



Update for all Parents and Carers Autumn Half Term 1 2026-2027

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the families with children in schools who are part of Synergy Multi Academy Trust. Whether your child is joining one of our schools for the first time or returning for another year, we look forward to working in partnership with you to support them. We are incredibly proud of our schools and proud to be part of the communities they serve.

One of the questions we are sometimes asked is, "What does a Multi Academy Trust actually do?" I thought it would be helpful to explain the role and responsibilities and how they benefit your child's education:

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is a family of schools working together as part of a single charitable organisation. Each school retains its own identity, character and important place within its local community, while benefiting from the collective expertise, resources and support of the wider Trust. The Trust has overall responsibility for the governance, legal compliance and strategic direction of its schools, including many responsibilities that, historically, would have been undertaken by the Local Authority.

What Does This Mean for children and families?

For parents and carers, being part of a Trust brings a number of benefits:

- Greater collaboration between schools.
- Access to shared expertise and specialist staff.
- Improved opportunities for staff development.
- Consistently strong approaches to safeguarding and school improvement.
- Enhanced opportunities and experiences for pupils.
- Mutual collaboration and support for staff workload and well-being.
- Additional capital funding specifically for building safety, maintenance and development.
- Implement financial efficiencies through processes such as procurement and sharing of resources.

Most importantly, being part of a Trust means that schools are not working in isolation. They are part of a wider group of schools committed to supporting one another and delivering the very best outcomes for every child. Our ethos and approach are summarised by our values: Ambition, Inclusion and Collaboration.

Synergy Multi Academy Trust was formed in 2016 and has grown as other schools have chosen to join us. We are really proud that all of our fourteen schools have been judged Good by Ofsted and provide excellent opportunities for pupils as well as support them to make excellent progress socially, emotionally and academically. One of these schools has recently been inspected under the new OFSTED Inspection Toolkit and the school will share that report with all parents and carers and place it on the school website, when it is published, in approximately three to four weeks. I have provided further details of the new OFSTED approach below.

We are committed to further improvement and developing additional, much needed resources to provide pupils with Special Educational Needs across Norfolk, and I will of course keep you informed as these developments progress in my half termly updates to all parents and carers.

As we begin this new academic year, I would like to thank you for your continued support. Together, as schools, families, and communities, we can provide the very best opportunities for the young people in our care. I wish all our pupils a happy, successful, and rewarding year ahead.

With best wishes,

Alastair Ogle
Chief Executive Officer
Synergy Multi Academy Trust

The New Ofsted Approach: What Parents and Carers Need to Know

The Ofsted "Education Inspection Framework has been replaced by "The Ofsted Toolkit"

A new "**report card**" system has been implemented providing different judgements for different specific areas schools. The goal of the new system is to provide parents with a more detailed and nuanced picture of their child's education and care.

1. Goodbye Single Grades, Hello Report Cards

Instead of receiving a single overall grade (like "Outstanding" or "Good"), schools will receive a detailed "report card" with grades for several different areas.

2. New 5-Point Grading Scale

Each area on the report card will use a new five-point grading scale:

- **Exceptional**
- **Strong standard**
- **Expected standard**
- **Needs attention**
- **Urgent improvement**

The expectations of all schools has risen significantly. The new Expected Standard is higher than the previous "Good" criteria. The result of this is that many schools nationally are receiving grades on "Needs Attention".

3. Focus Areas for Inspection

Inspectors will assess schools on a wider range of areas, giving greater focus to key issues that matter to parents and provide a grade for each of the following areas:

- **Inclusion:** A new, separate evaluation area focusing on support for all children, especially those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged children, and children known to social care.
- **Safeguarding:** This will be a standalone check, judged as either "Met" or "Not Met".
- **Achievement:** How well children make progress and achieve compared to national benchmarks
- **Curriculum and Teaching:** How effectively the school ensures children learn and progress.
- **Behaviour and Attendance:** Promoting positive behaviour and good attendance habits.
- **Personal Development and Wellbeing:** The broader support for children's well-being and extra-curricular opportunities.
- **Leadership and Governance:** The effectiveness of school leadership, management and governance.
- Schools that have a **Sixth Form** will also receive a judgement encompassing all aspects of the provision
- Schools that have **Early Years** provision will also receive a judgement encompassing all aspects of the provision.

4. The Parent View Survey

The online survey, [Ofsted Parent View](#), has been updated to reflect these changes and remains a crucial way for parents to share their feedback.

- **When to use it:** You can complete the survey at any time of the year, not just during an inspection. Your input helps Ofsted decide when to inspect a school.
- **During an inspection:** When your child's school is being inspected, the headteacher will invite parents to complete the survey. Responses received during the inspection are carefully considered by the inspectors.
- **Anonymity:** Your individual comments are confidential and anonymised.
- **What it asks:** The survey asks a series of questions about your child's happiness, safety, the quality of teaching and support (including for SEND), and whether you would recommend the school to other parents.