

Inspection of Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School

Arden Grove, Hellesdon, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 6QA

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Waterfield. 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.

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 March 2015. 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 develop excellent learning skills and behaviours that enable them to flourish and succeed. The school is highly ambitious for what pupils will achieve. Most pupils leave with excellent reading, writing and mathematical skills. They are well prepared for junior school.

The school places high value on knowing every pupil very well. Staff work closely with parents and carers to understand what pupils enjoy and what they find difficult. They adapt learning to help all pupils address any barriers to progression.

Pupils behave very well and are kind to each other. Staff regularly praise pupils for what they have done well and follow up on pupils' interests, making sure that pupils feel valued as individuals.

Pupils enjoy their learning. The school makes strong use of drama and talking activities, such as debates. These help pupils develop sophisticated vocabulary and impressive speaking skills.

The school has a systematic programme of developing early skills needed for successful writing, such as good balance and the ability to hold a pencil. The school teaches these to the youngest children through playful activities. This helps pupils become strong, accurate writers later in the school.

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

The school has a meticulously designed curriculum. Staff have a strong knowledge of what they teach and how they are expected to teach because of effective training over time. This results in pupils making excellent progress in their learning.

The quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum is very strong, but particularly so in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are given targeted, highly effective support if needed to help them achieve well. Reading is taught using a highly consistent approach. Pupils are taught the precise sounds that they need to learn next. They have lots of opportunities to practise their reading and writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to a very high standard. They are fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff thoughtfully adapt their work, where needed, to ensure pupils with SEND progress through the curriculum and achieve well. The Place is a local authority funded, specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils who attend this have excellent support to help them engage with education. Staff gain a deep understanding of these pupils and their needs. They work closely with pupils' permanent schools to help pupils become more confident and to make academic progress.

Children's confidence is developed right from the start. Children in the early years have safe opportunities to take risks and develop problem-solving skills. They collaborate well,

such as building structures together. Pupils continue with this through key stage 1. They enjoy the practical opportunities in the wider curriculum. This helps them recall knowledge, for example talking confidently about the life of Henry Blogg and how they used the tree stump outside as his lifeboat. Children who find it hard to engage become more confident to join in with whole-class activities as they get older.

There is a focus on the local area, with lots of trips to explore and learn, for example visiting the airport and linking up with local farmers. The school has made the most of what is available locally and, as a result, created strong links with the community.

The school teaches pupils how to understand and deal with their emotions. They use child-friendly language and pupils confidently talk about how to calm down if they feel 'fizzy'. These terms originated in The Place, with pupils understanding how their 'guard dog barks' if they are upset or confused. This all helps pupils to behave extremely well. They work hard and are resilient when confronted with challenges.

Pupils have many stories read to them. Some of these are based in settings that are familiar to them. They also read stories that help them to understand more about different countries and cultures. The school has made sure that pupils also experience traditional stories and rhymes. This work gives pupils a great understanding of life in modern Britain and beyond.

The staff team feels well supported. The school ensures that whenever changes are made, these are evidence and research based to ensure the greatest impact for pupils. Through the trust, the school shares its expertise with others and gains from the work of experts elsewhere.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	139736
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345373
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Smith
CEO of the trust	Daniel Thrower
Headteacher	Sarah Waterfield
Website	www.ardengrove.norfolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 March 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of The Wensum Trust.
- The school has a before-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The specially resourced provision provides up to 16 places for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. This is a local authority funded, specially resourced provision.
- There is a separately registered and run pre-school located in the school building.

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 other leaders, including from the trust. They met with members of the local academy board, the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science 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

Imran Khan

Ofsted Inspector

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