculum. There are well-established systems to support pupils with SEND. The school works closely with parents and carers and seeks advice from external agencies. As a result, SEND plans are precise. Pupil progress is carefully checked. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. A new policy has brought about a consistent approach. This is working well. Pupils behave and respect each other. Learning proceeds without disruption.

The school places pupils' wider development at the heart of what it does. There is a rich and varied wider offer in place. The school caters for the individual needs of its pupils. Pupils are well prepared to contribute positively to society as responsible, active citizens. They gain age-appropriate knowledge about healthy relationships. Pupils learn the importance of mutual tolerance and respect. Pupils' individual needs are also considered. For example, the school's 'Care Rangers' group meets weekly as a source of support and enrichment for pupils who act as young carers in their everyday life.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They provide appropriate support and challenge to the school. Staff feel well supported to manage their workload and well-being. The school recognises the pressures that policy changes can cause. It is working hard to balance the speed of implementation with supporting staff to manage the changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in staff subject knowledge; this is particularly the case in the wider curriculum subjects. This means the curriculum is taught more effectively in the core subjects than foundation subjects of learning. Leaders, including the governing body, should implement focused subject-specific professional development for staff to ensure that they have the necessary subject knowledge to teach the whole curriculum effectively. This will mean pupils will learn the school's planned curriculum more successfully.
- Assessment systems across foundation subjects lack rigour and consistency. This means learning is not routinely checked across subjects in the foundation curriculum. The school should adopt a clear and consistent approach to assessment. Leaders need to ensure that teachers receive training to be able to use the chosen assessment systems throughout the curriculum so it accurately informs teachers about how well pupils are achieving.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

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	120932
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10294994
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julie Brociek-Coulton
Headteacher	Chris Hutchinson
Website	www.magdalengates.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses the services of one registered alternative provider.
- The school has nursery provision on site for children from the age of three.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, subject leaders, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers,

spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.

- The inspector also considered curriculum documentation and spoke to leaders about the computing curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, pupil records, records of governing body meetings, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by speaking to some of them at the beginning of the school day and by reviewing the free-text responses submitted to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. The inspector also met with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Jonny Wallace, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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