

Inspection of Nythe Primary School

Nyland Road, Nythe, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 3RD

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
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 principal of this school is Gudrun Osborn. This school is part of Excalibur Academies 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), Nick Lewis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Toby Watson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Nythe is a happy and caring place to learn. The school's motto, 'Together may our feathers give us wings to soar', underpins its high ambition for all. Pupils' achievement is improving. However, the many positive changes to teaching and the curriculum have not had enough time to fully have an impact on some pupils' learning.

Pupils respond well to the school's increased expectations for behaviour. Most uphold the school's 'SOAR' values, such as 'respect', in how they conduct themselves in lessons. Pupils can rely on staff to act on any concerns, including bullying, quickly and effectively.

School leaders have transformed pupils' experiences at lunchtime. Pupils of all ages play harmoniously together. They revel in creating bug hotels, making 'soup' in the mud kitchen and physical challenges. Pupils describe outdoor time as 'the best' and 'a chance to role-play together'. They strive to earn the 'golden welly' award by applying the school's values in their play.

Pupils benefit from rich experiences beyond the academic. They develop leadership skills through their roles as school councillors and playleaders. A range of clubs, such as choir, gardening and drama, develop pupils' interests. Experiences, including trips to the theatre, add to pupils' cultural awareness.

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

The school has been through an unsettling time. Following leadership and staffing instability, pupils' behaviour and standards declined. However, things have begun to change for the better. The school is now on a stable footing with determined and ambitious leadership. This is beginning to impact pupils' achievement positively.

Children start their education off well in the early years. Staff place a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills. They weave stories and rhymes through children's play. In the Reception Year, children eagerly retold the story of 'Handa's Surprise' using props. They confidently used language such as 'under' and 'around' when creating an obstacle course for The Gingerbread Man.

Reading is a priority. Staff benefit from high-quality training to improve phonics teaching. Consequently, more pupils than previously are now capable readers. Staff provide well-targeted support to pupils who need to catch up. Older pupils have a positive view of reading. They enjoy opportunities to read thought-provoking books on social topics, such as refugees.

The school has undertaken successful work to strengthen the curriculum and how it needs to be taught. Pupils revisit prior learning to help them remember important content. For example, pupils in Year 6 understand the concept of invasion in World War Two and how it builds on their learning about the Romans. In the main, staff teach the curriculum effectively. However, some staff lack the subject expertise needed to teach the curriculum with the rigour the school intends. Furthermore, sometimes the checks that

staff make on what pupils have understood or remembered lack precision. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning and do not have a secure understanding of key concepts.

The school's expectations of pupils' written work and mathematics are rising. A revised approach to the mathematics curriculum is helping to address low outcomes in statutory tests. Older pupils write at a high standard. However, some staff do not routinely pick up on handwriting, spelling and punctuation errors. This affects the quality of some pupils' writing.

The school has significantly improved its systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the early years, children receive personalised support to develop their speech and language skills. Across the school, staff receive ongoing training to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers.

Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. Their attendance is improving. It is now broadly in line with the national average. Staff work closely with families and provide support where needed.

The school enriches the curriculum based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. For example, the 'Malala Day' assembly educated pupils about the right to an education. Pupils show a mature understanding of the protected characteristics. They know the importance of accepting everyone, regardless of difference.

Staff welcome and are positive about the changes to improve the school. They value how leaders consider their workload. The local academy committee and trust leaders clearly understand the school's priorities. They provide rigorous support and challenge to maintain the upward trajectory of improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' written work. As a result, the quality of some pupils' writing achievement is hampered by handwriting, spelling and punctuation weaknesses. The trust and school should ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' written work and implement strategies to enable pupils to write with greater accuracy.
- Improvements in staff expertise to deliver some aspects of the curriculum are not fully embedded. There remain pockets of variability in how well the curriculum is implemented. This hinders how well some pupils acquire and develop a secure understanding of key concepts over time. The trust and school should ensure that staff

are supported in developing their subject-specific expertise to enable them to implement the curriculum effectively.

- In some subjects, the school does not check with enough precision what pupils know and remember. As a result, some gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified or closed quickly enough. The trust and school need to ensure that staff use assessment effectively to check pupils' understanding and secure knowledge in their long-term memory.

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	147511
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10344827
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Toby Watson
CEO of the trust	Nick Lewis
Principal	Gudrun Osborn
Website	www.nythe.excalibur.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in February 2020. When its predecessor school, Nythe Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- Several changes to leadership and staffing have occurred in recent years. The current principal took over the substantive post in May 2024, following a period of part-time support from February 2024. The vice-principal and special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator started in September 2024.
- The school has on-site nursery provision for two- to four-year-olds. It is managed by the trust.
- The school does not currently use any 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 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 held discussions with the principal, the vice-principal and other school staff. The lead inspector met with a representative from the trust board, the CEO, the director for primary improvement, the school improvement lead and members of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics and geography. 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. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: met the designated safeguarding lead; checked the single central record of adults working in the school; took account of the views of 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 considered a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents and minutes of trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how the school supports their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

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