

Inspection of Wicklewood Primary School and Nursery

Hackford Road, Wicklewood, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 9QJ

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Wicklewood are happy and enjoy learning. They love reading and spending time in their well-loved library. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how their teachers bring learning to life through practical activities and experiences. They go on lots of trips out, for example to the theatre. Pupils have displayed their artwork at regional events. They love the wide range of after-school clubs. All of this gives pupils confidence and helps engage them in learning.

Pupils are kind and respectful towards others. They demonstrate kindness towards others, for example, by warmly welcoming newcomers to the school. Older pupils have lots of responsibilities, such as being on the eco-council, and are excited about their plans to have a real impact on the school community.

Leaders are extremely ambitious for what the school can do for pupils and how highly they can achieve. Pupils, staff, parents and carers all recognise that the school has improved significantly in the last two years. Pupils now make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Pupils, including the very youngest, have lots of opportunities to develop independence and confidence.

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

Following a period of instability in staffing, leadership and finance, the school is now on a stable footing. It has a full staff and leadership team. Through work and federation with another school, leaders have rapidly and successfully addressed weaknesses that led to a dip in educational standards.

The school has a well-considered curriculum. Schemes have been chosen carefully to best support teachers to provide a high-quality education. Training for teaching of English and mathematics was prioritised. Consequently, teaching of these subjects is strongest. Staff are highly positive about the training and coaching they have received.

Some staff use interactions with pupils expertly to support learning, for example developing children's vocabulary through play in the early years. In mathematics, staff use questioning to quickly find out what pupils know and to help pupils progress through the curriculum well. However, not all staff use questioning and discussions with pupils as effectively across the wider curriculum. As a result, not all learning is moved on as well, which slows some pupils' progress through the curriculum.

The teaching of reading is precise and enables pupils to quickly learn to read. Regular checks on pupils' phonics knowledge mean that anyone who needs extra help gets it. Staff make sure that all younger pupils read regularly with an adult. As pupils become more fluent readers, they enjoy the books that they read together as a class.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified and understood well. Pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from a range of adaptations, where needed, to help them access work, for example visual images and word banks. Some use tablets and computers to record their work. Pupils across the school use technology confidently and learn to type as well as write, which supports those who find writing harder.

Pupils' behaviour in class is generally calm and sensible. Pupils work hard, meeting the school's high expectations. Children in the early years quickly learn the routines and understand what they should do in different parts of the provision. The two-year-old children have their needs met to a high standard, with quieter areas for them to access when needed.

Children in the early years access interesting indoor and outdoor play opportunities as part of their learning. They confidently explore the outside woodland and join in group activities. The older children love it when they can use the forest school area in learning and playtimes to build dens and investigate the natural world. However, what other pupils can do at playtime is limited. There are not many organised games, activities or other things to do.

Pupils learn about diversity and now go on lots of trips out to experience life in the wider world. They are very clear that difference is a positive thing and that no one should be discriminated against. The older pupils have lots of opportunities to be leaders.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. Rapid improvements have been made in a short time. The schools in the federation have worked highly effectively to address weaknesses. This has been done in a way that staff appreciate and ensures that improvements are sustained. Staff have worked to share good practice between the two schools in the federation, which has benefited pupils and improved the quality of education. The governing body provides strong support and challenge to leaders at all levels, ensuring that any changes make the difference intended and are in pupils' best interests.

The school is aware that there is still work to do. Relationships with parents were distant after the pandemic. The school has opened up to parents again, welcoming them to various events and workshops. Leaders, governors and the parent association work closely together. Many parents appreciate this and feel they know more about what their children are learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff do not consistently use high-quality discussion with pupils or check on pupils' understanding consistently well, for example, by effective use of questions. This means that staff sometimes do not move on pupils' learning as efficiently as it could be. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise needed to develop pupils' learning effectively, including in ad-hoc moments in class or play.

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	121205
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345253
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Holden Cooke
Headteacher	Louise McLeod (Executive headteacher) Laurence Hughes (Head of School)
Website	www.wicklewoodschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- As of September 2022, the local authority had serious concerns about the school's leadership capacity and financial security. Most teachers and senior leaders left around this time. The local authority put warning notices in place and secured support from another school. The school has been formally federated with Drake Primary School for a year.
- The school is part of the Halcyon Federation. The other members are Drake Primary School and Little Pirates Nursery, both in Thetford, Norfolk.
- Members of the senior leadership team work across both schools. The federation shares an executive headteacher and a governing body.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school provides its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The nursery provides places for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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 spoke to the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders. They met with members of the governing body and the school's linked local authority officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and art and design. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alastair Heath-Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024