

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Firside Junior School

Middletons Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 5NF

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Firside Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Rosalind Robinson. This school is part of the Wensum Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Daniel Thrower, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Smith.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They rise to the high expectations of achievement and behaviour set by their school. Pupils are eager to win the weekly award for showing the school's DREAM values of determination, resilience, enthusiasm, ambition and motivation. These values are evident in pupils' exemplary attitudes. Pupils develop a love of learning through engaging classroom learning, for example conducting online sessions with the national history archives. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Pupils' activities in school take them beyond their current life experiences. These include performing in collaborative band lessons and singing in the Rock Notes choir at national events. Pupils visit local theatres, county shows, art galleries and historical sites. They work with visiting artists, wildlife trusts and music societies.

The extensive range of clubs further inspires pupils' interests. These clubs have included martial arts, dodgeball, athletics, tag rugby and mad science. Many pupils attend these clubs, including disadvantaged pupils. These experiences help pupils explore and develop their talents and interests.

Pupils adopt a range of leadership roles that help others, such as emotion coaching leaders, sports leaders, team captains and school councillors. Pupils proudly adopt these responsible roles, having received appropriate training. This encourages pupils to develop as confident and responsible leaders.

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

The ambitious curriculum encompasses the school's vision, 'To become the best you can be, for learning, for life, for future success'. The progression of knowledge and skills is carefully sequenced across different subject areas. The content excites and engages pupils, inspiring them to find out more. Learning is regularly checked to ensure pupils have remembered key knowledge. As a result, most pupils achieve well, including disadvantaged pupils.

The school makes sure that all pupils have the reading skills they need to access this curriculum. Staff provide effective teaching for pupils still at the early stages of learning to read. Consequently, these pupils quickly develop the fluency, accuracy and confidence they need.

The school has now embedded its writing curriculum. This curriculum has had a significant impact on pupils' written work, especially in English. Pupils' English writing is accurate and sophisticated. However, in other subjects, the quality of pupils' writing is not of the same high standard. This is because staff do not apply the same high expectations of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The school precisely identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because staff know their pupils extremely well and are highly sensitive to their individual needs. This means that staff can tailor support to enable these pupils to thrive in their learning. The school ensures that staff receive ongoing training to accommodate the wide range of pupils' needs. Consequently, many pupils with SEND achieve well from their varied starting points.

Staff work closely with pupils and families to identify and remove any barriers should attendance become a concern. This work is effective. Therefore, pupils' attendance has improved recently.

The school ensures that pupils are very well prepared to be citizens of modern Britain. Pupils celebrate diversity through the philosophy and beliefs curriculum and assembly programme. They have many opportunities to debate moral and ethical topics. This means they have a very strong understanding of right and wrong and they are confident to express their views. Pupils learn about democracy through voting for their school councillors, running mock elections and their historical studies.

Pupils have a very strong community spirit. Many pupils are working towards a community kindness award through conducting care home visits. Pupils suggest and participate in many fundraising activities both locally and nationally.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They receive high-quality training for their professional development. Staff feel very well supported by leaders with regards to their workload and well-being. The trust keeps detailed oversight of the school's work. It is

very clear about the priorities for further development. The trust provides the school with the support needed to continually drive improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, pupils sometimes do not receive the same support they need to address weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar as they do in most other subjects. As a result, pupils' written work is not yet of the same high standard as in their work in English. This means that their writing does not always reflect the depth of their learning or the ambition of the curriculum. The trust should ensure that the school's expectations of pupils' written work are as consistently high across all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2015.

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	142840
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345429
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Smith
CEO of the trust	Daniel Thrower
Headteacher	Rosalind Robinson
Website	www.wensumtrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Wensum Trust.
- The school manages a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school currently uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives from the trust, including the CEO and the chair of the board of trustees, as well as members of the local school committee.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's records of behaviour and attendance and spoke with several groups of pupils to understand their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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