

Inspection of The Open Academy

Salhouse Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 9DL

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive school. Pupils are tolerant of difference and supportive of peers who find things difficult. Pupils of all abilities have their individual needs supported in lessons. Careful adaptations are made by teachers to enable this to happen.

Since the previous inspection, leaders' expectations for pupils' behaviour, uniform and attendance have raised substantially. The consequences for not following the rules are well understood by pupils and consistently applied by staff. Consequently, behaviour and attendance have improved. Where there is bullying, leaders deal with this appropriately. Pupils say that behaviour is better than in the past. Some still express concerns about things that happened before.

Pupils know that the values of the school are important for their own development. They respect each other and are polite. Pupils socialise in groups that reflect the broad ethnic mix of the school community. Many attend the range of extra-curricular activities and enjoy the trips that enhance the curriculum, such as geography field work at the coast.

Pupils feel they have a voice in collective decisions. This is seen in the way pupils make considered submissions to leaders that have informed jewellery and uniform policies.

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

There is a well-planned curriculum in place. Concepts taught build directly on what has come before, whether within that term or in a previous year. Teachers keep topics refreshed. For example, they rewrote a unit about Russia to reflect changes in the world political landscape. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. They check on pupils' understanding, both at the point of learning and sometime after initial teaching. They use this information to adapt future lessons. This means that pupils are now making steady progress through the curriculum.

Staff have had comprehensive training on how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Leaders ensure that teachers have information that identifies what help pupils need. Pupils' views on what helps them best are considered. This helps teachers successfully adapt learning for pupils with SEND. Pupils in the specialist resource base are supported effectively by staff who know them well. These pupils study most of the mainstream curriculum and get modifications to the curriculum and extra support as appropriate to help them make progress with their learning.

Pupils who need extra help with reading skills get extra teaching to help them successfully catch up. Staff check on their understanding, provide word lists or extra prompts to help pupils with their writing. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to read. Pupils enjoy using the well-stocked library.

Behaviour has improved over time. The systems are clear and help both staff and pupils follow them consistently. The number of behaviour incidents resulting in suspension has recently reduced substantially. Likewise, the number of pupils taking themselves out of class is now much smaller than in the past. However, a small number of pupils still do not behave well or consistently meet leaders' expectations, so they miss learning through suspensions or by being out of lessons.

Leaders' actions to improve pupils' attitudes, pride in their appearance and attendance have had positive results. Leaders set an example, welcoming pupils to school in the morning and reminding pupils of expectations. All staff pick up on any non-compliance as they meet pupils during the day. Pupils know the consequences for not following the rules. Most choose to follow them. The mobile phone policy is followed better by younger pupils, but older pupils too often have their phones out when not allowed.

The sixth form is small. Students choose it for the nurturing community feel and/or the specialist football academy course. The subjects available to study are not limited by the size of the sixth form. Leaders are ambitious for students, supporting them to find varied destinations, including placements overseas.

Leaders promote pupils' wider development well. Careers education is carefully planned. It gives pupils lots of knowledge about the different opportunities they can access in the future. Pupils learn about different cultures and ways of life. The 'open way' (be ready, be respectful and be safe) is embedded through leaders' curriculum. Pupils explain that this teaches them to be understanding when others may have different opinions to themselves. They are taught appropriate relationships and sex education, which gives pupils the knowledge they need to build healthy relationships.

Staff access a wide professional development programme. Teachers work with colleagues to share good practice, particularly around provision for pupils with SEND. Leaders check on the quality of education through regular reviews and then work closely with the multi-academy trust to improve provision. Staff at all levels feel well supported by leaders, both professionally and personally.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have acted swiftly to improve safeguarding procedures. They have retrained all staff and ensure that every concern is followed up swiftly and appropriately.

Staff know pupils very well. They quickly spot any concerns. Pupils access a wide range of support in school. Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as the police and children's services, to keep pupils safe.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe out and about and when online.

Leaders carry out all necessary checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work in the school. Governors and trust leaders check regularly to ensure good safeguarding practice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have acted to improve behaviour. Most pupils behave well. The number of suspensions for poor behaviour has reduced significantly. A small number of pupils still do not meet leaders' high expectations of behaviour consistently. Leaders need to ensure that they continue with and refine further their actions, so that improvements in behaviour are sustained.
- The number of pupils taking themselves out of class or not attending classes has substantially reduced. There are still a small number of pupils who still do not spend enough time in lessons, reducing their access to high-quality learning. Leaders need to ensure that they continue to take actions to support pupils to reduce further the numbers of pupils who miss learning because they are not in 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](#)' 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

Unique reference number	135650
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10265676
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	588
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	67
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Crawshay
Headteacher	Jon Ford
Website	www.open-academy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust. The trust was issued with a termination warning notice in November 2022, following the inadequate judgement in June 2022. The Department for Education Regional Director has written to parents of pupils at the school regarding a potential transfer of the school to another multi-academy trust.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative education providers to supplement the education of a small number of pupils.
- The school has a specialist resource base for 10 pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. These pupils attend lessons as well as receiving individual support in the resource base. These pupils are all on the school roll and most have education, health and care plans.

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. They met with members of the governing body and spoke to representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, and physical education. For each of these, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited some lessons in other curriculum subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a wide range of safeguarding files. They spoke to leaders (including the designated safeguarding leaders), staff, pupils, and parents.
- As this inspection began as a monitoring visit, the Ofsted parent, staff and pupils' surveys were not available. The lead inspector attended a parent event to speak to a range of parents. Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Polly Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Stainsby	His Majesty's Inspector

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