

Great Yarmouth Primary Academy

Dickens Avenue, Great Yarmouth, NR30 3DT

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The outstanding leadership of the academy trust, governors and the headteacher has established a community of dedicated and enthusiastic staff who believe there are no barriers to learning or excuses for underachievement.
- From low starting points, pupils are making rapid and improving progress. This year, the majority of pupils in Year 6 are reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with or above the national average.
- The large number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language are supported very well to make good progress.
- Enrichment activities and study sessions provided as part of the mandatory extended day increase pupils' self-confidence, life skills and engagement in learning. They contribute to the pupils' improving achievement.
- Behaviour is continually improving. Pupils have developed good attitudes to learning and to all aspects of academy life. They say they feel safe and are calm and well-mannered around the academy.
- Strategies for teaching key literacy and mathematics skills and supporting pupils to fill gaps in their learning are effective.
- The headteacher is ably supported by a talented leadership team in his relentless and uncompromising drive to improve pupils' achievement. Together they have implemented rigorous systems for checking and developing the work of the academy, particularly the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not always organised well enough to engage children and sustain their concentration.
- Pupils in some classes are not challenged sufficiently to improve their handwriting and presentation.
- Progress in some classes slows because the quality of teaching is not always good enough. Pupils do not demonstrate sufficiently good learning behaviour in these classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 30 lessons. Many were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher or other senior leaders. They looked at pupils’ books and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, met with four groups of pupils and spoke to pupils informally in the playground, library and the dining hall.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and with seven members of the governing body including board members of the Inspiration Trust. A telephone conversation was held with the academy sponsor.
- The academy’s improvement plan, assessment, self-evaluation and monitoring information and teachers’ performance management procedures were evaluated.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of 24 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- There were insufficient responses on the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) for inspectors to take these into account however, they attended a parent drop-in session and held informal discussions with parents on the playground and as they had lunch with their children.

Inspection team

Prue Rayner, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this academy

- Great Yarmouth Primary Academy opened as a new academy sponsored by the Inspiration Trust in September 2012. It is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is high.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement is above average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy operates a mandatory extended school day for Key Stage 2 pupils. Pupils are entitled to a range of enrichment activities and Year 5 and 6 pupils attend study sessions until 18:00 from Monday to Thursday.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is never less than good and more is outstanding by:
 - continuing to use the existing outstanding practice as a model for improvement
 - developing the innovative teaching strategies already implemented so that every pupil is able to fully engage with learning activities and make good progress
 - securing strategies to improve handwriting and presentation.
- Improve provision across all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the wider activities children engage in during the focused teaching sessions are stimulating and enriching and encourage them to use the new skills they have learned.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is rapidly and continually improving. Most children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. They learn early reading and writing skills particularly well because they practise these every day in sharply focused, well taught activities. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the large majority of children are assessed as reaching standards that are above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to use these key skills to show that they fully understand their learning.
- Pupils make very good progress in understanding and using the sounds that letters make to read and write because the teaching of phonics is well structured. The proportion of pupils meeting the required standard at the end of Year 1 was above the national average in 2013. The school's assessment information shows that these high standards are set to continue this year.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 2 made accelerated progress to reach standards that were in line with the national average at expected and higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have improved rapidly in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 in 2013 rigorously targeted teaching and study support had enabled pupils to make exceptionally good progress in writing and mathematics. In writing particularly, more pupils than nationally made expected and better than expected progress.
- Despite the much improved progress, pupils' attainment remained below the national average in mathematics and reading at the end of Key Stage 2. In writing, standards matched the national at both the expected level and the higher level 5. Improved teaching of phonics and the increased focus given to improving reading across the academy has resulted in pupils' making better progress. Pupils talk excitedly about the books they are reading and use their learning to read texts well.
- The school's current assessment information suggests that the rapid improvement is continuing and that all pupils are making expected progress with the large majority exceeding this to attain at least average standards. More pupils are on track to achieve higher levels in all subjects because the most able pupils are being taught more effectively. Pupils' work does not currently reflect that they are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for writing.
- This accelerated progress is not yet secured in all classes, in the small number where teaching is not always good, pupils make less progress in acquiring and using key skills and concepts. Across the school, standards of handwriting and presentation do not reflect the significant progress pupils are making in their learning.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium benefit from the innovative use of the extra funding the school receives and from the enrichment programme that enables them 'to do things I would never have known about'. In addition to high quality teaching over extended hours, pupils and their families are given personal and emotional support. As a result, their attainment and progress matches or exceeds that of other pupils in the school. At the end of Key Stage 1, their reading attainment was almost half a year ahead of that of similar pupils nationally. In 2013, Y6 pupils made good and better progress to close the previously wide gaps between their attainment and that of similar pupils nationally. Their attainment was a term below the national level in reading and broadly matched national attainment in writing and mathematics.

