

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sprowston Infant School

Recreation Ground Road, Sprowston, Recreation Ground Rd, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8EW

Inspection dates:

13 May 2025

Outcome

Sprowston Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend this school are happy and enjoy being here. They benefit from a well-thought-out balance of learning activities. This includes regular focused time working with adults on key skills. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to enhance their learning through age-appropriate play and exploring different topics. The school's expectations of pupils' achievement are high and rising further. As a result, pupils are developing very strong writing skills.

The school is highly inclusive. Pupils who attend the special educational needs unit (SEN unit), and those who are in the mainstream classes, benefit from the specialist knowledge that adults bring. All pupils access a wide range of trips and different experiences, such as a visiting planetarium. The school has positive links with the local community. It makes use of this partnership through visits, for example to local shops and green spaces close by.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places. Pupils know what is expected of them and behave appropriately. At playtimes, they appreciate the wide range of activities on offer, from hairstyling models and small world play through to large-scale ball games. They have positive relationships with the adults in school and are kept safe.

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

The curriculum lays out clearly what pupils will learn, right from the start of Nursery to the end of the school. Staff make links in learning from what has come before and build up pupils' vocabulary.

Teaching of reading is precise and enables pupils to master the skills of decoding quickly. Pupils who need additional help with reading get this in the classroom so that they do not fall behind. Pupils practise their writing skills daily with an adult. This means that, in Reception, children quickly become confident with letter formation and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1 and beyond. Throughout the school, during writing activities, pupils receive almost immediate feedback and encouragement from adults, which helps pupils improve their work successfully and to a high standard.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the topics they learn. For example, in Reception, children talk proudly about the different plants that they have grown from seeds and labelled themselves. Staff bring learning to life by using real-life objects for pupils to see and understand, for example when looking at life cycles of minibeasts and plants. However, in a few subjects, sometimes the activities that staff provide are too focused on learning facts and do not give pupils the opportunity to develop and apply their knowledge securely.

The SEN base classes provide a highly structured day, with plenty of opportunities for pupils to re-regulate through movement and other sensory activities. The school develops early communication through use of visuals and meaningful objects. Pupils join in activities with their mainstream peers wherever possible. There is a high focus on developing pupils' skills to help them to access the wider world, for example by experiencing different foods through touch and smell before gaining the confidence to taste.

Pupils across the whole school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Pictorial cues help pupils when, for example, retelling a story. Most of the time, children practise mathematics and English with close adult support, which means that any misconceptions are picked up early. Regular staff development related to supporting pupils with SEND helps improve the quality of education across the whole school.

The very youngest children quickly become confident and independent. They politely take part in joint lunchtimes. They learn to take turns and share. High expectations and levels of challenge in the early years mean that pupils make a strong start to school life. Children in Reception have lots of opportunities to investigate and explore, for example building forts and sensibly considering the risks involved.

Pupils behave well. This is because adults have high expectations for them and make this clear to pupils. Pupils are kind and respectful to each other.

Pupils learn about democracy through activities such as voting for the daily story book. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of historical figures who helped win the vote for women. The school has ensured that the books and resources used within the school reflect a wide range of cultural backgrounds, helping pupils understand about life beyond the local area.

Staff feel highly supported. They value the collaborative work to develop the curriculum and understand the steps of progression well. Leaders know their school well and what they need to continue to work on to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the activities staff prepare sometimes focus too much on learning facts. Where this is the case, pupils are not able to apply this knowledge, nor do they develop a secure enough understanding of how the important knowledge fits together. The school needs to ensure that staff have the expertise to design activities that allow pupils to develop and apply their knowledge securely in 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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	120853
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10378480
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Griffin
Headteacher	Rob Edwards
Website	www.sprowstoninfant.norfolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has taken control of the on-site nursery and extended its age range to admit children from age two and a half.
- The school has an SEN unit for pupils with autism. This has been extended since the previous inspection. There are currently three classes in the SEN base and 27 pupils on roll in this provision. This provision is set within the main school building.
- The school does not use any 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. 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 and deputy headteacher. They met with members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to teachers and support staff.

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons. They looked at samples of pupils' work and curriculum plans. They spoke to pupils both in lessons and out of lessons.
- 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

Imran Khan

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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