

# Inspection of SET Ixworth School

Walsham Road, Ixworth, Suffolk IP31 2HS

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Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

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

This is a small school, where pupils and teachers know each other extremely well. As a result, their support and care for each other are excellent. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly when necessary. One pupil observed that 'It's impossible for bullies to fly under the radar.' Pupils feel safe.

Pupils have a longer working day than in most schools. They think this is great. Parents and carers are pleased they chose the school. It is a very happy community.

Pupils develop interests outside their subjects during the school day. Every Wednesday afternoon, they choose from a range of opportunities. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, preparing for the school production or learning British sign language.

School leaders want every pupil to do well. They say they want to give pupils 'a foundation for life'. They do this successfully. Pupils leave the school, not only knowing a lot about the subjects they have studied, but also as confident young people.

Pupils attend regularly and arrive promptly because they enjoy school. They move between lessons purposefully and sensibly. The school is calm and well ordered. Pupils behave well in lessons because they are interested and engaged in their learning.

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

The school has improved hugely since it was last inspected. Pupils achieve well at GCSE in a wide range of subjects. This is because school leaders and trustees of the multi-academy trust focus on making it the best school it can be.

Teaching is strong and improving. Most teachers are experts in their subjects but, if they are not, colleagues support them and they get helpful training. Teachers get on well with pupils, who behave very well as a result. This means that pupils learn rapidly. Teachers ask questions which make pupils think.

Teachers plan carefully to make sure that pupils know more and can do more as they move through the school. They think carefully about the order in which things are taught and they ensure that pupils understand connections between different parts of each subject.

Teachers make sure that pupils get better at remembering information. Lessons start with a 'do it now' task requiring pupils to recall previous learning. Sometimes this is from the last lesson, sometimes it is from an earlier topic and sometimes this is even from a previous year. This helps pupils to keep important knowledge fixed in their minds.

In almost all subjects, teachers understand what pupils know and how well they can use this knowledge. In subjects including English, mathematics, science, history and geography, teachers identify where there are gaps in what pupils know and fill them. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and computing lessons, however, teachers do not have such a clear picture of what each pupil knows and can do.

Teachers in charge of leading subjects regularly think about what is being taught so that it stays interesting and relevant. They make changes if required. In geography, teachers have recently added lessons about plastics in our oceans. In most subjects, these leaders are school staff. Sometimes, they are experts from other trust schools. In modern foreign languages, it is not clear who is providing this leadership.

Inspectors saw pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) work independently in their classes. Teachers had made sure that the work was accessible for everyone. The proportion of pupils with SEND moving on to the next stage of their study or employment is high. One parent described the school as 'an incredibly inclusive environment'.

Pupils are well prepared for adult life. They all eat lunch in the school restaurant with their teachers, which develops important social skills. Teachers plan tutor periods, assemblies and personal development days so that pupils can thrive in modern Britain. Teachers help pupils to plan for their next steps after they leave the school. Leaders have more to do to make careers education as strong as it should be.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know that they play an important role in creating and maintaining the school's culture of safeguarding. They keep up to date with the school's procedures and training. Leaders carefully check that this happens. Staff are quick to follow up any concerns, however small. They liaise well with agencies outside the school so that pupils get the support that they require quickly. Information is shared effectively with parents. What pupils do in lessons helps them to deal with risks they may face, including the use of the internet and social networking sites.

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

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

- School leaders should ensure that they have identified leaders within the school or trust who are clearly responsible for the quality of education in every curriculum subject area. This will ensure that every teacher knows who to approach if they need support, and there is clarity about who is constructing, evaluating and revising the curriculum. There is a particular priority for identifying a curriculum leader in modern foreign languages.

- School leaders need to ensure that every curriculum subject incorporates effective processes for understanding what individual pupils know, remember and can do. In most subjects, this is already well embedded but the school needs to work towards even greater consistency. This will particularly involve sharpening practice in computing and PSHE.
- The school's curriculum has a number of strengths in the way it prepares pupils for success in the next stage of their education, employment or training. It provides many opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work, including work experience. Leaders are using the Gatsby benchmarks effectively to evaluate and strengthen their careers provision. However, they now need to sharpen the school's approach to providing individual pupils with independent, personalised careers guidance.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140047
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110206
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	James Wellesley Wesley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Barrow
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ixworthfreeschool.org.uk/">www.ixworthfreeschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	June 2017

## Information about this school

- The school was last inspected on 20 June 2017.
- Since the school was last inspected, it has changed its name from Ixworth Free School.
- The school uses Olive Academy, Stowmarket and the Albany, Bury St Edmunds to provide alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the head of school, the inclusion leader, cross-trust assistant heads, cross-trust lead practitioners and curriculum leaders. They also met with members of the board of trustees and the local advisory body.
- Inspectors started the inspection on the first day by focusing on English, mathematics, history, geography and modern foreign languages. This involved discussions with curriculum leaders, visits to a series of lessons with school leaders, discussions with pupils, discussions with teachers, work scrutiny undertaken with school leaders and the review of relevant documentation.

- On the second day, inspectors undertook further discussions with school and trust staff, made additional visits to lessons, tutor periods and an assembly, and analysed 46 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, including 45 text responses from parents, 15 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire and 51 responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors inspected safeguarding through scrutiny of the school’s single central record of recruitment, discussion with the designated safeguarding lead and discussion with other staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Paul Lawrence, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
David Hutton	Ofsted Inspector

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