- As a result of effective diagnosis and support, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Pupils whose first language is not English are taught exceptionally well and as a consequence they make very good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They frequently share their high aspirations for pupil's success and encourage them to take risks, work hard and continually strive to achieve more.
- Where teaching is not enabling pupils to make the rapid progress they make in most lessons, not enough attention is given to ensuring all pupils are supported or challenged to remain on task and engaged in their learning. In these lessons, pupils do not concentrate and become restless and fidgety, consequently they do not make enough progress.
- Continual analysis and assessment is used to plan the teaching of core skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The expertise of staff is used creatively and teaching is fine-tuned to very specifically meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils. As a result pupils make good progress and develop a strong sense of themselves as successful learners.
- In most classes, pupils are given very clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work and their responses clearly show rapid improvement as a result.
- Teachers were seen using a wide range of exciting strategies to sustain pupils' interest and keep their learning moving on quickly. In these lessons, no learning time was wasted and there was no time for pupils to become distracted. In a Year 5 lesson planned to support pupils to catch up on key literacy skills, the teacher used choral speaking and physical actions to help pupils understand and use combinations of letters to spell and read. From low starting points pupils made exceptionally good progress because the teacher set very high expectations of pupils and sustained their full engagement.
- In another example, a teacher effectively used practical resources to enable pupils whose first language is not English to make rapid progress in developing their vocabulary and their understanding of sentence structure. Pupils of different ages worked eagerly in pairs to learn and use different letter combinations to read.
- Pupils learn enthusiastically in mathematics lessons because teachers use a range of resources effectively to develop their understanding. In a Year 4 mathematics lessons pupils worked excitedly, but with great focus, in groups to plan and revise a budget. They took different roles making key decisions about what they would and could buy. The teacher skilfully drew on the learning of each group at the end of the lesson to demonstrate how much they had all learned.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children work hard with their teachers in sessions which are tightly focused on improving their key literacy and mathematical skills. However, opportunities for them to use the new skills they have learned to improve their progress in more creative and exciting ways during these lessons are limited.
- The work of teaching assistants is planned well, they work closely with teachers and use their training and skills creatively to provide effective support for pupils, who make good progress over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Expectations of behaviour, implemented following the opening of the new academy, are known and understood by all staff and pupils. Displays in classrooms and hallways remind pupils how they are expected to behave and staff consistently reinforce them. Strong systems are in place to reward positive behaviour and levels of supervision as pupils move around the academy are high.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff, pupils and parents unanimously agree that it has improved enormously because of the high standards established by the headteacher. Pupils are welcoming, polite and well mannered. They work and play together well, in some lessons the levels of care pupils show towards each other as they learn together are high.
- In a small number of lessons, expectations of behaviour are not enforced and teaching does not engage pupils, consequently they do not concentrate and become distracted and restless. In some classes expectations of the presentation of work are not high enough and pupils do not make enough effort to write neatly and present their work well.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the school's breakfast club which a large number of pupils attend. They make their breakfast together, working as a team so have a good start to the day. The cooperative behaviour between adults and pupils and between pupils is a significant strength developed through the club.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 clearly love the opportunities they are offered through the enrichment activities they participate in as part of the extended school day. They excitedly describe the things they can choose and say that the new experiences for example, horse riding, ballet and sailing have given them confidence to try new things and to 'aim higher'. Older pupils benefit from the extra study time they receive which helps them develop greater resilience in their approaches to learning.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Administrative arrangements to ensure all personnel are safe to work with children are rigorous, a number of staff hold First Aid qualifications and statutory training is up to date. Child protection is outstanding, academy staff work effectively with other services and with families to ensure pupils are safe well and cared for.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the academy, they understand how to keep safe when using the internet and know about the safe use of mobile phones. They understand there are different forms of bullying including racist and homophobic. Pupils say there are some incidents they think are bullying but that the academy has procedures in place to deal with them.
