Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sparhawk Infant School & Nursery

Sparhawk Avenue, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8BU

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Sparhawk Infant School & Nursery has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are successful and happy here. They achieve in line with the school's high expectations. Dedicated staff ensure pupils learn important knowledge securely such as number bonds, how to write a sentence and the meanings of new words. Pupils' confidence grows as they notice they get better at a wide range of skills such as reading, painting and singing.

The school is a calm and positive place to be. Important routines, such as lining up and tidying away, teach pupils how to take care of their surroundings and respect each other. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Pupils know that the adults will help them if they are stuck on something in class or need support with their friendships.

Pupils go on a range of memorable educational visits and take part in many community events. They enjoy talking about what they have learned from visitors to the school, such as how to keep safe and how to care for animals. The school helps pupils develop personally by noticing and celebrating key attributes like teamwork and the ability to explain ideas clearly.

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

The school has strengthened its quality assurance processes and support networks for staff. For example, staff have regular opportunities to work with their colleagues across the federation on how to teach different subjects well. This supports the school to put focus on high quality lesson experiences. Pupils access the curriculum successfully and focus on learning important foundational knowledge such as how to write well.

The school has designed its curriculum so that it is well organised for all year groups, including the Nursery. Teachers teach well and ensure pupils have opportunities to practice new learning. They regularly check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. The school has recently refined the curriculum in subjects such as history. For example, it has set out the concepts pupils need to learn. As a result, teachers now have more clarity about what to teach and when. Some teachers are still getting to grips with teaching some subjects in the curriculum and their activity choices do not always enable pupils to deepen their learning. As a result, in some lessons, pupils do not deepen their understanding of what is being taught well enough.

Reading is a priority. Phonics sessions follow a clear, familiar structure, and help to ensure that pupils gain strong decoding skills. Staff provide extra support for pupils who fall behind with their reading, using effective, targeted interventions to close gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. Staff ensure pupils have regular practice with texts that are well matched to the sounds that they know. This helps to build pupils' confidence and accuracy. Pupils develop a love of reading, for example through engaging book choices and discussions. Consequently, many pupils become confident and fluent readers.

The school provides strong support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps to ensure that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Staff identify pupils' needs at an early stage. They effectively tailor provision to the needs of individual pupils and use expert advice to refine the strategies that they deploy. The school has increased its resources to help pupils with greater needs. This has helped pupils with SEND to engage more with learning, access greater support with their language and communication and make visible progress in a range of subjects.

A typical day in the early years involves plenty of stories. Staff in the early years are experts in child development. They aptly support children to build their communication skills, for example by modelling sentences and encouraging conversation. Carefully designed activities support children to develop their fine motor skills which, in turn, support children's writing development. Staff teach children how to be polite and caring towards one another. Children show confidence and independence in their learning. This ensures children are prepared well for Year 1.

The school fosters a positive culture with clear routines and high expectations for behaviour. These high expectations are enforced consistently by staff which helps pupils to focus and listen well. Staff notice, encourage and celebrate pupils' hard work and kindness. As part of the school's work to promote high attendance, it works closely with families and connects them to important, helpful services. This helps to remove barriers that may prevent regular school attendance and helps to improve attendance.

The school prepares pupils well for life beyond the classroom. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education covers key topics in an age-appropriate way. For instance, it helps pupils to understand friendships, safety and different beliefs. The school provides strong character education. Pupils can take on roles such as science ambassador, which builds their confidence and leadership skills.

Leaders have driven positive change, including through providing opportunities for staff development. Staff feel supported and leaders balance their ambition for the school with staff's workload considerations. Governors are highly committed to the school. They play an active role, providing support and challenge to school leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers are still getting to grips with teaching some subjects. As a result, sometimes their task choices in these subjects do not maximise pupils' learning or deepen their understanding. The school should ensure all staff have the expertise to make informed task choices that strengthen progression through 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 outstanding 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

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	120999
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10378487
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Thompson and Hannah Collison-Smith (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Heidi Jordan
Website	www.sprowstonsparhawk.norfolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Following a short period of informal partnership, the school federated with Spixworth Infant School and Woodland View Junior School in September 2024.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher took on the substantive role in September 2024.
- The school has a nursery for three- and four-year-old children.
- The school provides before- and after-school care.

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. The inspector held meetings

with three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons in a range of subjects; spoke with pupils about their learning experiences and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and in lessons.
- 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with staff and considered the views expressed through Ofsted's staff survey. The inspector also considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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