

Great Yarmouth Primary Academy

Dickens Avenue, Great Yarmouth, NR30 3DT

Inspection dates 22–23 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and the academy trust has resulted in vast improvements to pupils' achievement.
- A positive atmosphere of endeavour and high expectations abound. There is an expectation that all pupils can and will be successful.
- Children get off to a positive start to school in Nursery and Reception classes. Effective leadership has brought about recent improvements. Children typically make strong progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. There is a sharp and constant focus on reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are making better, more rapid progress and are reaching higher standards than previously.
- When necessary, the school provides effective additional support including from skilled teaching assistants. All groups of pupils, including the significant proportion eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language, progress well.
- Pupils enjoy school. Positive attitudes to learning are demonstrated in their appreciation for the variety of opportunities and experiences offered to them. Pupils feel safe and know how to access support should they need it. Systems for ensuring pupils safety and well-being are excellent.
- The extended school day ensures that pupils receive exceptionally broad learning experiences. These make a strong contribution to pupils' personal, social, emotional and cultural development as well further raising achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in some classes is slower than in others. This is usually because the work is too easy for most able pupils and too difficult for less able pupils. Consequently, at such times, these pupils make fewer gains in their learning.
- Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted at no notice.
- Inspectors and senior leaders jointly observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons.
- During observations in lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their books. They also considered teachers' planning and the role of additional adults.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, as well as teachers and groups of pupils. A meeting was held individually with the Chair of the Governing Body as well as a meeting with six governors. A telephone meeting was held with the academy's sponsor.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised. This included policies and procedures for keeping children safe, case studies of individual pupils, the school's self-evaluation documentation, evidence of monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, the school's systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating pupils' progress were examined.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by speaking to them on the playground at the beginning of the school day. There were insufficient views recorded on the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to take these into account.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Sheridan

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Great Yarmouth Primary Academy opened as a new academy sponsored by the Inspiration Trust in September 2012. It is much larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. An above average proportion of pupils' first language is not English.
- Nearly two-thirds of pupils are known to be eligible for additional support through the pupil premium funding. This is additional government funding for pupils in local authority care and for those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club.
- The academy operates a mandatory extended school day for all pupils in Key Stage 2. During this time pupils take part in a vast range of enrichment activities. In addition, from Monday to Thursday pupils in Years 5 and 6 complete an additional hour of study and finish school at 6.00pm.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in order to raise standards further by:
 - ensuring that teachers respond swiftly and take action during lessons when pupils find planned tasks too easy or too difficult
 - ensuring that most able pupils are consistently challenged to make even more progress in order that they reach the higher levels of which they are capable
 - continuing to use information from latest research and outstanding practice from within the Inspiration Trust and other high performing organisations as models for further improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The recently appointed Principal has rapidly established himself as an exceptional school leader. With the total support of talented senior leaders and highly skilled governors, he has wasted no time in getting to know the pupils and staff, in accurately evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and in taking action to drive further improvement.
- An atmosphere of possibility, high expectation and endeavour pervade Great Yarmouth Primary Academy. The academy is committed to ensuring pupils' success as well as to developing future leaders of education. Research and study visits, including to learn about the success of mathematics teaching in Shanghai, are used as a platform to review and improve teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders constantly monitor the quality of teaching using a wide range of information. High and low performance are identified through professional reviews and subsequent consequences for pay progression. There are effective opportunities for sharing excellent practice between teachers both within the academy and more widely across the Inspiration Trust. Teaching has improved significantly since the academy opened. It is continuing to strengthen.
- Middle leaders are working with increasing autonomy. Responsible for particular curriculum areas, middle leaders ensure that pupils' progress in wider subject areas is tracked and analysed. Curriculum leaders ensure that necessary elements of the curriculum are covered at appropriate levels through afternoon topic sessions and through the extended day provision.
- Information regarding pupils' achievement is analysed regularly and in great detail. This information is shared with staff, parents and governors. Underachievement is swiftly identified and remedial action taken. The school mantra, 'No excuses', is applied universally. No matter what a pupil's particular circumstances, every individual is expected to work to his or her limits. School staff expect to provide the necessary support to enable pupils to succeed. As a result, equality of opportunity is promoted highly effectively and the performance of all groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, is improving.
- Parental involvement in learning and school life is encouraged. A new parent forum has been established and weekly opportunities exist for parents to drop in and ask questions, raise concerns or simply find out more about their child's learning. Partnerships with wider agencies, including social services, the speech and language therapy service and counselling services, are effective. High quality support for pupils and families is established.
- The school curriculum is distinctly planned and delivered. An absolute focus on reading, writing and mathematics is apparent from the outset and this focus is maintained. As pupils enter Key Stage 2 the school day is extended. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities, including diverse sports, arts and cultural activities on a daily basis. The oldest pupils complete another hour of study in reading and mathematics. Trips and visits are a conspicuous and carefully planned element of the school curriculum.
- Additional sports funding has been used to extend the range and quality of sporting experiences. For example, experts provide tuition in fencing and horse riding, sports that pupils would be unlikely to access otherwise. Pupils participate widely in a range of sporting activities and are aware of the health benefits as well as the enjoyment that can be derived from exercise.
- Pupils have a strong sense of morality, understanding and acceptance. Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning permeate the academy day. Pupils have the opportunity to explore values and beliefs in assemblies and in philosophy lessons. An academy council allows pupils to learn more about democracy and leadership through voting for representatives.

