



School Name Northfield St Nicholas Primary Academy

School Address St Margaret's Road

Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 4HN

Head/Principal Mr Iain Owens

IQM Lead Ms Lindsay Higgins

Assessment Date 17th January 2023

Assessor Mr Roger Leeke

Sources of Evidence

Evidence was gathered from a variety of sources within the school. The range of evidence was extremely useful presenting a full picture of life in the school. A tour of the school with the Headteacher, School Parliament representatives and Ambassadors, informal observations and talking to the children and staff in the playground at lunchtime also informed the evidence base. The Self Evaluation Report reflects the high quality of evaluation that exists in the school. It is comprehensive and reflects the school as seen by the assessor.

Meetings Held with:

Interviews on the day of the assessment were carried out with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, the Pupil Parliament and Ambassadors, the caretaker, the AH/SENCO, the Pastoral Team, representatives from Suffolk C.C. Special Education Service remotely, children at the KS2 lunch club, LSAs, three Governors remotely, key stage leaders, teachers and a group of parents.





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Overall Evaluation

Northfield St. Nicholas Primary Academy is an excellent example of inclusive practice. It is a school with 375 pupils in Lowestoft with a catchment area that has predominantly white British families. Inclusion is evident in all aspects of the school's work and there are good links with the community to offer support for families. The Head teacher works effectively with his leadership team, the Governing Body and the REACH2 academy Trust to ensure that all staff have similar aspirations for children at the school. All teachers are expected to be teachers of SEND and all leaders, leaders of SEND. The Pastoral Team demonstrates a commitment and focus on ensuring the school caters for the needs of every child. The school encourages all children to 'Look smart, think smart and be smart'. The school strives to be present and available for children, colleagues and parents and to have considerate, professional and respectful behaviours with all members of the school community.

They also have worked hard to ensure a safe school environment by maintaining positive relationships. The school provides a challenging, stimulating and creative curriculum delivered in a calm, supportive learning environment where all pupils are encouraged and enabled to achieve their best and to become independent resilient learners. Pupils have made good progress over the last four years from low starting points and all staff in the school are committed to ensuring individual progress continues to reflect the hard work that has been devoted to developing a broad, balanced, diverse and well thought through curriculum which offers opportunities for every child to progress. The ASUPERHERO curriculum is bespoke to the school and its aims are to be found displayed all around the school building. Aspirational, Sensory, Unforgettable, Progress, Exciting and Engaging, Relevant, Hope, Emotional Literacy, Reading and Opportunity are all built in to the ASUPERHERO curriculum expectations. The Headteacher feels that regular reminders around the school of commitments to children's education are important. He states that it is 'gentle pressure applied relentlessly.' Certainly the school has moved forward a long way since its 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgement in 2018. An Ofsted Inspection in July 2022 stated: "Pupils at Northfield St Nicholas Primary Academy are happy and safe. They earn 'nicely done' certificates for showing care or encouragement towards others. Pupils trust school staff, feeling listened to and valued. Pupils use the daily check-ins or 'talk it out triangles' to let staff know if they have any worries. As a result, bullying is rare, and resolved quickly when it happens." This inspection was judged 'Good' with 'Outstanding' leadership.

The Assessor can confirm that this was certainly the overall findings of this assessment and that the Headteacher has been true to his philosophy of 'Making the school a successful place for every child'. His 'hard on issues, soft on people' approach has certainly paid dividends in this exciting, inclusive environment where everyone feels they have a 'voice' regardless of their age or status. There is also a strong and proactive pastoral team which works closely with children, families and staff in order to support children's wellbeing, but also to support conflict resolution through the Restorative Practice approach.





