

Inspection of Astley Primary School

Fakenham Road, Melton Constable, Norfolk, NR24 2HH

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Astley Primary school is a positive and caring place for pupils to learn. Pupils know that there is always an adult to talk to at school. They appreciate the way that the adults help them with their friendships and their learning behaviours. Pupils are caring towards each other and think that behaviour is good in the school.

Adults are positive role models at Astley Primary school. When they talk to pupils, they remember to project the school's '4 Cs' of being 'calm, caring, consistent and constructive'. In assemblies, pupils are taught about values such as 'thankfulness'. Pupils benefit from this positive role modelling. It helps them to learn how to communicate nicely with their friends.

Pupils enjoy their lessons, and they value the variety of clubs that are on offer. They like receiving rewards, such as 'hot chocolate with the headteacher'. Pupils play an active part in school life through, for example being able to take on responsibilities such as 'roving reporter', lunchtime monitor or school council member. Pupils collect ideas with their class peers and present to leaders on how to make the school a better place. Pupils are encouraged to support charity through fundraising.

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

Since the appointment of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher in September 2019, senior leaders and teachers have worked together to re-write and improve the curriculum. As part of this process, the role of subject leader has been enhanced through training and extra opportunities for collaboration. Subject leaders share senior leaders' enthusiasm for curriculum development. They have been given time to focus on their subject lead responsibilities and they have shared their new subject knowledge with teachers.

Pupils are learning more and remembering more of the curriculum. They enjoy their lessons. This is because the curriculum content has been carefully chosen and teachers teach with enthusiasm. Careful monitoring and a range of assessment methods help to give leaders and teachers assurance that pupils are benefiting from the changes to the curriculum. In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. Leaders would like to develop these subjects further by, for example adding in more opportunities for pupils to make links with prior learning.

The early reading curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their phonics. Leaders ensure that the books pupils use for practise are well matched to the sounds they learn. Staff, including teaching assistants, are well trained in how to teach phonics. They are keen for pupils to become fluent readers. Leaders' plans ensure pupils encounter a range of different types of books and poetry, both classic and modern. Pupils develop a love of reading.

A relatively new approach to encouraging positive behaviour and attitudes is helping to meet the needs of pupils who require additional help to behave well. The pastoral team are integral to this approach. They provide nurture support. This helps pupils to be ready to listen and respond well during lessons.

Staff say that the school's approach to managing behaviour is easy to understand for both adults and the children. Adults are consistent in their management of behaviour and pupils are encouraged to be reflective. A range of unique rewards gives pupils lots to aim for in their learning and their conduct.

The school provides a range of clubs that cater for pupils' talents and interests. There is a varied calendar of events as part of the school's house system. Pupils learn a lot about other cultures as part of the school's 'life skills' curriculum. This helps to develop their understanding of the wider world and prepare them for the next stage of education.

Children in the early years play nicely with each other and take turns. They have opportunities to develop their ability to concentrate for extended periods. Leaders have worked together to ensure that the curriculum prepares children for learning in Year 1 and beyond. Assessment is used to continuously track how well pupils are developing in all areas of the curriculum. Assessment also enables staff to identify pupils who need additional support.

The headteacher's vision for education is shared by governors and trust leaders. They have supported the headteacher, school leaders and staff to work together to improve the curriculum offer and to develop pastoral support. This enables subject leaders to flourish in their roles. All staff spoken to and all of those who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and supportive of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a positive culture of safeguarding. Communication with families is a strength of leaders' safeguarding approach. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Children are taught how to keep safe, including online. Pupils know they can go to an adult for support if they need it.

Staff are familiar with safeguarding procedures and have been trained to keep pupils safe. They know how to identify signs of abuse and how to record concerns appropriately. The school's systems for record keeping and support for pupils are monitored closely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the teaching of the curriculum does not enable pupils to secure all the knowledge that is set out in the curriculum plans. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to recall and build on prior learning. As a result, pupils remember some of the content set out, but do not secure a deeper foundation of knowledge in these subject areas. Leaders should ensure that teaching in all subjects helps pupils learn well.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	144565
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10200451
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony Williams
Principal	Jennifer Goakes
Website	www.astleyprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Astley Primary school is a smaller than average school in a rural setting. Most pupils are of white British heritage.
- This was the first inspection since the predecessor school, of the same name, was inspected in March 2014 and was found to be good.
- Astley Primary school converted to become an academy school in July 2017. It is now part of the Synergy Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the senior leadership of the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the academy trust, the executive primary lead and members of the governing body to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the school's pastoral team and visited the school's breakfast nurture club.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the school business manager to discuss the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- The lead inspector looked at responses to Ofsted's surveys. This included 25 parent responses to Ofsted Parent View, of which there were 19 free-text responses. 28 staff responded to Ofsted's staff surveys. No pupils responded to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Milligan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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