- Pupils say some of the opportunities they are given, for example, membership of the academy council, being playtime buddies and charity work are helping them to understand what having responsibilities means.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average, procedures for monitoring and following up absence are rigorous and include collecting pupils from home if necessary. As a result of the approaches taken to enriching the lives of pupils, persistent absence is much lower than the national average. The attendance of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is particularly good.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- At every level of leadership, the vision for every child to succeed is driving rapid improvement. The commitment of the sponsor, the expertise of the academy trust, the knowledge of governors and the passion of academy leaders together mean that obstacles to pupils' success are being swiftly overcome.
- The headteacher is uncompromising in the belief that pupils from the local area can succeed as well as those in the highest achieving schools in the country. He has galvanised staff and set high expectations for outstanding standards which are well on the way to being met. In addition, behaviour has improved significantly and pupils talk about their academy with pride.
- The academy is totally inclusive and promotes equal opportunities at all times. The highly structured approaches to teaching and effective nurturing are ensuring that the performance of all groups of pupils is improving rapidly.
- Drawing on up to date research, expertise from the academy trust and other high performing urban schools, the headteacher and senior leaders have implemented innovative and rigorous approaches which are improving teaching. Teachers are supported to improve through highly frequent monitoring which provides individual coaching and identifies small specific achievable next steps. Staff learn from and train each other using film clips taken of their practice.
- Phase and subject leaders monitor improvement in detail. Regular analysis and tracking of pupils' progress leads to rapid action where underperformance is identified. Teachers' assessments are regularly reviewed and external moderation and review is sought to ensure they are accurate.
- The academy uses performance management effectively to motivate and reward good and better teaching. Teachers' targets reflect the need to improve pupils' achievements rapidly. A significant feature in the improving profile of teaching is the extent to which all academy staff are challenged and enabled to develop their skills. As a consequence, the teaching team is expanding and improving and recruitment difficulties are overcome as the academy 'grows its own' professionals.
- The range of subjects and topics has, by intention, been focused on improving pupils' basic skills and ensuring they are supported to make accelerated progress. Their engagement and enjoyment of learning is enhanced by a number of 'launch' days during which visits and activities are used to heighten pupils' interest and introduce new topics. Specialist drama and music teaching enhances provision at regular points throughout the year and new approaches are broadening pupils' experiences of culture. The academy is using the extra primary sports funding to provide pupils with experience of adventurous sports and to employ specialist teaching. This is contributing to pupils' enjoyment of sport and their health and well-being.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 participate in an exciting variety of enrichment activities every afternoon. Pupils say they have opportunities that make a real difference to their lives. In some instances, pupils are pursuing the skills and talents they discover to particularly high levels. These activities contribute significantly to their improved self-discipline, enjoyment of learning and physical well-being. Coupled with the study sessions pupils in Year 5 and 6 attend from Monday to Thursday, these experiences make an outstanding contribution to pupils' improving achievement, their well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Highly successful approaches are involving more parents in their children's education. Parents described how much the parenting course run by the school had helped them manage their

children's behaviour, another about how they had received excellent support for a child with health and dietary needs and another about how the enrichment activities had helped their child develop confidence. 'The school is doing wonders for me and my children' is a typical comment.

- An emerging feature of the academy's success is its engagement with innovative teaching approaches not only are teachers implementing new and different ways of working but they are working with researchers to develop these practices. In addition the academy is providing outreach support to other local schools and hosting a number of teachers and academics to share their continually improving practice.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effectively led by a passionate and experienced Chair. Governors are exceptionally well informed and ambitious, they know the school well and bring a wide range of expertise to their roles. As a result they hold leaders rigorously to account but are also able to provide good support and advice regarding development priorities. Governors have ensured the academy receives high quality monitoring from an experienced professional and also through the Inspiration Trust for specific areas of development. They ensure financial management is robust and teachers' are rewarded for the quality of their work. They visit the academy regularly to engage in its work at first hand and draw on this to evidence improvement. They are confident the academy is improving rapidly and that the ambitious targets set for the end of the year will be met. Governors have a detailed knowledge of safeguarding procedures and ensure statutory requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138793
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	440058

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dame Rachel de Souza
Headteacher	Bill Holledge
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01493 855304
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Email address	office@gypa.org.uk

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