Children with special educational needs access the same, but sometimes modified, curriculum as other children in the school and consequently make good progress. The Assistant Headteacher/ SENCO plays an important part in ensuring every effort is made to cater for the needs of every child and goes out of her way to ensure all agencies, teachers and support staff have the child's needs upper most in their minds. Consequently the progress of all children is good. The Thrive assessments support the identification of needs and the Thrive room supports a large number of children with their emotional wellbeing and attainment. The HUB is another room that helps children understand themselves and their behaviour and how it may impact on others near them. The School Parliament, Ambassadors and Play Leaders also play a big part in supporting other children and providing a 'voice' for the children in the school. They take their roles very seriously and come forward with ideas and suggestions about life in school and remind other children of their responsibilities. Health and safeguarding are addressed in PSHE lessons on a weekly basis and children are given the opportunity to discuss current affairs through the discussions of the reporting of world affairs in the magazine Picture News.

The behaviour and attitude of the children in both formal and informal settings is excellent and the calm, tidy and purposeful learning environment encourages that level of behaviour by the children. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are spacious, offering children opportunities to develop aspects of sport, sustainability and learning through play. Music in the corridors adds to the calm atmosphere. These environments are important and supplement the focus on the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils and the understanding that high quality learning experiences support that pupil development. Staff and pupil wellbeing is regularly addressed. There is a Wellbeing Committee and teachers can check-in on a weekly basis to express any concerns they may have.

Support staff feel totally included in the life of the school. The LSAs say 'there is no hierarchy- everyone is given responsibility'. They have monthly wellbeing meetings and they are always kept up to date with regular training in different areas of learning. The site manager is well respected and has a wealth of knowledge of health and safety procedures which the school uses to good effect. The friendly faces at the school reception provide parents with the confidence to approach the school with their concerns. They are an important first line of contact for parents who may have an issue they need to discuss. Staff are also available at the beginning and end of the day for a 'meet and greet'. This close liaison helps to ensure a two way monitoring of attitudes, pupils' progress and the opportunities to celebrate successes. A Breakfast Club offers children a good start to the day and a lunch club is an excellent environment for any child who needs some reassurance or a quiet chat. Parents understand the expectations of behaviour and the inclusive ethos of the school and recognise the improvements made over the recent years. They understand the high expectations of all staff to ensure children have a positive learning experience.





Northfield St, Nicholas Primary Academy is a particularly outstanding example of a school committed to meet the needs of its pupils and is outstanding in its commitment to and implementation of inclusive practice. All staff have an enthusiasm and passion for their part in the learning and lives of the pupils at the school. They are dedicated and positive about the futures of their pupils. Everyone is committed and wanting to do the best they can for the pupils at Northfield St. Nicholas Primary School. They provide an outstanding, caring environment for pupils where high expectations have a huge impact on their progress and wellbeing. The Self Evaluation Report reflects the high quality of evaluation that exists in the school. It is comprehensive and reflects the school as seen by the assessor.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded IQM's Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Roger Leeke

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

Joe McCann MBA NPQH

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Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

Assessor: Roger Leeke





Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

Inclusion is evident in all aspects of the school's work and there are good links with the community. The Head teacher works effectively with his leadership team, the Governing Body, the Trust, parents and staff to ensure that everyone has similar aspirations for children at the school. The leadership team expects that all children who go to the school go to be safe and to learn. There is good monitoring of all pupil groups by leaders and key patterns and threads are identified and strategies put in place to rectify any lack of progress.

The Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead supports across the school to ensure that all pupils are making progress and where pupils are identified as having a possible educational need, alongside the support of the Safeguarding and Inclusion Team, a graduated approach of support is implemented and, where required, a multi-agency approach is sought.

All teachers are expected to be teachers of SEND and all leaders, leaders of SEND. The Pastoral Team demonstrates a commitment and focus on ensuring the school caters for the needs of every child. Pupils are tracked and identified during pupil progress meetings and those pupils who have not made progress are rag rated. Additional provision for those rag rated pupils is agreed and the provision is placed on provision maps. The provision maps provide entry and exit data so that progress can be analysed. The school's motto, of 'Look smart, think smart, be smart' children understand and demonstrate in their learning. There is a good rapport between staff and children and the respect shown by learners for each other. The excellent behaviour and attitude of the children in both formal and informal settings and the calm, tidy and purposeful learning environment reflects the overall ethos within the school.

