School report

Inspection of Harford Manor School, Norwich

43 Ipswich Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 2LN

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 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	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are looked after well. They forge positive, trusting relationships with adults. Pupils enjoy learning from a personalised curriculum. This helps them to develop firm foundations for their futures.

Adults understand each pupil's needs, including those of students in the sixth form. Pupils understand the clear expectations of how they should behave. They are provided with firm, sensitive support to make positive choices about their behaviour. Pupils become familiar with routines. They use their personal 'toolkits' to manage their emotions and conduct. When pupils become anxious or upset, staff act quickly to de-escalate any potential incidents.

Pupils' learning continues at break- and lunchtimes. They make enthusiastic use of the play equipment and activities available. Under the close guidance of staff, they learn to manage their behaviour and play games productively together.

Pupils feel safe. They rarely experience bullying. If they become uneasy, they turn to trusted staff who provide effective support.

Pupils have plenty of opportunities to experience life in the local community. They gain a great deal from their visits to local supermarkets and, for sixth-form students, through their work in the school's charity shop.

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

Leaders are guiding the school well through a tricky period in which there have been many changes in staffing and governance. Supported by governors, leaders have reshaped the curriculum based on the 'Harford Strands'. Some strand leaders have yet to complete their review of the impact of their work. The curriculum is effectively established and delivered in most strands. Pupils usually study content relevant to their needs and capabilities.

Leaders are determined to provide each pupil with an education that meets their individual needs. They gather information from a range of sources, including external professionals, schools and parents, to draw up pupils' personalised learning goals (PLGs). Leaders ensure that teachers make effective use of these PLGs. Teachers, for instance, routinely adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of each pupil.

The 'My communication' strand of the provision is central to pupils' learning. Teachers teach this with clarity and enthusiasm. They integrate appropriate approaches such as signing, symbols and sensory stories into lessons. This helps most pupils, many of whom join the school with little verbal communication, to make good progress in this aspect of their learning.

Pupils get lots of opportunities to work with books and hear stories and songs. Adults use the school's chosen phonics scheme to help pupils at the early stages of reading gain confidence and fluency. The support some more confident readers, including those in the sixth form, receive is not as precise.

Teachers choose suitable activities and resources that interest pupils within curriculum strands such as 'How my world works' and 'Me and my body'. Adults emphasise important content and words. They check that pupils understand these and spot when pupils are ready to build on their learning. Where this is the case, pupils achieve well. On occasion, teachers choose teaching approaches and resources less well suited to pupils' needs. In these instances, pupils' attention strays from the task at hand and their learning slows.

Many pupils who join the school struggle to regulate their behaviour. Skilled staff teach pupils to recognise and manage their emotions and conduct. Pupils' behaviour improves over time and so purposeful learning takes place. Many pupils show increasing resilience and engage more fully with their surroundings and learning.

Pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral care. They learn strategies for staying safe, self-care and dealing with new social situations. Staff give pupils meaningful opportunities to make independent choices and contribute to decision-making. Older pupils receive suitable careers advice and purposeful experience of the world of work. Sixth-form students learn plenty of important knowledge about adulthood, such as home management. They are prepared appropriately for the next stage of their lives.

Building on guidance from the local authority, the governing body provides leaders with apt support and challenge. Staff are warm in their praise for leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being. Being part of the 'tackling all concerns together' teams helps staff contribute to the school's development.

Many parents are positive about the work of the school, but a small number of parents expressed frustration about aspects such as communication arrangements. Leaders have put in place many avenues, such as daily communication books, to engage with parents about their children's education and welfare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors, school leaders and staff are thorough in carrying out their safeguarding duties. Leaders make sure staff receive necessary safeguarding training. Adults know the safeguarding risks vulnerable pupils face.

Staff report concerns in line with the school's policy. Leaders make sure pupils who are at risk get the necessary support.

Pupils learn important messages about personal safety. This includes strategies to

stay safe online and the importance of privacy.

Leaders carry out, and keep careful records of, necessary checks on adults working with pupils at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Aspects of the curriculum are new. Some strand leaders have not completed their review of how well it is taught. On occasion, adults do not choose resources and teaching approaches that are well matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. Where this is the case, some pupils lose focus and make less progress. Leaders should evaluate further how well the curriculum, including that in reading for more advanced readers, is being delivered. Leaders should then provide staff with guidance to deliver the curriculum equally well in all subjects.

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	121264
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10227276
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Lamb
Headteacher	Cheryl Frost-Cordy
Website	www.harfordmanor.norfolk.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This special school provides education for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Several pupils have autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes use of one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- There have been considerable changes to the governing body and staff team since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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, other senior leaders and many teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils. Inspectors also observed pupils during break- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors observed pupils learning in two off-site locations.
- An inspector met with six members of the local governing body (LGB), including the chair of the LGB.
- An inspector spoke via telephone with a representative of Norfolk local authority.
- An inspector spoke via telephone with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these curriculum strands: my communication, how my world works, me and my body, and me and my community. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke with school leaders and teachers, looked at curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work. An inspector also met with the strand leader, considered curriculum documentation and looked at examples of pupils' work in one other curriculum strand.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at safeguarding documentation, spoke with pupils, staff and governors and spoke with a representative from Norfolk local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, the school's own surveys of parental opinion and in written communications received over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tessa Holledge	His Majesty's Inspector

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