Inspection of Recreation Road Infant School

Recreation Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 3PA

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
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 October 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everybody is welcome at this inclusive and caring school. Pupils are happy and feel safe here. They are positive about their school. They attend well. Pupils know that if they have a worry or concern, then a trusted adult will be there to help them.

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. They talk enthusiastically about some of the different things they have learned. Pupils' behaviour in class is typically positive. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils generally listen to their teachers and settle into tasks quickly. Bullying happens rarely. Pupils are confident that adults help stop poor behaviour straight away.

The school supports pupils to develop their character beyond the classroom. Pupils learn how to be reflective, independent and resilient. For example, pupils undertake a range of wider experiences such as '50 things before you leave Recreation Road'. They also work towards being a learner values champion. Additionally, pupils learn how to make positive changes in their community.

Pupils enjoy having leadership roles. These roles include playtime buddies, planet pals and digital leaders. The smart school council also provides pupils with opportunities to be involved in the school's decision-making process. These roles help to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

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

Staff in the school work together to develop a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Teaching staff have the confidence and strong subject knowledge to teach the curriculum well. This is because leaders have provided staff with effective guidance and support. For example, recent staff training has helped them develop pupils' reading inference skills.

The school prioritises reading. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they join the Reception Year. Expert staff deliver engaging phonics lessons. As a result, pupils develop their confidence to move from simple to more complex words. The school checks carefully to ensure pupils develop the skills they need to read fluently. Where pupils need additional support, effective interventions are put in place. This helps them to catch up.

The school has ensured that, for the most part, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. However, in some subjects, staff have not identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. Consequently, pupils can struggle to recall their previous learning. Some pupils can find it difficult to build on what they have previously learned.

The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. The school accurately identifies pupils' individual needs at an early stage. Staff then provide pupils with SEND with effective and appropriate support, adapting their input as needed, for example by providing additional adult support or resources.

Staff regularly remind pupils about the school rules of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils understand the positive behaviours they need to demonstrate to be part of the school community. As a result, disruption to lessons is rare. Pupils behave equally well during breaktimes and lunchtimes.

The school prioritises attendance. It works to provide effective support for families to overcome any barriers to attendance. Due to this approach, pupils' attendance has steadily improved over recent years.

The school's curriculum helps ensure pupils learn to keep themselves safe, both online and when they are outside of school. The school aspires to create a safe and inclusive environment for everyone in the community. Pupils understand what makes them unique and that everyone is different. The school is creative about its approach to fostering community engagement and pupil voice. For example, a regular school radio show allows pupils to share school news and pupil interviews and celebrate fantastic achievements with a wide audience.

The early years curriculum supports a diverse range of children's needs and starting points. Staff carefully adapt their input so children can be successful. The environment is calm and engaging. The staff have created a positive and inspiring place to learn. Children are supported to develop their vocabulary and spoken language by well-trained staff. They are encouraged to describe or ask questions about what they are learning. Many children are, therefore, ready for Year 1.

Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are ambitious for developing their school and supporting pupils in achieving well. They take account of staff workload and well-being. Staff enjoy working here and feel well supported. They receive helpful training to undertake their roles effectively. Governors have the knowledge and expertise to carry out their responsibilities. They provide appropriate challenge and support for school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not identified what key knowledge it wants pupils to learn and when. This hinders pupils from building a deep body of knowledge and linking together previous learning. The school should ensure that it finalises its curriculum thinking so it is clear what pupils should learn and when this knowledge should be taught.

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	134964
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345288
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Kate Campbell (Co-Chair) Pamela Reynell (Co-Chair)
Headteacher	Michael Bunting (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.recreationroad.com
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2014, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2002,

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, this school has federated with Avenue Junior School. The headteacher works in an executive capacity across both schools.

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 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.

- The inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the executive headteacher, head of school and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives from the governing body, including the co-chairs.
- The inspectors met with various groups of staff and pupils. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, history, computing and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online Ofsted staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Benjamin Axon, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Becky Quinn	Ofsted Inspector

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