Inclusivity is at the heart of everything the school does. The school believes that everyone can learn, achieve and has the potential to be successful. Positive relationships are the key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another. The school has high expectations in everything they do. There is a bespoke programme for each pupil who has special needs or is vulnerable which meets the emotional need and mental wellbeing of the individual pupil. The Governors are experienced and their understanding of the key issues relating to school improvement also impact on outcomes for children. The Chair of Governors is an experienced professional and works well with the Headteacher and the other governors to address the inclusive ethos within the school. One governor spoke of the excellent progress made in the school over the past 4 years and how governors 'all have a responsibility for SEND and this is always reflected in their monitoring visit reports'.

- To further support SEND and vulnerable Y7 pupils when they move on to High School.
- To carry out Diversity training CPD in the next academic year.





Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils feel cared for and supported in their learning with teachers and support staff understanding their pupils' needs. The dedication and strong leadership of the Headteacher, his accessibility, commitment to inclusion and improving the opportunities for all children has had an exceptional impact on expectations and relationships over the past four years. The promotion of inclusivity across the school and the high aspirations for every child has been a particular feature of the school's ethos which is strongly rooted in a Restorative Practice approach to support pupils' wellbeing. The good performance management systems have been effective in focussing teachers and non teaching staff on the school improvement and moving the school forward and the SLT have a commitment to raising standards and providing staff and pupils with the best possible environment and opportunities. There is a close monitoring of data and learning and teaching which have had an impact on raising standards and a close working with a range of agencies to address the inclusion agenda and to ensure children's needs are met. Representatives from the Suffolk Education Service spoke of the proactive approach of the school in addressing children's needs. They praised 'the strong pastoral team' and the SENCO 'who takes on suggestions, removes barriers and works well with families'. One spoke of the school as 'A lovely inclusive place with probably one of the best SENCOs in Suffolk!' The SENCO supports teachers well in providing advice, support and resources to ensure all children have the learning they need.

Ofsted stated in July 2022 when grading Leadership as Outstanding: "Leaders' sharp focus on helping pupils to thrive in their education is paying dividends. They have designed a curriculum that reflects their high aspirations for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have ensured the curriculum is planned so that pupils extend their vocabulary in each subject. Learning builds on what pupils already know. Pupils behave well and learning is rarely disrupted."

Every governor is a governor of SEND and throughout all governor monitoring SEND is included.

- To ensure Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content in order to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment.
- To ensure Leaders realistically and constructively manage staff workload and wellbeing.
- To ensure Leaders engage effectively with pupils and the community.
- To ensure Governors continue to have a clear vision and strategy and are held to account for the quality of education through clear supportive challenge and monitoring of the SIP.





Element 3 - Curriculum - Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

The ASUPERHERO curriculum, which is broad and balanced and encompasses local, national and international themes, inspires and motivates children. The ASUPERHERO expectations are displayed in all classrooms as a reminder and prompt for staff and children to use and revisit during the topic. As part of the curriculum there are a variety of activities that take place in the local community as well as a number of visitors to the school to enhance the learning experience. The school uses Picture News as a resource for weekly current affairs debates to broaden children's attitudes and perspectives on the wider world. There are also a wide range of extra- curricular activities available to children at lunchtime and after school which extends children's learning and interest. Working walls are used within each classroom to support learning and subject leaders have shared expectations of learning prompts and resources that are available in each class in order to support learning in each subject. ASUPERHERO expectations are displayed in all classrooms as a reminder and prompt for staff and children to use and revisit during the topic. Access to a range of outdoor learning activities is a major element of the ASUPERHERO curriculum.

