

Inspection of Wickhambrook Primary Academy

Wickhambrook, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 8XN

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Rosie Kerr. This school is part of the Unity Schools Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dr Tim Coulson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christine Quinn.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Wickhambrook Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Wickhambrook Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Wickhambrook Primary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Community is key at this small, rural school. Pupils value the fact that the school's size means they make friends across year groups. Pupils of all ages mix happily at breaktimes, as well as at breakfast or after-school club. A well-established buddy system builds lasting bonds between the oldest and youngest pupils. Attendance is high because pupils are happy to come to school.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. They settle quickly, thanks to strong routines and attentive adults. Throughout the school, there are warm relationships between pupils and adults.

Pupils are proud to earn learning badges for hard work, or class points for showing the school's values of respect, resilience, responsibility, commitment and achievement. These rewards motivate them to meet adults' high expectations. Classrooms are calm and provide an environment conducive to learning. In the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics, many pupils achieve highly.

There is an extensive range of high-quality, extra-curricular activities. These introduce pupils to new skills, including archery, gardening and Sudoku. Numerous roles and responsibilities help to strengthen pupils' character. Wellie monitors keep the environment tidy, class greeters welcome visitors and trust councillors represent the school at whole trust council meetings.

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

From early years through to Year 6, the school's ambitious curriculum sets out a clear sequence of learning. At each stage, pupils build on what they have learned before and are prepared for future learning. Vocabulary is a high priority. This starts in the Reception Year, where there is a laser-sharp focus on language acquisition. Pupils throughout the school systematically learn, practise and apply subject-specific vocabulary.

The school and trust ensure that teaching staff receive effective training. This equips them to teach subjects confidently. Teachers introduce new learning clearly. They recap previous learning and check pupils' understanding often. This enables them to identify any gaps or difficulties, which they address by adjusting their teaching. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to move pupils' learning forward. In some instances, they do not provide activities to deepen learning for those pupils who are ready to move on. In others, teachers do not always provide pupils with effective feedback.

The school makes highly effective use of technology to support learning. Hand-held tablets promote pupils' independence. In the Reception Year, for example, children photograph their achievements and upload these to their digital learning journals. In key stage 2, pupils use digital quizzes to test their knowledge. Digital tools support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Adapted tasks, additional resources or help from skilled adults enable pupils with SEND to access the same

curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well in relation to their various starting points.

The school's 'literature spine' is central to the curriculum. From the Reception Year onwards, pupils are exposed to a richly diverse range of high-quality texts. Reading is a priority. Children receive daily phonics lessons as soon as they start in the Reception Year. These continue throughout key stage 1. The adults who teach phonics are experts. They identify and support pupils who need extra help swiftly. By the end of Year 1, almost every pupil has the knowledge and skills they need to read fluently. If any pupils in key stage 2 remain in the early stages of reading, the school gives them the support they need to catch up.

Pupils behave well. After a period of challenging behaviour, the school introduced a new behaviour policy. This has had a significant impact. Pupils appreciate the familiar routines and clear expectations. Adults consistently manage any poor behaviour. Strong pastoral support ensures that pupils who struggle to meet expectations receive the help they need to improve.

Provision for pupils' personal development is exceptionally well planned. The school is determined that as many pupils as possible access enrichment activities. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. These activities often take pupils beyond the school, on trips that broaden their horizons and enhance the curriculum. The school's sporting achievements have been recognised with a national award. Pupils learn about other cultures and the major world religions. They show tolerance and respect for difference in all its forms.

The trust and governors provide high-quality support and challenge to the school. They are very well informed and regularly check the school's performance against its objectives. After an unsettling period, the relatively new leadership team has stabilised the school. Leaders' actions have positively impacted on staff well-being, parental engagement and pupil achievement. They are relentless in their drive for continued improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to move pupils' learning on. This is either through the design and timing of lesson activities or through weaknesses in the use of feedback for improvement. Consequently, some pupils may not progress as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers are supported to plan appropriately challenging activities, make best use of lesson time and use feedback effectively, so that all pupils achieve the aims of the school's ambitious curriculum.

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	142995
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10295086
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
CEO of the trust	Dr Tim Coulson
Headteacher	Rosie Kerr
Website	www.wickhambrookschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Unity Schools Partnership. It joined the trust in January 2017.
- There have been changes in the leadership in recent years. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their roles in September 2023.
- The school uses the services of one registered alternative provider of education.
- There is wraparound care before and after school. This is run and managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with a range of leaders, including the trust director of primary and the trust CEO, who represented the chair of trustees. They also met with senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynn Ayling

Ofsted Inspector

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