- Safeguarding arrangements are highly secure. All staff are knowledgeable and well trained. They understand what actions to take under different circumstances. All staff know that safeguarding comes first.

- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are fully committed to the ethos and ambitious vision of the academy. A highly astute and well-organised body, they bring vast and relevant expertise to their roles. A skills audit has been undertaken and consequent training, for example, on data, has been completed. Governors know how pupils' achievements in all key stages compare with national data and with the highest performing schools. They are aware of the quality of teaching, including how teachers are being rewarded through pay progression and weaker teaching addressed. Governors ensure that staff, particularly senior leaders, are held firmly to account for continuing improvements. They retain robust financial oversight and can explain how additional government funding is used to raise achievement for the most vulnerable. Governors have undertaken safeguarding training as well as training in safer recruitment processes. High quality monitoring and well received advice has been provided through the Inspiration Trust as well as from external consultants. Governors know that the academy is improving rapidly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Expectations for positive behaviour are high and these expectations are rigorously and consistently upheld. This is leading to improvements in standards of behaviour overall. For example, in a whole school assembly, when a stop signal was not responded to quickly enough, this was practised until the required response was achieved.
- Pupils report that they are expected to work very hard. In lessons, pupils organise themselves quickly and are usually eager to get on with their work. Pupils typically sustain concentration when working independently, with a partner or in a group. Pupils show maturity in articulating that positive attitudes and good attendance lead to better learning. They appreciate the rewards such as certificates that they can earn.
- In a few lessons pupils become distracted and inattentive, chat with their friends or begin to misbehave. This generally occurs in lessons where pupils are finding learning tasks too easy or too difficult and expectations for positive behaviour are not reinforced strongly enough.
- Pupils understand the importance of respect and friendship. Visitors, adults and peers are spoken to politely. Philosophy lessons contribute particularly well to developing pupils' ability to consider and respond to complex moral and social issues. Pupils are frequently generous in inviting others to join in their games.
- Attendance has improved and is similar to most other primary schools. Great emphasis is placed on high attendance as well as on punctuality. Procedures for monitoring attendance and for following up unexplained absence are rigorous. Persistent absenteeism is rare.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils report that they feel very safe in school because of the excellent care they receive from adults. They also say that they are confident to seek help should they need it from any adult in school.
- Pupils explain clearly the measures that they can take to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They are aware of different forms of bullying and report lively debates they have taken part in, such as on cyber and racial bullying.
- Additional support, such as the 'Friendship Club' that operates at lunchtimes, ensures that pupils who may be anxious, isolated or who struggle to manage their own behaviour have somewhere to go, with positive activities to engage in. Staff are good role models and pupils are encouraged to talk about how they feel. Over time, pupils are becoming more capable of regulating their own behaviour.

- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility, to represent their class or their school. Pupils proudly told about taking part in a huge concert at the O2 arena and how well they conducted themselves.
- Pupils are enabled to take appropriate risks. Risk assessments and supervision ensure that pupils safely experience extensive range of trips, sports and adventurous activities. Pupils are taught to be aware of risk and to identify potential dangers. As a result, they are well equipped to take good care of themselves.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the academy opened in 2012. It is now good overall. Teaching leads to pupils of all ages making good, and in some cases accelerated, progress over time. In all classes and subjects pupils understand what teachers want them to learn and what they need to do in order to succeed.
- Pupils spend a more than average amount of time focusing on reading, writing and mathematics. Despite this, pupils say that 'lessons are always interesting'. However, tasks in both English and mathematics do not consistently challenge most able pupils to achieve even more. Opportunities are provided to further extend pupils' literacy skills in different subjects. For example 'Word and World' work being completed in Year 3 successfully combined a geography topic of 'The Earth' with reading aloud, comprehension and numerous extended writing tasks.
- Pupils' early reading skills are developed at a good level. This is because all staff have been trained and because pupils are taught in many small groups. This ensures learning is tailored to the needs of all pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, the most able and those who are new to speaking English. This approach exemplifies the expectation that all pupils can and will succeed as well as demonstrating a commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Older pupils also take part in highly structured daily reading tasks. Using a wide variety of texts, they learn about different writing styles and techniques. In conversation with inspectors, Year 6 pupils were able to explain the meaning of inference, deduction and authorial intent. Although standards of reading reached by the oldest pupils have improved strongly, they are not yet at the expected level for this age group.
- Teachers often use questioning well to encourage pupils to think, reflect for themselves, and to test and extend their knowledge. However, this is not always used to good effect. In cases where pupils find the planned tasks too easy or too hard, teachers are not always adept at altering or stopping the activity. Consequently opportunities for pupils to make maximum progress are reduced, particularly for the most able.
- In mathematics pupils use a wide range of apparatus to help develop their understanding of increasingly complex mathematical concepts. For example, in Year 1, pupils used cubes and other counting apparatus to help them count in twos, fives, tens and threes from a given number. Older pupils used a variety of measuring equipment including jugs and scales when learning about units of measurement. Consistent features of mathematics teaching include frequent practising of new skills, the 'do it now' brief revisions of known skills, regular mental mathematics activities and opportunities to apply new knowledge and skill in problem-solving activities.
- A strong feature of teaching is the contribution made by skilled teaching assistants. They effectively support individual pupils or small groups who are disabled, have special educational needs or are at an early stage of learning to speak English. This targeted and nurturing support enables these pupils to make good progress.
- Highly specialised teaching is provided for very small groups of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils in a separate classroom known as the 'nurture class'. Pupils attend these classes for morning or afternoon sessions for an extended period of time. Tracking data show that pupils usually make excellent progress and the learning gaps between these pupils and their peers are significantly reduced. After this extensive

intervention, pupils make the transition back to their full-time class.

- Teachers mark books regularly and use this and other assessment information, including reviews of their own teaching to inform their planning. Feedback provided to pupils is helpful and guides them to improve further. Pupils are regularly asked to make corrections or improvements to recent pieces of work and this is routinely followed through. High quality feedback makes a clear contribution to raising achievement, particularly in writing.
- The 'extended day' is a particular feature of this school. Lessons at this time are taught by a range of physical education coaches, music specialists, teaching assistants or other adults with particular skills and experience. Pupils exercise some choice in the subjects and activities they wish to participate in. However, the school ensures that all pupils receive a broad range of learning experiences. These experiences contribute strongly to pupils' engagement with learning and further support their development.

