

# Northfield St Nicholas Primary Academy

St Margaret's Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4HN

## Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good enough progress to address past underachievement, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2. Although standards have improved, pupils are not making sufficiently swift progress to fulfil their potential at key stage 2.
- The leadership team has not ensured sustained improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching have not resulted in consistently strong teaching across the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive a fully broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils do not develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding in science, history, geography and a modern foreign language.
- Teachers do not provide precise enough guidance in many areas of the curriculum so that pupils know how well they are doing.
- Teachers do not consider what pupils already know and understand when planning lessons. As a result, most pupils are not stretched to make good progress in many areas of the curriculum.
- Although attendance has improved slightly, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is above the national average.
- Although senior leaders and governors monitor how additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent, it is not effective. As a result, disadvantaged pupils do not make progress in line with other pupils nationally.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading, mathematics and writing have been in line with the national average over time.
- Pupils develop strong skills in music, art and sport.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is strong, so that they make good progress.
- Teaching and learning in early years are effective. As a result, an increased proportion of children make a good level of development.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of leadership, ensuring that it has a sustained impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupil outcomes. In particular, ensure that:
  - leaders effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that focused and effective support can be provided where necessary
  - leaders develop a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils for life in twenty-first century Britain by developing strong skills in history, geography, science and a modern foreign language
  - leaders monitor more closely the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils so that they make progress at least in line with other pupils nationally in all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - accurate assessment information is used to inform planning so that activities and tasks meet the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils
  - teachers provide clear guidance so that pupils know how well they are doing
  - pupils understand the purpose, audience and text type of their writing when considering language features
  - pupils develop strong reasoning skills in mathematics
  - pupils develop effective strategies to improve their spelling
  - pupils continue to develop their understanding of how writers use language to convey ideas in a range of texts.
- Improve the attendance of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, by:
  - more effectively tracking and monitoring pupils who are frequently absent
  - making explicit to pupils, parents and carers the link between school attendance and achievement.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The school has experienced turbulence in its leadership. A new headteacher was recently appointed to take over the leadership of the school from the REACh2 Academy Trust interim executive headteacher. The interim executive headteacher was appointed to arrest the decline in standards at key stage 2 in September 2017. The interim leadership secured some improvements in pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Year 6. However, the impact on raising standards throughout key stage 2 is not consistent.
- Leaders and governors have high ambitions for the success of pupils both academically and socially. However, this vision for school improvement and the strategies adopted have not been effectively disseminated to all staff within the school. More than half of staff stated in Ofsted's online survey that they did not feel that the school had improved since the last inspection.
- Leadership of the curriculum is not effective. Pupils do not experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils do not develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding of history, geography and science throughout key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils do not currently have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language.
- Pupil premium funding is not spent effectively. Although leaders have identified the barriers experienced by disadvantaged pupils and made clear links to additional interventions, the impact has been limited. In recent years, disadvantaged pupils have achieved less than other pupils nationally.
- Leadership of reading has had some impact, particularly in Year 6. Pupils read high-quality texts, such as 'Carrie's War' in Year 6 and 'Fantastic Mr Fox' in Year 5, to both engage them and develop their understanding of how language is used to convey meaning. As a result, pupils are making better progress in reading at both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Senior leaders have not provided enough support to the leadership of mathematics and writing to secure rapid improvements in these areas. The REACh2 Academy Trust has provided training in identified areas but the impact on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics and writing has been inconsistent.
- Leaders accurately identify strengths and areas for development and ensure that appropriate professional development opportunities are provided. As a result, some poor performance has been tackled effectively.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Support is tailored to suit the needs of pupils and is reviewed frequently.
- Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. Many parents stated how happy their children were at the school.
- Despite staff turbulence, leaders have ensured that pupils continue to achieve in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1.

- Leaders have used additional sport funding effectively to provide specialist sports teaching to all pupils. In addition, pupils have access to a range of exciting sports and many opportunities to represent their school in sports competitions and festivals.

### **Governance of the school**

- Following the dissolution of the governing board by the trust in 2017, an interim intervention board was established to accelerate school improvements. All members of the board are members of the trust, apart from the externally appointed chair of governors.
- Governors are very supportive of the school. They have an informed understanding of the areas that the school needs to improve. They are regular visitors to the school and draw on a range of information with which to challenge school leaders.
- Governors prioritise the progress and achievements of disadvantaged pupils and know the strategies that teachers use. However, governors are not fully aware of the impact of the strategies employed by the school to improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the leaders of safeguarding to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders are both vigilant and tenacious in ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of pupils. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Safeguarding leaders are tenacious in following up referrals to ensure the safety of pupils. The school's record-keeping system is highly effective and is updated and reviewed regularly.
- Safeguarding leaders ensure that all staff, including volunteers, receive regular and timely training in safeguarding. Consequently, staff understand the importance of safeguarding and the systems used to protect pupils in the school.
- Staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire stated unanimously that safeguarding was effective in the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they felt well cared for and protected at the school. They stated that they could speak to a trusted adult at the school if they had a concern. They also stated that they knew how to keep safe when online and the importance of doing so.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the key stages and year groups. Teachers do not use pupils' assessment information effectively to embed appropriate challenge in their lessons. Teachers do not have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve from their respective starting points. The most

able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not routinely make the progress that they should across the curriculum.