The prioritisation of reading, in particular, and academic achievement in the core subjects to ensure pupils have the best possible start to their school lives greatly enhances children's prospects for the future. The school reading motto is to 'Read, read, read and read' and it aims to foster a love for reading and ensure pupils have regular opportunities to engage with texts across the school day. The school library is an excellent facility and it is well stocked and used well by children at lunchtime and during free time. Each class also has a timetabled session in the library each week with the librarian. There are excellent strategies in place to ensure reading is coordinated from the EYFS to Y6 including access to the Power of Reading scheme. All subject leaders have created progression documents which detail the sequence and progression of learning from Nursery through to Year 6. Key Stage leaders support each other well, understand the school ethos and ensure there is curriculum continuity and understanding throughout the school.

School leaders understand that pupils will receive the best possible teaching when there is a commitment to continual professional development. As a result, teachers and LSAs receive frequent, carefully selected training and support which aligns with the curriculum and school priorities, considers the skill sets of individual teachers and is in response to monitoring activities.

- To ensure key vocabulary is consistently taught and remembered across all age groups.
- To ensure calculation skills are successfully embedded in order that pupils can utilize these skills to better engage with mathematical problem-solving challenges.





Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

Progress is monitored by all leaders through progress meetings and this is then triangulated by monitoring of books, plans, pupil voice and lesson observations. Pupil premium is monitored and tracked. The ASUPERHERO aspirational and diverse curriculum is a vehicle for the high quality teaching and learning which takes place in the school and incorporates the key elements that are important to pupils. Ofsted stated: "Leaders' sharp focus on helping pupils to thrive in their education is paying dividends. They have designed a curriculum that reflects their high aspirations for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have ensured the curriculum is planned so that pupils extend their vocabulary in each subject. Learning builds on what pupils already know. Pupils behave well and learning is rarely disrupted."

The school's commitment to continual professional development to maintain high quality teaching is promoted amongst all staff and there is also a promotion of equality and diversity through weekly British Values lessons. Children are well motivated with good, innovative systems in place to improve the quality of learning. The varied outdoor learning environments and their impact on pupils' physical and mental wellbeing cannot be underestimated. The well set out EYFS outdoor environment encourages free flow and teacher directed and child initiated activities. It is well designed with sand pit, climbing apparatus, water play and a range of apparatus to stimulate children's imagination. Children were observed 'having fun' and calmly engrossed in a variety of activities. The school screens children's speech and language ability and this gives them a good start with reading in the EYFS. Children in the early years get off to a good start in learning to read. There is a consistency of display in classrooms and shared areas which shows a balance between celebrating children's work and providing a focus for learning. The displays in all classrooms are of particular high quality and there is a reinforcement of expectations. Anti-bullying posters and the ASUPERHERO explanations are in corridors and classrooms for everyone to see and reflect on. The Power of Reading book being read by the class, being safe in the community reminders and the class topic are all displayed outside the classroom door. Staff have created some excellent murals around the school and these are supplemented by displays of British Values, progression boards of children's work from the EYFS to Y6 in every subject, an Aretha Franklin music display focusing on developing cultural capital, a focus on sports clubs and an Alice in Wonderland theme. Word of the day and the behaviour expectations are in every classroom together with working walls for science, maths, English and topic work. The quality and consistency of display around the school is exceptional and children recognise its significance and impact.

Next Steps:

To further develop the RE curriculum.





Element 5 - Assessment

The tracking of individual pupil data including the progress meetings, together with the triangulation of evidence from books, pupil voice and lesson observations contributes to the regular assessment and progress of individual pupils, sometimes in small steps. The work ethic of the children, their good behaviour, friendliness and politeness impacts greatly on their engagement with their school work. The atmosphere in classes and in shared areas is calm with children reflecting and valuing the care and attention which all staff show for them. Children enjoy their time in school and consequently attendance is at national levels. This is celebrated in Friday assemblies alongside celebrating good attitudes and behaviours in front of parents and teachers. Staff use verbal feedback throughout the lessons to check progress and understanding. Live marking and feedback also take place so that pupils understand the next steps in their learning. All pupils use the 'talk it out triangles' to assess their work and are able to articulate their learning journey. Spelling data is assessed to identify gaps in learning for the whole cohort and more specifically for each pupil. Reading assessments are assessed in class and data is collated and filed in class reading folders. This data is triangulated and used to inform teacher assessments each term. Staff use writing standards grids and the teacher's assessment framework to help them assess writing. All pupils have regular extended writing opportunities which ensure pupils have opportunities to independently apply the skills they have been taught and explored in class. Every term there is whole school themed 'Big Write' and the writing is formally assessed using the Criterion Scale and informs teacher assessments. The school English lead also tracks and monitors pupil engagement with reading. All children have the opportunity to achieve and this is promoted through levels of challenge that all children can access.

