

Inspection of Windmill Primary School

Windmill Lane, Raunds, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 6LA

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Rhys Penny. This school is part of Nene Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Chris Hill, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jenna Weedon.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very inclusive school that wants the best for all pupils. A few turbulent years with several changes in leadership have negatively impacted pupils' experience of school and their achievement. The school is much more settled now. Recent improvements in the curriculum are having a positive impact. However, pupils are not achieving as well as they should yet because the curriculum is not always taught well enough.

Mostly, pupils are happy here. Pupils really like school staff. They enjoy very warm and nurturing relationships. The increase in clubs and exciting activities enthuses pupils. They enjoy sports, cooking and crafting clubs. Recently, the whole school enjoyed a trip to a pantomime.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to learn about responsibility. The school council organised a 'grandparents' afternoon' and has raised money to buy playtime equipment. The 'kindness ambassadors' help promote the new school values. The school wants pupils to be 'ARK', meaning 'ambitious, resilient, and kind'.

The majority of pupils behave well and are polite and friendly. Sometimes, pupils are not kind and respectful, or they demonstrate a negative attitude to their learning. A new behaviour policy and higher expectations have helped reduce these instances. However, pupils are not consistently well supported.

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

The school has made significant improvements in phonics teaching. Recognising a lack of rigour in phonics, the school retrained all staff. The phonics provision is checked regularly, along with pupils' acquisition of knowledge. Pupils get the right support when needed. In the early years, the school has also introduced support for children's speech skills to help them overcome difficulties. The daily teaching of fluent reading continues beyond phonics. Pupils enjoy this. Teachers explain the meaning of new vocabulary. While the impact is seen in pupils' achievement in phonics, improvements have not had time to reflect in statutory tests for older pupils yet.

A new ambitious curriculum has been introduced fairly recently. Again, this has not had time to fully impact on pupils' learning yet. Some subjects are further along than others, and pupils' recall of knowledge is improving. However, in many areas, pupils' knowledge is still weak. Although the curriculum is well designed, the school has not ensured that teachers fully understand how all aspects are to be developed over time. As a result, teaching sometimes does not focus on the right things and in the right order. The school is developing subject leadership. However, some subject leaders do not have a secure view of how effectively the curriculum is being implemented.

Where the intended learning is clear, this is often explained well. However, sometimes pupils are presented with too much new information at once. This makes it harder to grasp new knowledge. This can particularly impact pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Many appropriate adaptations are made for pupils with SEND. The school has seen a significant rise in the number of pupils with education, health and care plans. Staff have training, including from specialist services, to help understand and support some pupils' significant needs with communication and managing their emotions. At times, staff feel overwhelmed by these needs and other pupils worry.

Expectations for pupils' behaviour are not always high enough. Disorderly movement and lack of commitment to classwork are sometimes not addressed swiftly. This can draw in other pupils or distract learning. Sometimes, some pupils use derogatory language or show a lack of respect for property. When reported, this is dealt with appropriately. Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. The school emphasises the importance of regular attendance and supports families to overcome barriers.

Pupils learn about health risks and how to keep themselves safe, including online. Mental well-being is prioritised. Pupils are well supported to recognise and regulate their emotions. Pupils' awareness of life in modern British society is less well developed. Pupils have limited knowledge of the characteristics that make people unique and of values such as respect and tolerance.

Largely, staff appreciate that the school is more settled now and are encouraged by the new vision. They say their workload and well-being are mostly considered. The trust supports the school to improve and ensures that statutory responsibilities are met. The new local governing committee is focused on strengthening the engagement with the school community. The school has been working on this. Many parents and carers have noticed the improvements made at the school. However, some are unsure of the school's approaches, such as for managing pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers sometimes present pupils with too much information to take in at once. This can negatively impact pupils' learning, particularly for pupils with SEND. This makes it harder for pupils to secure new knowledge and they cannot recall what has been taught. The school should ensure that teaching does not overload pupils and that consistently effective adaptations are made for pupils with SEND so that all pupils can achieve well.
- The implementation of some aspects of the curriculum is not yet consistent. Pupils have limited knowledge as a result. The school should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum is checked and that staff have the understanding and expertise to successfully build pupils' knowledge in all aspects.

- The school's high expectations for pupils' behaviour have not been fully realised due to the inconsistent application of the new behaviour policy. Poor behaviour sometimes disrupts pupils' learning and hinders their enjoyment of school. The school should ensure that pupils are consistently challenged and supported to maintain high expectations of behaviour.
- The school has not sufficiently engaged with stakeholders to secure a common understanding of the approaches the school takes, to manage and support pupils' behaviour for example. This sometimes leaves stakeholders uncertain of their expectations of them, which can lead to some dissatisfaction with the school's work. The school should improve communication and engagement with stakeholders.
- The school has not fully developed its approach to teaching pupils about fundamental British values and the differences between people. As a result, pupils do not have an age-appropriate understanding of these, and a few pupils do not recognise when language is disrespectful. The school should ensure pupils gain a better understanding so they are better prepared for life in modern British society.

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	139552
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347566
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jenna Weedon
CEO of the trust	Chris Hill
Principal	Rhys Penny
Website	www.windmillprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has had four headteachers or principals since the last inspection. The current principal joined the school in September 2022.
- The school is part of the Nene Education Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

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 is 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.
- The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees and the local governance committee, including the chair of the trust. She also met with the CEO.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and trust representatives, and considered a range of documentation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and music. For each deep dive, the 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 as pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered evidence about pupils’ writing.
- 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 inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s survey for staff.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Chrissie Barrington	Ofsted Inspector
John Lawson	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Newman	Ofsted Inspector

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