

Inspection of an outstanding school: Sheringham Woodfields School

Holt Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8ND

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 May 2024

Outcome

Sheringham Woodfields School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school empowers pupils. They learn to communicate with confidence and improve their movement with greater freedom. This is because pupils receive expert care and attention from highly skilled and kind staff. Pupils are safe here.

Staff see unique potential in every pupil. They design learning experiences to help pupils realise their potential in creative and joyful ways, for example applying mathematical knowledge in cookery lessons. The school makes sure that pupils who can learn to read, no matter their age or stage, have all the opportunities possible to become confident readers.

Pupils learn the language of kindness and politeness. Staff get to know pupils very well. Staff help pupils to use their own means of communication to experience friendship, take part in lessons and make decisions about what they would like to do next.

Pupils go on frequent educational trips and learn from a range of visitors. The school recognises and facilitates older pupils' ambitions for their future adult lives, for example volunteering at a nearby National Trust property, learning to drive or taking extra computing lessons. Along the way, older pupils can experience teenage life, such as going bowling or shopping with friends. The school makes sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. The school population has grown, and a new therapy centre has been added to the existing facilities. Leaders have embraced these changes. They have made sure that every pupil continues to receive excellent care and education. The key to their success is joined-up thinking. Therapists, family support workers, safeguarding leads and the school's behaviour team frequently come together to discuss pupils' individual needs. Together, they can fine-tune the school's response to subtle changes in pupils' development.

The school considers every aspect of provision to be part of the curriculum. Therapies teach pupils how to understand their own bodies and minds. The curriculum for personal development teaches pupils essential life and social skills. The academic curriculum provides important knowledge about communication, reading and the wider world. Leaders have set out this curriculum in logical steps. The curriculum is made bespoke for each pupil, considering what is set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school further personalises pupils' learning experiences. It provides opportunities for pupils to attend different classes within school and at the local primary and secondary schools.

The school has brought in a new, more systematic way of teaching reading. Staff have been trained in how to teach reading and they use the resources well. Pupils benefit from and enjoy their reading lessons. Staff quickly spot and provide additional support to pupils who fall behind. Pupils notice that they are getting better at reading. They enjoy the feeling that success brings.

Staff expertly help pupils to learn new knowledge and skills. They provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to rehearse new concepts. Teachers work closely with therapists and other external professionals to make sure that learning experiences are purposeful. For example, in dance lessons, pupils learn about rhythm and dance moves, while developing more muscular control and range of movement. The school's assessment system accounts for every aspect of pupils' education and development. Pupils' successes are regularly shared with parents and carers.

The school makes sure that parents are fully included in discussions about how to meet pupils' needs. The school respects and acts on parents' insights, for example noticing that a pupil would like to learn how to ride a bicycle. The school makes sure this happens. Parents appreciate the way that the school's work has positively impacted pupils' home lives, for example increased confidence to go to the park as a family.

Supportive and friendly routines help pupils to start the school day in a positive way. The school makes sure that every pupil can take part in the social life that happens at lunchtimes and during breaktimes. As a result, relationships are respectful and positive. The school works closely with parents to help pupils attend school as much as possible. This includes facilitating medical clinics within the school to minimise pupils' travel to hospital appointments.

Pupils talk about the wide range of experiences. This includes taking part in cricket and football matches. The school's careers and life skills curriculum starts early. For example, pupils undertake work experience in the school's shop or office. The school has built up a range of contacts in the local community to provide work experience opportunities for older pupils, including those in the school's sixth form. Students in the sixth form are prepared well for their next stage. Staff assist pupils during visits to local colleges and advise parents on what to look for and ask about during visits.

Staff feel proud to work in the school. The school inspires them to take on new challenges and advance their careers in special education. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and

well-being. The school provides specialist training to enable staff to support pupils well. As a result, the school has developed a strong reputation for its expertise and positive impact on pupils' and their families' lives. The school shares this expertise widely, for example providing training to the Norfolk Constabulary on inclusive communication for young people with complex needs and disabilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in January 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; 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	121258
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323680
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Thurlow
Headteacher	Annette Maconochie
Website	www.sheringhamwoodfields.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, including profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The headteacher took up the post in January 2023.
- The school makes use of an annex at the local secondary school to provide education for students at sixth-form age.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body and spoke, via telephone, with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils. Due to pupils' differing communication needs, other adults were also present to assist pupils' communication with inspectors.
- To understand the contribution of the therapeutic curriculum, the lead inspector spoke with therapists and observed some therapies taking place.
- The lead inspector considered 25 responses to Ofsted Parent View, of which 24 responses included free-text comments. The lead inspector considered the views of 59 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey. The inspectors also gathered the views of pupils through various discussions.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Becky Quinn

Ofsted Inspector

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