Termly Thrive assessments have an impact on wellbeing, behaviour and attainment. There is a Thrive room with 2 practitioners. It is a 'safe room' where children can go if they need a 'safe space'. Individual Thrive activities are provided such as painting and creative activities. These are available every afternoon and presently 20 children each week take advantage of the facility. 56 children overall have been assessed this academic year and the families of those children have received support where required. The wellbeing of staff is also regularly addressed. There is a wellbeing committee which meets every half term to which all staff are invited. Staff can discuss any issues they may have and have the opportunity to speak personally to any member of staff. A further provision, paid for by the school, is available to any member of staff who needs professional help for their particular problem. There is a 'check-in' on staff to assess their wellbeing once each week and this includes a celebration of activities and emails to highlight good practice.

Next Steps:

• To further develop and embed the assessment systems to ensure all pupils make progress.





Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

The atmosphere in classes and in shared areas is calm with children reflecting and valuing the care and attention which all staff show for them. Children have high engagement in the schools' rules and expectations for high quality learning and conduct expectations. These in turn are clearly underpinned by the schools explicit Restorative Practice strategy. Pupils are also able to self-regulate during unstructured times, such as at lunchtimes when pupils can use the school corridors to access the library or ICT suite or when independently leaving class to visit the toilets. This self regulation is unusual in primary schools, but the assessor observed children using the library and corridors without 'permission' in an orderly and grown up manner. This aspect of the children's behaviour alone says a great deal about the trusting ethos of the staff, the inclusive attitudes of the children and the understanding by the children of the restorative practices practised in the school. The children are encouraged to take ownership of their own development of their behaviours, using their own 'point tracking' booklet to identify which behaviours they need to improve. Classes compete with each other to ensure every point gained is seen as being valuable and it develops 'fun team rivalry'. Children also earn real rewards for their efforts including badges, pencils, stickers and certificates for the individual and bonus play times for winning classes each half term.

The school has 8 learning behaviours which are reinforced on a regular basis and displayed in and around all classes. Children know these behaviours as they are developed more and more through the school at an appropriate age. Try new things, Concentrate, Work hard, Improve, Concentrate, Understand others, Push yourself, Imagine, Don't give up are the behaviours that are all designed to develop confidence, resilience and independence and are used across the school .

The school has a strong pastoral team that supports pupils, families and staff. Children's and staff wellbeing is a key focus of the team as is conflict resolution through Restorative Practice. The children are encouraged and supported to discuss their own emotions and work through problems of their own and with peers in a respectful way. Children have check-ins three times a day when they give points out of ten to how they are feeling. They also have talk it out triangles where they can identify how they are feeling emotionally or how they are coping with a particular lesson. All staff have received training in all of these elements and are skilled at using the systems in place to support children to develop their own personal skills. The PE and PHSE curriculums also include a focus on the importance of a healthy lifestyle, physical activity and mental wellness. In PSHE there are weekly themes of the week and safeguarding lessons. British Values are also given high priority and are visible around the school. These are particularly important as the catchment area of the school is not as diverse as some other areas in the country.

Next Steps:

• To ensure that the small minority of pupils who need additional support to make outstanding choices in class consistently do so.





