

Inspection of Admirals Academy

Admirals Way, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2JT

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The executive principal of this school is Greg Sadler. This school is part of the Eastern 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), Paul Shanks, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julie Perry.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Admirals Academy. They are proud of their school. They feel safe and confident to be themselves. Pupils strive to embody the school's values of aspiration, respect and kindness.

Pupils actively make their school a special place to learn. They share ideas for developing the school with regular pupil-led assemblies. All pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), know that staff value their opinion and voice.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. Strong relationships between staff and pupils help foster positive learning attitudes. Pupils with more complex needs get extra help to manage their emotions. Caring staff and a highly effective pastoral team support them exceptionally well.

Staff encourage pupils to try their best. Pupils mostly respond to this by eagerly contributing their ideas. This aspiration, alongside a thoughtfully constructed curriculum, is helping pupils' achievement to improve.

Educational experiences beyond the classroom enable pupils to make sense of the world they live in. Carefully chosen activities enrich the taught curriculum well. For example, through links to Thetford Guildhall Heritage, pupils develop a strong sense of community.

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

The school has a clear and consistent vision that is shared by all. With the trust, they are committed to creating a climate where everyone's well-being is given high regard. As a result, they have built a stable, effective team with a determination to provide the best possible outcomes for pupils.

The school has carefully considered the important knowledge that pupils should learn. High-quality training enables teachers to deliver the curriculum consistently. This curriculum is ambitious for pupils, including for those pupils with SEND.

In most cases, teachers check on what pupils have remembered carefully. These checks identify gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge effectively. However, occasionally checks are not yet robust enough. This means the school does not always have an accurate view of how well pupils learn in some subjects over time.

Reading sits at the heart of the school curriculum. High-quality delivery by teachers means pupils learn the skills which help them to really understand texts. Pupils read a wide range of genres which enrich their understanding of diversity, for example living with a disability. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading receive highly effective support to learn phonics. This helps to build their confidence and to develop their fluency quickly.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. A highly inclusive culture permeates the school. Pupils' support plans have appropriate and manageable targets. Specialist advice from professionals is understood by staff and helps them provide individualised support to help pupils progress. Consequently, the achievement of pupils with SEND is improving.

Underpinned by the school's values, the expectations and routines for behaviour are clear. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around school. Pupils describe how the school's 'safe ports' help them manage their behaviour if they are having a 'tricky' day. They know the impact that their behaviour has on others. Pupils value their education.

Pupils' personal development is woven through school life. The school has crafted a curriculum and enrichment offer which gives pupils pride in where they live and opportunities to contribute to their community. At the same time, they learn about major issues in the world, such as the experiences of refugees. This helps strengthen pupils' understanding of human rights and they are proud to be tolerant and inclusive. Pupils learn how to stay safe and the importance of healthy relationships. In addition, there is an extensive range of clubs, festivals and competitive sporting opportunities for all pupils.

The school has the best interests of pupils at the centre of everything it does. Parents and carers know and appreciate this. Trustees know what is working well and what they want to make even better. They work in partnership with the leaders and staff to make decisions that improve the learning and experiences of all pupils. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the checks and assessments used by staff are not refined and accurate enough. This means the school does not have a sufficiently clear picture of how securely pupils are learning the curriculum. The school needs to continue to ensure that assessment processes in all subjects are robust and accurate so that the curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils.

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	145028
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323781
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Perry
Principal	Greg Sadler
Website	www.admiralsacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 January 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Admirals Academy joined the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust in July 2018.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club for pupils.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision for pupils.
- The executive principal and other leaders work across Raleigh Infant Academy and the Admirals Academy. Both schools are part of the same multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed other curriculum areas and spoke to leaders about these subjects, including personal, social, health and economic education.
- 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive principal, senior leaders, members of the trust and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided, such as minutes of academy council meetings, the school self-evaluation form, school improvement documents and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors spent time speaking to pupils, including at lunchtime.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by reviewing the 50 responses and 24 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking with them. Inspectors took account of the trust's most recent staff survey.

Inspection team

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Emma Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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