

Inspection of Foulsham Primary School Academy

High Street, Foulsham, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5RT

Inspection dates: 25 February, and 4 and 5 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 Good

The headteacher of this school is Miles Elcock. This school is part of Synergy Multi-Academy 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), Alastair Ogle (interim), and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Natasha Hutchison. The headteacher is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning and making friends here. Dedicated staff make the time to get to know all pupils and their individual needs. Pupils know that if they have any worries they can speak to staff, who will help them.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' achievements. Pupils rise to this challenge, especially in reading and mathematics. Effective, small-group support helps them to succeed. Pupils show confidence in their learning. They enjoy talking about what they have learned, such as their times tables and artistic skills. Pupils are proud of their work.

Warm relationships and highly structured lessons set the tone for pupils' positive learning experiences. Teachers use familiar routines to help pupils focus, listen and respond to instructions. Pupils generally behave well, both in lessons and when on the playground. The school teaches the importance of character traits such as bravery and empathy.

Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities. These range from helping out in the classroom to being part of the school council. The school supports pupils' understanding of the wider world through educational visits. Older pupils enjoy going further afield on residential and learning how to be more independent.

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

The curriculum is well sequenced and ambitious. The school has adapted the curriculum to cater for mixed-age classes and pupils' differing needs. The trust's extensive provision of staff training opportunities supports teachers to teach with confidence, clarity and enthusiasm. As a result, all pupils become increasingly knowledgeable and skilled in subjects such as art, geography and mathematics.

Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to revisit previously learned knowledge. Teachers regularly check this knowledge. They use this information to refine their teaching. The school supports pupils to make a positive start with their foundational writing skills. It provides additional support to children and pupils who need to improve, for example their handwriting. However, there are fewer opportunities for older pupils to develop their writing stamina, including in subjects other than English.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils quickly become fluent readers. This is due to staff expertise, strong routines in phonics lessons and effective support that helps pupils to catch up. Once pupils can read with fluency, they join older pupils to study class novels in depth. This allows them to learn more about characters' emotions from a wide range of exciting storylines. Pupils enjoy their daily story times.

The school identifies any pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at an early stage. This includes before children join the school. The school engages with parents and local nurseries to support children's smooth transition into the Reception Year. The school sensibly balances bespoke support for pupils with SEND alongside their access to the full curriculum.

Staff aptly support children in the Reception Year to make the most of their initial experiences in school. Children are provided with a range of appropriate learning opportunities, both through carefully designed hands-on activities and as part of a class group. Children enjoy singing songs and listening to stories together. There is a focus on developing children's language skills. Children learn how to be polite and speak in full sentences. This supports them to make friends and communicate their wishes to the adults and each other. Children are being prepared well for Year 1.

The school sets clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils respond well to praise and rewards for their efforts. The school regularly checks how well pupils are behaving in lessons. It provides additional support for pupils who find it difficult to regulate their emotions. Lessons usually run smoothly and calmly. Occasionally, expectations are inconsistently applied. As a result, pupils can lose focus and become distracted from their learning.

Attendance is a priority. The school offers a free breakfast club and sets clear expectations with parents about timings of the school day. The school works closely with families to identify and help overcome barriers to attendance. The school's work has had a positive impact on improving pupils' attendance.

The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep safe and be healthy in mind and body. Assemblies, workshops and community projects enrich pupils' understanding of well-being. Pupils learn about differences between people and cultures. Pupils are accepting of difference and say that it is good to be unique.

Trust leaders, governors and the school have a united vision. They ensure staff feel valued and supported. Leaders' support contributes positively to staff's sense of commitment and teamwork, and ultimately to pupils' positive experiences in lessons. Governors and trustees understand their roles and hold leaders to account through effective and regular oversight.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils do not develop stamina for writing or a level of consistency in their work. The school should support teachers to design effective opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills in a range of subjects.

- Occasionally, behaviour expectations in lessons are inconsistently applied. As a result, pupils sometimes lose focus and become distracted from their learning. The trust and school should continue to support staff to fully apply the school's behaviour expectations consistently, so that pupils develop their ability to focus and concentrate and, therefore, maximise their time for learning within all lessons.

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	144428
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10378574
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Natasha Hutcheson
CEO of the trust	Alastair Ogle (Interim)
Headteacher	Miles Elcock
Website	www.foulshamprimaryschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Antingham and Southrepps Primary School, and Corpusty Primary School.
- The school is part of Synergy Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school runs before- and after-school provisions.
- The school uses one registered provider of alternative provision.

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.
- The inspection started on 25 February. It was paused in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy. Inspectors returned on 4 March to complete the inspection. The headteacher was absent at the time of the inspection.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held discussions with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, as well as the interim CEO and deputy CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading and geography. 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. The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences and observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and in lessons.
- 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.
- The lead inspector met with staff to discuss their experiences of working in the school.
- The lead inspector met with parents and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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