

Inspection of Norwich Road Academy

Norwich Road, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2HT

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Julia Miles. This school is part of the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Shanks, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Wilde.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is because the school is a caring community. Pupils enjoy the friendly atmosphere in class and during social times. Staff build warm relationships with pupils. Pupils feel valued and safe. They know that if they have a worry, the adults will help them.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve and how they behave. Pupils live up to these expectations. They follow the 'Norwich Road Academy Way' routines. These routines help pupils to listen to the staff and learn as much as possible. Pupils listen carefully and enjoy their learning. This helps pupils to become confident readers and mathematicians.

Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. These opportunities have been carefully put together to help pupils connect to the diverse, wider community. Pupils take on roles, such as being a lunchtime helper or by working on projects to take care of the environment. They take part in musical performances at large, local events. These opportunities help pupils to feel valued and supported. Pupils enjoy being able to develop their leadership skills and cultural awareness.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has focused intensely on improving its educational offer. The curriculum is well-sequenced, including in the Nursery and Reception Year. The curriculum is well taught and accessible to all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because the school has trained staff in how to teach subjects well and because the trust provides them with expert curriculum support. Despite this, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum needs further embedding. As a result, not all lessons maximise pupils' opportunities to learn.

Leaders and staff work together to provide interesting and memorable lessons. For example, by including topics about Thetford's history in the history curriculum. Teachers help pupils to understand new concepts and they quickly spot pupils' misconceptions. Lessons provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise. For example, in reading lessons, teachers encourage pupils to repeat key phrases and sentences from the class text. In the Nursery and Reception Year, children learn songs and stories off by heart. As a result, pupils across the school learn new words and increase their reading confidence.

Teachers are experts in teaching reading. In phonic lessons, teachers present new sounds clearly. Pupils learn and remember new sounds well because of this. If pupils fall behind, they receive the help and support they need to catch up quickly. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds they know. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers.

The school is quick to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. The school involves parents, external agencies and professionals when considering what additional support to provide.

The school's emphasis on clear teaching and plenty of practice enables pupils with SEND to understand and remember more. Teachers also adapt lessons to meet pupils' additional needs effectively.

Teaching and practice of rules, routines and manners underpins the school's approach to encouraging good behaviour. This helps pupils to be successful as soon as they start in the Nursery or the Reception Year. Pupils receive praise and rewards for working hard and being polite. The school is patient and understanding with pupils who struggle with their behaviour, providing adaptations such as a 'calm space' if pupils need it. The school also makes careful adaptations, to help pupils achieve the best possible attendance.

The school has crafted an all-encompassing provision for pupils' personal development. The school expertly develops pupils' talents and interests and supports them to contribute positively to the community. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to develop leadership skills, such as being part of the school council. A well-structured programme of personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) education, alongside dedicated focus on relationships and health education, helps pupils to develop resilience and empathy. The school's pastoral care system includes access to counselling and support services. This positively impacts pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

Leaders closely monitor the school's quality of education. The academy committee and the trust know the school well. They have a secure understanding of their duties and fulfil these well. The trust has developed additional networks of support for school leaders, so that staff can share their expertise with one another. Staff feel valued and supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum needs further embedding. As a result, not all lessons maximise pupils' opportunities to learn. The school should continue to support staff to consistently apply the school's teaching methods and make sure all pupils learn the curriculum effectively.

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	145029
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323782
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Wilde
CEO of the trust	Paul Shanks
Principal	Julia Miles
Website	www.norwichroadacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The school has pre-school provision for three- and four-year olds.
- The school provides a before- and an after-school club, which is managed by the governing body.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: Early reading, English, history, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with staff, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and in lessons.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the chief executive officer, the director of education, a regional school improvement director, two trustees and two members of the school's academy committee.
- 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.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The lead inspector also took into consideration the online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Glenn Russell

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