

# Inspection of an outstanding school: John Grant School, Caister-on-Sea

St George's Drive, Caister-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 5QW

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Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils really enjoy coming to this school. The day starts with lots of smiles as they take part in familiar routines and/or songs that signify the start of learning. Pupils have access to a wide range of facilities. They talk excitedly about activities such as swimming and trampolining. As pupils get older, they access different areas of the school and learn skills for independent living, for example in self-care, catching public transport or paying for snacks.

Pupils learn how to communicate well. Those who use communication aids or signing develop strong skills in sharing their thoughts and ideas. Others become confident speakers and readers over time. Pupils are supported by some staff very well to understand what is going on using physical or visual cues. Some staff are at an earlier stage of developing this interaction. The way that pupils learn to read using phonics is at an early stage of implementation.

Pupils learn to be sociable and work with others. They are highly supportive of each other. Pupils are helped to manage their behaviour if needed. There is very little bullying, but where there is unpleasant behaviour between pupils, staff sort it out. Pupils are safe and looked after well.

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

Pupils are grouped into classes that closely match their developmental needs. The curriculum is clear on what the very small steps of learning pupils should work on over time. As pupils get towards the end point of the school, many are ready for, and achieve, qualifications in English and mathematics. The curriculum is delivered through different, age-appropriate themes that keep pupils highly interested and motivated.

Many staff are highly skilled at getting pupils involved in learning through different sensory cues, for example by using straw and puppets to retell the Three Little Pigs story. However, there are times when the activities staff provide do not challenge or support all pupils as well as they might.

Staff help pupils with the most complex needs to develop eye contact and response to their names. Pupils build up concentration, listening skills and understanding of turn taking. Those with additional medical needs are well supported by the wide range of specialist staff. Pupils with autism spectrum disorder are taught strategies to get the support they need.

Many pupils become confident readers over time. They enjoy sharing and listening to stories. Teachers use a wide range of books, building up pupils' understanding of the key characters and events. Repetitive rhyme and songs help pupils who are not yet ready to read to know different sounds. The school has recently introduced a new phonics scheme to teach early reading. This is at an early stage of implementation. Not all staff have had enough training for it to be used consistently across the school.

Pupils' achievements are celebrated with each other, both in daily lessons and at the weekly assemblies. For example, they were proud to share their learning about the Coronation with each other in these assemblies. Pupils learn about different cultures and ways of life, enhanced by termly days to learn about a country. They are respectful and welcoming to visitors. Pupils benefit from several extra-curricular clubs, including 'chatty club' to talk about a range of topics, and sports-based ones. Students in the sixth form spoke enthusiastically about their recent residential and outdoor adventure activities that everyone took part in.

Staff ably spot triggers for negative behaviour and put in place strategies to stop poor behaviour escalating. This means that classrooms are settled, focused places to learn in. Lunchtimes and playtimes are also calm.

Leaders at all levels work together closely. Staff feel well supported by them. The school has grown rapidly in recent years and the needs of pupils have changed. Leaders have a programme of training for the newer staff and the different types of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils have, but this is only part-way through. As a result, some staff are more skilled than others in supporting pupils. The governing body knows the school well and brings a wide range of skills to help support and challenge school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know what signs to look for that might tell them a pupil is upset, worried or at risk of harm. They have had specific training to understand the additional vulnerabilities that the pupils in this school may face. Staff refer concerns appropriately. Leaders know the pupils well and work closely with families as needed. They have appropriate links with local health services, children's services and the police to

provide support to pupils and families. As a result, any concerns are dealt with well and all appropriate actions are taken.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. They have adults they trust to talk to if they are concerned.

All appropriate employment checks are made on staff.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some staff are extremely skilled at meeting the individual needs of pupils, but there are others who have not yet got the experience or training to do this to as high a quality, for example in providing appropriate sensory cues for understanding or challenging pupils to do more. Consequently, there are times when pupils do not learn as much as they could. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the appropriate training to be able to meet individuals' different needs.
- Leaders' chosen phonics programme is at an early stage of implementation. It is not used consistently across the school, which means that pupils have different modelling depending on the member of staff. This means that pupils do not make as rapid progress in reading as they could. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and that the scheme is fully established so teaching is consistent across the school.

## **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 November 2017.

## **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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121265
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255263
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Ashworth
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.johngrant.norfolk.sch.uk">www.johngrant.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October and 1 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school provides education for pupils with a wide range of complex SEND. It has specialisms in visual impairment; profound and multiple learning difficulty; hearing impairment; speech, language and communication needs; autism spectrum disorder; multi-sensory impairment; physical disability; moderate learning difficulty; and severe learning difficulty.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. They met with members of staff. They also spoke with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, physical education, and personal and social education. For each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding files. Inspectors spoke to leaders, including the designated safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 32 responses, including free-text responses, to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

## Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Cloke

Ofsted Inspector

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