

Spotlight on a Suffolk school



Red Oak Primary School

Southwell Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0RZ

Red Oak Primary school is a large school with over 450 pupils on roll. 31% of children have SEND, with 3% on EHCPs. 49% attract pupil premium funding and 9% have EAL. The IDACI figure is 0.28.

The school is situated in a community that experiences various social challenges, which can sometimes affect children's early development and their ability to engage with learning. Despite joining Red Oak extremely below school readiness, our highly disadvantaged children still reach above National by the time they leave Red Oak, alongside those children not identified as disadvantaged.



What is the school's vision?

Our aim is to help all children succeed by reaching their potential in every area of school life — academic, social, personal, physical and spiritual. We do this by ensuring that our pupils clearly understand their educational journey - where it begins, where it will take them and how they will get there!

Our school believes in the value of every child who enters our doors. We want all those who become part of our school community, whether a child or an adult, to feel valued, happy, respected and to recognise their role in continuing to make our school 'Outstanding'.

Curriculum and pedagogical approach

Our curriculum is heavily focussed around ensuring pupils are exposed to role models from other cultures and ethnicities. It is important to us that the diversity they need to be aware of to engage in the wider world is brought to their learning. Particularly as we are a predominantly white area.

We deliver our curriculum from Early Years and onwards with reading for pleasure and development of vocabulary at the heart of all subjects. We teach Read, Write Inc for our synthetic phonics programme and achieve excellent results due to the highly consistent approach and investment in staff training.



All staff teach English at the same time and likewise Maths is then taught by all staff at the same time. This allows for consistent support, monitoring and CPD development for staff.

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Subject leaders for all subjects including our bespoke 'Current Affairs' subject is led by leaders who receive regular input with in-house support from our Curriculum leader.

Pedagogical approaches we use in our school are based around the Inquiry-based approach, reflective approach and collaborative approach. At different points / subjects – these approaches enable our students to adapt and respond to various information and skills, learn to research and apply what they learn. Due to our catchment we can't rely on students having rich experiences provided by their families so we try to provide an extensive enrichment curriculum.



Thrive

We strongly believe that every child can thrive academically and emotionally through our curriculum offer. This is why we invest so much time into CPD with staff meetings always dedicated to development, release time for subject leaders and staff encouraged to work with colleagues or networks from other schools.



Our school has recently been recognised as a Thrive School of Excellence which demonstrates our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of all of the pupils. We know this supports us to address the social and emotional needs of our community, making a real difference in the lives of its young learners. As a Mental Health School of Excellence with Leeds Beckett University we have worked very hard to ensure our staff have a considerable amount of support to reduce workload, a lovely working environment, support through Vivup and in-house consideration eg: attending PTA events and parents evenings in lieu of staff meetings.

Our attendance is consistently above National. Children want to come to Red Oak due to the rich opportunities, inclusive and nurturing approach and exciting learning through the curriculum. These improvements reflect the school's commitment to creating a nurturing environment where pupils can thrive academically and socially.

Staff are given opportunities to engage in professional development opportunities to support them to understand children's needs and growth patterns. The support provided to staff focuses on building strong relationships and offers tailored support to empower children to express themselves and build resilience. Staff are equipped with a range of practical tools to carry out and behave in a way aligned with the school's ethos.

Staff use a profiling tool to assess the social and emotional needs. Once profiled, staff create action plans for their class and individual children and young people based on their needs. Resources and practical tools are shared to support in the

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classrooms. One example of this was the introduction of Thrive boxes into classrooms.

We recognise there are some pupils with greater need and require specialist intervention to support their social and emotional development. Therefore, we invested in this further by training several members of staff to be fully qualified Thrive practitioners. In addition to this, we employ a member of staff, who is based out of the classroom, to support the pupils with the greatest need. They support these pupil identified from the profiling and carry out individualised Thrive plans with specialised activities, actions and strategies which can support the child to flourish in their classroom and beyond.



We were fortunate enough to be granted funding to create specific Thrive spaces for us to carry out this important work. This includes our wonderfully well-resourced sensory room. We have seen a wide range of benefits to the pupils who use this including a safe environment to support children to self-regulate. The space provides sensory stimulation, development of motor skills, reduces anxiety and supports improvement in mental health.

We also recognised the importance of adopting the approach within the community and the families we serve. Therefore, we introduced the Family Thrive programme, a six-session course designed to help parents and carers understand and apply the Thrive Approach at home, encouraging a supportive atmosphere for learning both in school and at home.

