

Inspection of a good school: Hall School

St Faith's Road, Old Catton, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 7AD

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 April 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 be outstanding 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 are safe and happy at Hall school. They are exceptionally well cared for. All the staff have a profound understanding of pupils' unique and individual needs. Pupils achieve well in every aspect of their learning and development because staff have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils recognise when they need calming activities to regulate their behaviour. Pupils concentrate because teachers make learning interesting. There is rarely any disruption to pupils' learning so pupils have every chance to be successful.

Pupils like and trust their teachers. Pupils value how they are taught to communicate, learn and gain independence. Positive relationships are nurtured from the moment they enter the school. Pupils receive excellent support, in a wide range of contexts. This develops their confidence and resilience, so they can work independently with peers.

Pupils enjoy a wide variety of visits outside the school. For younger pupils, these are mainly within the local community. Older pupils and sixth-form students use public transport with help from staff. Pupils learn to cope with visitors to their school and classrooms. They are not distracted by the presence of 'community workers they don't know'.

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

The school has made significant improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection.

Leaders have designed learning pathways and areas of learning that meet the complex needs of their pupils. The curriculum has clear and ambitious endpoints. Staff get clear

guidance on how best to implement the curriculum, such as different learning and communication strategies to use. This means pupils learn well.

Teaching is highly effective. Teachers apply the curriculum to enable pupils to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills they need in each area of learning. Teachers and support staff manage learning and behaviour exceptionally well in lessons. The school provides high-quality training for all staff. For example, it has developed a coaching system which helps staff embed new approaches in their practice. As a result of these improvements, teachers plan well-crafted learning activities. This enables pupils to achieve well based on what they have already learned.

Reading is key to pupils' learning throughout the curriculum. Pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to learn their letter sounds. They can identify letters, and some are able to construct and read short, simple sentences using symbols and words. All pupils love stories. Older pupils can talk about their favourite stories. A few older pupils can read simplified versions of their favourite books. This exposure to reading supports pupils to become fluent and confident readers.

Teaching pupils to communicate is at the heart of everything the school does. The school's teachers are expert at designing strategies and programmes that develop pupils' communication. All pupils can communicate using signing and symbols. Most use words and phrases by the time they leave the school. Some develop a richer vocabulary. These pupils are able to clearly share their ideas, for example in school council meetings.

Children make a strong start to learning in the early years. The curriculum is well-planned and is closely informed by the targets in each child's EHC plan. There are strong routines in place and learning activities are fun and engaging. Children listen to their teachers and are supported to behave and learn well.

There is a well-structured and carefully thought through curriculum for students in the sixth form. Students develop the functional skills that will help them transition from school into adult life. For example, they learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. Students demonstrate respect for one another and for their teachers. They are polite and listen carefully to adults and to each other. Careers advice is comprehensive and appropriate for the pupils needs. There is a wide variety of work experience opportunities. All students move successfully to college or social care placements when they leave the school. The school is relentless in securing the best possible provision for them.

The school works exceptionally well with external agencies and professionals so that pupils' complex needs are met effectively. The school is doing everything possible to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. As a result, pupils attend school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 2014.

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 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	121257
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323679
Type of school	All-through special school
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Wendy Alcock
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Ridgeway
Website	www.hallschoolnorfolk.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in 2021.

Information about this inspection

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with senior leaders, teachers, a group of governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the school’s designated safeguarding team, including the parent support adviser. 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and phonics, thinking and problem-solving including mathematics, physical development including physical education, and citizenship including relationships, sex and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work on the school’s electronic assessment system.
- Inspectors spoke to parents dropping off their children at school. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey and Ofsted’s staff survey. The inspectors considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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