

Inspection of Norton CEVC Primary School

School Close, Norton, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3LZ

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
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 November 2011. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They enjoy their lessons and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned. The school is highly ambitious for what pupils can achieve. This extends beyond the core curriculum. The many different experiences pupils have as part of their education make them highly knowledgeable about the world beyond their local area. They understand fundamental British values well, for example knowing about human rights and democracy both in our country and others.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved. Everyone knows the routines and expectations and follows these. This means that classrooms are highly focused places where pupils work hard. All pupils, including the very youngest, are motivated by the activities they undertake and have high levels of concentration.

There are many extra-curricular activities on offer, from gymnastics to model making. Older pupils have independently set up further clubs, such as reading, for the younger ones. Pupils have many opportunities to undertake leadership roles, for example as behaviour ambassadors.

Pupils enjoy their play. Building structures is a favourite activity, using the 'scrap shed' materials. Pupils of all ages play games together or enjoy climbing on the equipment. Pupils feel safe and know who they can talk to if they are upset or worried.

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

The school has placed the teaching of reading at the heart of what it does. There is a high emphasis on sharing high-quality texts together as a class. Children in Reception love listening to stories. They use them as a base for play, for example creating their own adventures based on a story. Older pupils read widely and are motivated by the points they gather for quizzes about books they have read. The school regularly checks on pupils' phonics knowledge and makes sure that anyone at risk of falling behind gets additional help so that they keep up.

The curriculum has been considered carefully so that it meets the needs of the pupils. Lessons build knowledge up over time. Teachers revisit previous learning, for example using quizzes, to help pupils recall and remember what they have learned. The school enriches the curriculum with trips and visitors, for example meeting a 'caveman' or visiting a mosque.

There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils have the technical skills to write fluently. Children in Reception practise writing daily. They and pupils in Year 1 also take part in activities to strengthen their pencil grip. This early work means that older pupils can write quickly without having to think about how to form letters.

Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and work hard on tasks set. The school has correctly identified that sometimes pupils are cautious in more open-ended investigations and challenges. Pupils are encouraged to be 'bold adventurers' and step out of their

comfort zone. However, some pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not always as independent as they could be. Those pupils with SEND who need adult support achieve well and access the same curriculum as peers. Some pupils with SEND ably use technology or other adaptations to work with less help, but this is not the case for others who could access the curriculum with less adult support and direction.

The school knows the pupils really well. It tracks their progress through the curriculum carefully. This includes pupils with SEND. Leaders identify any pupil needs appropriately and put in place strategies and activities to help fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Staff expertly model language to children in Reception. Their discussions with children engage them in activities and move learning on. For example, children tried out different ways to make a 'telescope', developing language around comparing length and shape, and understanding that it was a cylinder. Children keep trying with tasks, even when they find them hard. Children behave exceptionally well. They develop the knowledge and attributes that prepare them extremely well for learning in Year 1.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to think carefully about issues such as discrimination. They are thoughtful and reflective. They can confidently explain their learning about British values. The school enhances pupils' cultural development as well. For example, it ensures that pupils experience a wide range theatrical performances and that the oldest pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils confidently perform drama and music to an audience.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. Leaders know clearly what the quality of education is and what needs to improve further. The school's continued improvement is supported by a knowledgeable governing body.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, particularly those with SEND, rely too heavily on adult support and direction to access the curriculum. They do not develop the knowledge and skills to do so with less support. This means that, when additional adults are not available, these pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The school should develop further ways to adapt teaching so that more pupils can access the curriculum independently more of the time when they are able to do so.

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	124710
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10295014
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicky Broughton
Headteacher	Lisa Sparkes
Website	www.norton.suffolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2011 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded to take pupils in Years 5 and 6. The number on roll has more than doubled.
- The school is a Church of England school. The most recent inspection of its denominational education and collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in November 2024. The next inspection will be due within eight years of this.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

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 headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They met with members of the governing body and spoke to the school's improvement advisor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, 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

Charlotte Martin

Ofsted Inspector

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