The achievement of pupils is good

- A substantial improvement in the achievement of pupils has been secured since the school opened as Great Yarmouth Primary Academy. Pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 in 2013 and in 2014 made more progress from the end of Key Stage 1 than most other pupils nationally.
- Staff are quick to establish routines and set high expectations. There is a relentless focus on raising achievement in English and mathematics. Consequently, the proportions of pupils in all year groups making expected progress and reaching the nationally expected standards for their ages in both Key Stages 1 and 2 subjects has increased rapidly from a very low base. However, there are still not enough pupils reaching the expected levels in reading or mathematics and not enough pupils gaining the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- More able pupils throughout the school have made consistently good progress over the last two years. However, this has not always been rapid enough for the oldest pupils to fully address the legacy of underachievement from their earlier education. In 2013 and in 2014 most able pupils in Year 6 made more rapid gains in writing than in reading or mathematics and this is reflected in the overall standards achieved in the national tests. Pupils currently in Year 6 still have significant gaps in their learning arising from weaker teaching and slower progress in the past.
- Standards reached by children at the end of Reception and by pupils in Key Stage 1 national tests demonstrate remarkable improvements recently. In 2013 and 2014 the results from the Year 1 check on phonics knowledge (the sounds that letters make), indicate that the proportion reaching the expected standards was well above the national average. Similarly, standards at the end of Year 2 in 2013 and 2014 were consistently meeting or exceeding the national average for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, including at the higher levels.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities are developing as enthusiastic readers. The school philosophy is that competence in reading is key to wider success. The youngest children display great enjoyment selecting books from the school library and pupils of all ages willingly read aloud and discuss the meaning of texts. When reading to inspectors, Year 1 pupils showed that they could use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read individual words and sentences and to tackle words that they were unfamiliar with.
- The school's information shows that there is currently little discernible difference in the learning and achievements of different groups of pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, those entitled to the pupil premium had made the same strong progress in writing, better progress in reading and slightly less good progress in mathematics as their peers in school. Overall, these groups achieved equally well as demonstrated by their combined average points scores for reading, writing and mathematics. Data show that rates of progress remained high for all groups in 2014. A notable increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standards in both English and mathematics was secured.
- Each individual pupil is tracked closely. Equality of opportunity is fundamental and pupils from different backgrounds work together and get along well. There is no wavering from the vision that all pupils will succeed and no stone left unturned in order to make this happen. As a result almost all pupils achieve well.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children start Nursery with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Around two-thirds of children joining the academy in Reception in 2014 have not attended the academy's nursery provision. These children also have skills below those expected for their age.
- Adults ensure that children settle quickly and happily, working closely with parents to find out about the children, to learn about their strengths and any difficulties they face. As in the rest of the school, there is an evident focus on developing key literacy and numeracy skills. Children are carefully assessed and successfully taught to develop speaking and listening skills, to identify letters and sounds and to write and count from the very earliest days.
- Good quality teaching, both indoors and outside, promotes high levels of engagement in interesting and challenging activities across all areas of learning. Adults carefully question children to prompt their thinking and to promote independence. At the end of 2013 all groups of children had made remarkable progress. School data, validated by external moderation, indicated that the proportion of children reaching and exceeding the expected standards was above the national average. The academy's targets for this academic year are equally ambitious.
- Children's behaviour is good. They have plenty of space in which to play, explore and learn. From their first days in school there are frequent opportunities for children to make independent choices as well as to follow directions. Children develop positive relationships with one another as well as with staff.
- Leadership of early years has been strengthened. Improvements have recently been made to the environment, to the quality and availability of resources, to staffing levels and to the overall quality of teaching. Plans for further improvement are in place.
- Safeguarding procedures and policies are routinely and rigorously applied.

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	452771

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dame Rachel de Souza
Principal	Dr Craig Avieson
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 May 2014
Telephone number	01493 855304
Email address	craig.avieson@gypa.org.uk

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