- The quality of the teaching of writing is inconsistent across the key stages. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, learn specific language features, such as the passive voice, in isolation, without considering the effect that these language features might have on an audience, the purpose and the text type of their writing. Consequently, pupils do not make rapid progress in writing.
- Teachers do not address pupils' weaknesses in spelling effectively. As a result, pupils frequently repeat their misconceptions about spelling in their writing.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics is inconsistent across the key stages. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not develop key reasoning skills effectively to enable them to consider different approaches to mathematical problems. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well in mathematics at key stage 2.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficiently concise and insightful guidance to enable them to know how well they are achieving in many areas of the curriculum, such as science, history and geography.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive tailored support from teaching assistants and teachers to enable them to access the curriculum effectively. Teaching assistants use effective questioning to help pupils develop their understanding, skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations of the conduct of some pupils are not sufficiently high enough. Where learning does not regularly challenge, some pupils disengage from lessons and occasionally create low-level disruption.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Through regular, high-quality phonics sessions, pupils develop key skills which enable them to decode words successfully.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in music and art is strong. For example, an inspector observed pupils in a Year 4 class developing strong understanding of the role of patterning in music. Similarly, an inspector observed Year 3 pupils developing a complex range of sketching skills in art. Through specialist teaching of art and music, pupils make strong progress and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well throughout the curriculum. An inspector observed Year 3 pupils considering a range of moral dilemmas with perception and thoughtfulness.
- Pupils use talk very effectively to discuss their ideas with both their teachers and their peers. They develop their own thinking well through dialogue with each other.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils who require additional help. Through well-structured questions and dialogue with teaching assistants, pupils make better progress in many areas of the curriculum.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are kind, welcoming and generally respectful of each other. Pupils and staff have strong relationships, enabling pupils to feel safe and listened to.
- Despite the turbulence created by changes in staffing, pupils have been supported emotionally very well by the pastoral team and other adults. Through access to a range of sports clubs, tournaments and festivals, pupils have maintained their emotional and physical well-being.
- Most pupils like their school. Pupils told inspectors how happy they were at the school as it was friendly and supportive.
- Pupils are highly inclusive. Pupils told inspectors how they embraced and valued each other's differences as 'the world would be boring if we only listened to people like us'. Staff support pupils to challenge and reject gender stereotypes very well. Girls and boys play well together.
- Through the school parliament, pupils have a strong voice in the school. They have helped to fund-raise money for worthy causes and to enhance learning in the school. Pupils engage in the democratic process through elections and campaigning to gain a place in the parliament.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils' conduct in class and around the school is strong. However, where staff do not provide stimulating and challenging tasks for pupils, some pupils disengage from learning and occasionally create low-level disruption.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is similar to the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has been consistently above the national average. Staff do not effectively monitor, evaluate and review the attendance of pupils who are frequently absent.

## Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils are currently not making sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2. Although standards in key stage 2 have improved, they continue to be below the national average. Pupils in key stage 1 achieved in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and 2017, and this has been sustained.
- Disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress and attained significantly less well than other pupils nationally in reading, mathematics and writing at key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017. Pupils are currently making improved progress and attainment, but it is

still below what they are capable of achieving. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils at key stage 1 did not achieve in line with the national average in reading and writing in 2016 and 2017. Although they have improved, most of these pupils currently do not attain well.

- The proportion of pupils at key stages 1 and 2 who achieved 'greater depth' in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and 2017 was below the national average. However, current assessment information demonstrates an increased number of pupils are achieving 'greater depth'.
- Pupils do not make strong progress in science, history or geography. Pupils do not develop knowledge, skills and understanding in depth, because they do not explore these subjects in depth.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was just below the national average. Currently, Year 1 pupils are on track to exceed national expectations. Robust leadership has ensured that all staff adopt a uniform approach to the teaching of phonics so that all pupils receive high-quality teaching.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points. Pupils' assessment information is assessed and reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils receive tailored support that addresses their needs.
- Pupils make strong progress in music and art because specialist teaching encompasses high expectations of pupils, combined with the development of key skills.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those typical for their age group. Through strong teaching, learning and assessment, children make good progress from their starting points.
- The recently appointed leader of early years has had impact in improving the ways in which assessment and tracking of children's achievements are conducted. This information is used well to identify the strategies that are needed to improve children's skills, knowledge and understanding of reading, writing, mathematics and communication.
- Leaders and staff embed vocabulary throughout children's activities to support their language acquisition and development. For example, an inspector observed Reception children writing letters to their mothers, fathers and carers using key words.
- Staff design both indoor and outdoor activities to extend children's imaginative worlds, and to develop their emerging reading, writing and mathematics and social skills. An inspector observed children developing their understanding of stories through their early reading of pictures and simple words while waiting for their lunch. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The proportion of children who make a good level of development was just below the national average in 2017, but due to improved teaching, learning and assessment, an increased proportion of children are on track to meet national expectations.

- Staff have developed effective relationships with parents and many respond enthusiastically to the opportunity to engage with the regular 'story cafes' that enable parents to read to their children.
- Staff provide disadvantaged children with effective support in developing their language skills. As a result, an increased proportion of disadvantaged children are on track to make a good level of development.
- Children develop very effective social skills. They are polite, welcoming and respectful of the needs of each other. They share their toys well and take turns in a polite, orderly fashion. Nursery children have frequent opportunities to mix with Reception children to enable them to develop their social skills. Additionally, Nursery children are well prepared for Reception.



## School details

Unique reference number	142016
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10046619

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	459
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Andy Rutson-Edwards
Headteacher	Iain Owens
Telephone number	01502 563 528
Website	<a href="http://www.northfield-st-nicholas.suffolk.sch.uk">www.northfield-st-nicholas.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Email address	office@nsnacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status in 2015 when it joined the REAch2 Academy Trust. Governance is managed by an interim intervention board.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with small numbers of pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of education, health and care plans is in line with the national average.

- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's published floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, many jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from various year groups. Discussions with school staff, including senior leaders, middle leaders and two governors, were held.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' outcomes and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, and the behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside 18 free-text messages from parents and 15 staff responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to a range of parents.

## Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tessa Holledge

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sean Tobin

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

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 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018