

Spotlight on a Suffolk school

Place Farm Primary Academy

Camps Road, Haverhill, CB9 8HF

Place Farm Primary Academy is a large primary school in the heart of Haverhill. There are 404 pupils on roll: 136 are Pupil Premium; 52 pupils have SEND; 10 pupils have EHCPs; 69 pupils are EAL (21 additional languages spoken). The IDACI figure is 0.14.

Place Farm Primary Academy – where everyone is a reader!



Attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been above national for the past three years. Phonics scores have also been above national for the last 5 years.

What is the school's vision?

Our vision is for Place Farm Primary Academy to be an excellent school, where best practice and excellent CPD, high achievement, inclusion and well-being are at the heart of everything we do for our children and for our staff. Our vision is that a pupil in 2026 will:

- Model the school values and show motivation to be the best that they can be
- Strive to achieve the highest possible outcomes
- Be involved in all that the school has to offer – be an active member of the school community
- Respect everyone and thrive in a supportive environment

Curriculum and pedagogical approach

We use the Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership (CUSP); an unapologetically ambitious curriculum that is rooted deeply in evidence-led curriculum structures such as retrieval, spaced retrieval practice, and interleaving. It is underpinned by explicit vocabulary instruction and research-focused pedagogy.

A carefully crafted literature spine, with high quality books that offer a window and mirror for our pupils, allows children to explore the world around them including culture, inclusion and diversity, and debate moral and ethical issues. They also reflect upon their own place in the world and the contribution they can make. Learning is cross-curricular with a strong emphasis on vocabulary development.

Developing expertise within support staff

In recent years we have focused on developing expertise within our support staff: we recognised that this body of staff had untapped potential, and the power (through their direct contact with children) to have a significant impact on attainment in reading. We invested heavily in training for Learning Assistants: Sounds Write (phonics); Developing Better Value interventions (Reading and Maths) – training them to the same level as teachers in these areas. With coaching and support, this group gradually began to take more ownership of the assessment and planning in these areas – their confidence levels and sense of purpose increased, and they are now able to make in the moment decisions about the delivery of these interventions, tailoring support dynamically to cater for the needs of pupils in their groups. This has had a hugely positive impact with our phonics results in particular.