Element 7 - Parents, Carers, Guardians

Excellent work is carried out with families, pupils and the community generally to ensure that children are cared for and valued. There are good communication systems which give parents and carers confidence in the school and in its support for their child's needs. The daily 'meet and greet' in the mornings by senior members of staff reassures parents and has improved parental confidence in the school over time. Tables around the school at the start of the day with senior staff, including the Headteacher, offers parents a time to engage in a conversation about home or school whilst being offered a bagel to start the day! The presence of the Headteacher both to parents and pupils has an impact on attitudes, behaviours and support which is vital in an inclusive school. It was mentioned to the assessor more than once by staff and parents. The SENCO has developed a parent advocate role. This is a parent volunteer who has received additional training and is a point of call for all parents who would benefit from a 'listening ear' or support to attend meetings. The SENCO and parent advocate have also developed a monthly SEND Forum which all parent/carers are welcome to attend. Parents have helped to develop this Forum as each one has a unique theme. It has not only support parental knowledge, but it has improved engagement, as well as, providing support to families.

At parents evenings parents are able to book appointments to meet with any member of the school team to discuss any matter they might see as a priority. They are also invited to weekly celebration assemblies which highlight children's successes, attitudes and behaviours, sports days which involve all children and Christmas concerts. The school is presently engaged in bringing back reading cafes, maths cafes and Triple P parenting courses which were all present before covid and were very well supported. Parental feedback from surveys is excellent with 98% of parents stating their child is happy, 99% stating that bullying is addressed, 96% saying they would recommend the school and 99% feeling their child is safe in school. Parents at the parents' meeting with the Assessor were very positive about the school. 'I can't fault them, 'said one parent. 'They are always available,' stated another and one very grateful carer said, 'If there is an issue they will find it and sort it out.' They were also very grateful for the range of lunchtime and after school clubs. The parent and teacher engagement and mutual trust and support impacts greatly on children's progress. The SLT are very effective in supporting parents and families and consequently there is a growing support from parents and understanding of the school ethos.

- To set up a 'Dad's club' club to help provide a support network for those male carers who may have limited support.
- To provide an Early Help coffee morning available to all families to offer further support.
- To set up a Parents' Association over the coming year.





Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

The school has good links with the local community and the senior staff are trying to improve these relationships even further. The schools improving data, their good Ofsted report, the links to the wider world in their curriculum and their inclusive mindset are making changes to the perception of the wider community's view of the school. Good use is also made of the local parks, beaches and services to extend the curriculum. There is good support for local and national charities and an involvement of the children in raising funds for children less fortunate than themselves. The school engages well with local agencies to develop provision and support for families. They invite visitors into the school and try to engage with the local community to support children's understanding of their community and the local community's understanding of the school. Visits and visitors include RNLI lifeboats, Fit and fed (half term project to support Early Help), a dentist visit, the Police (following up local safeguarding concerns in the immediate environment), the Fire Brigade, Social Workers, Local church (assemblies), Magic Breakfast (Early Help), One Life Suffolk and a link with St Margaret's Church.

The enrichment days and the opportunities for visitors from the local and wider community to come into school after the pandemic are again opening up many opportunities to give pupils an understanding of their extended community. The school aims to ensure that its children see what opportunities exist beyond the school. Staff want the children to understand that their current learning leads onto many opportunities. Positive comments and views from parent/carer surveys, mentions in the local newspaper demonstrating a positive impact on the community, participation in local activities, fundraising for local and national charities all add to the schools growing recognition within the local community as well as adding to the children's understanding of their immediate environment. Themed enrichment days support key themes around global and local issues. Themes include an anti-bullying day and following the Russia/Ukraine war.

11 before 11, which are a variety of experiences which children may not encounter in the usual way through the curriculum, is a major feature in the school offering fun excitement and wider experiences before the children are 11 years of age. These experiences are 'different' and provide cultural capital for the children at the school. The transition to the local High School is also forward thinking. It has developed after excellent links with the High School SENCO and SEND forum in order that pupils with SEND are followed on their journey into year 7 and possibly beyond in the future. This is another far reaching development which has resulted from the SENCO's initiatives. The school further develops the children's understanding of the wider world with their residential trips and weekly outdoor learning sessions.

- To set up a School Road Safety Officer project where pupils help develop an understanding and promote road safety in and outside the school community.
- To further develop children's global awareness.