

Cliff Park Infant School, Gorleston

Orde Avenue, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, NR31 6SZ

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
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 strong leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school, well supported by governors, has secured good achievement.
- Leaders and managers check teaching effectively and make sure it is consistently good.
- Standards in reading and writing are broadly in line with the national average, and above the national average in mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for their next school.
- Children joining the Reception classes adapt quickly to school life. They make good progress because of the stimulating opportunities for learning and good teaching.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they make learning interesting and relevant to pupils' experiences. Combined with good relationships, this ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make at least the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are good. The school is a caring and supportive community. Pupils feel safe and are confident that the school will address any concerns they have.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy a stimulating curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development and prepares them well for their next stage in education as well as life outside school.
- The school actively involves parents in its work. Most parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- The recently restructured governing body is providing effective challenge and support in holding the school to account to ensure pupils achieve as well as they could and teaching continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not have consistent expectations for high standards of writing when pupils do work in other subjects.
- Subject leaders have not brought about sufficient improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make).
- Pupils do not use their phonics knowledge enough to help them to do well in writing.
- Teachers do not always address misunderstandings quickly or provide suitable additional challenge for those pupils who have completed their work, particularly the most able.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms. Some was observed with the head of school or the executive headteacher.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised and inspectors heard several pupils read. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety.
- Discussions were held with staff, governors and the academy director.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents including: the school's self-evaluation; its development plan; behaviour records; governing body documents; and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The views of the 32 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account as well as discussion with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 32 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marian Driver	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cliff Park Infant School converted to become an academy in April 2013. When its predecessor school, Cliff Park Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Cliff Park is an average-sized primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is slightly above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. This funding provides additional support for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The early years consists of three full-time Reception classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding by ensuring that subject leaders support teachers to:
 - improve their knowledge of how to teach phonics as a skill for writing
 - have consistent expectations for high standards of writing in all subjects
 - respond quickly in lessons to address misunderstandings and provide further challenge for those who need it, particularly the most able.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and the head of school have driven forward improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance, which have ensured good teaching. There is a good ethos of team work in the school with a common purpose to bring about further improvement.
- The school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness and what it needs to do to improve further. Improvements are secured because governors are involved in checking the progress of improvements and subject leaders write action plans to provide a clear focus for monitoring their subject across the school.
- The wide variety of subjects engages pupils' interests so that they are keen to learn. Parents of children from different ethnic backgrounds enrich all pupils' learning. Parents come into school to teach pupils about different cultures and help them understand the diversity of their school and local community.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. An elected school council contributes to the running of the school and its future direction. Pupils have a keen sense of what is fair. They demonstrate good levels of respect and tolerance for others; discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school is committed to securing equal opportunities for all pupils. Leaders recognise that girls have previously outperformed boys, particularly in writing, and have successfully focused resources and teaching methods to address this. Good use of the pupil premium funding has provided additional teaching as well as opportunities for the most disadvantaged pupils to engage fully in school life. Consequently, the progress of these pupils is accelerating, and the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is narrowing.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding has been used effectively to improve the skills of teachers to deliver good quality physical education lessons. Pupils also benefit from specialist teaching in gymnastics as well as enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities and participate in competitive events.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and procedures are well understood by all staff and pupils.
- To aid school improvement, senior leaders are working closely with the academy junior school, to provide a 'seamless learning journey' for pupils. This collaboration has provided good opportunities for the sharing of good practice as well providing professional development for staff who talk about the value of 'having a bigger picture'. Staff working across both schools support pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and this helps to bridge any gap for the most vulnerable pupils on transition from one school to the other.
- Most of the subject leaders have a good understanding of their role. They have been largely effective in bringing about improvements, particularly for the support of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs, as well as raising standards in mathematics. All staff have received training and support for the teaching of phonics. The work of subject leaders to ensure better teaching of phonics, particularly to support pupils' writing, has not been completely successful and is not consistent across the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been restructured following the school's conversion to an academy. Newly appointed members bring 'fresh eyes' in challenging and supporting the school and this is proving to be effective.
 - Governors are keen to move the school forward. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and what is required to raise pupils' achievement. They are aware that they have an obligation to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of pupils to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain.
 - Governors gain an accurate view of how the school compares to others nationally through their

- understanding of data and how to track the achievement of different groups of pupils across the school.
- Governors monitor the school’s work through visits which are focused on specific targets within the school’s improvement and development plan.
- The governing body has a clear structure for consideration of pay awards. Governors have looked at samples of teacher targets to ensure they are focused on raising pupils’ achievements.
- Finances are monitored closely and governors ensure that additional funding is used effectively. They are well informed about the impact of pupil premium spending on raising achievement for the most disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that the sport funding is improving the expertise of physical education teaching and providing additional opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- Pupils’ behaviour is good. They are enthusiastic. A typical comment from pupils was, ‘You come to school to learn, be nice to people and get help’. Pupils respect the rights of others and talk proudly of their responsibilities when they are the ‘pupil of the day’ in class or voted on as a school councillor.
- Good behaviour starts in the Reception classes where the school’s expectations, rules and routines are quickly established and continue to be respected as pupils move into Key Stage 1. Pupils in all classes work well in pairs and groups. They concentrate and maintain focus for sustained periods of time.
- Behaviour during playtimes is good; pupils enjoy the open space and activities provided for them. The school has clear procedures and systems to address any bad behaviour. These are recorded and where necessary parents are involved. These measures are proving effective, with very few incidents requiring significant intervention.
- For those pupils who may present challenging behaviour or find it difficult to adapt to school life, a nurture group provides good support. A specific programme of sessions is provided to help pupils understand how their behaviour impacts on others and how to ‘read’ other people’s reactions. This helps them to develop life skills so that they are quickly integrated into school and are prepared for their next stage in education.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say there is little or no bullying in school and are confident that any concerns they have are dealt with. They understand different forms of bullying, how to stay safe on the internet and the impact of name calling. They are adamant that the school insists that you have to say sorry if you upset someone.
- All aspects of safeguarding are implemented well. The head of school and the staff take effective steps to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and protected. Regular risk assessments and appropriate checks are made when appointing new staff.
- The school has been effective in improving attendance, particularly of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance, which is celebrated in assemblies. Where necessary the school uses legal sanctions so that parents take responsibility for ensuring their children attend school.
- During the inspection there was an emergency evacuation. Although a false alarm, it demonstrated that staff and pupils followed the correct procedure calmly and quietly and assembled safely.

The quality of teaching is good

- The effective teaching results in pupils’ good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. .
- Good teaching and support helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs keep up with their peers. Regular assessments mean that activities are well targeted to the specific learning needs of this group. In lessons, teaching assistants encourage and explain to ensure pupils understand what to

do and focus on their work.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are creative in making the learning of basic skills interesting, for example using the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* to help teach the wolf the time. The teaching of mathematics is good and this is evident in pupils' books where pupils are tackling some challenging problems, competently applying their mathematical knowledge.
- Work is marked frequently and leads to prompt improvements in pupils' work. Teachers provide helpful advice on what pupils need to do to improve and make sure that their guidance is followed.
- In lessons, pupils show they are able to sustain concentration because work is usually pitched at the right level. Occasionally, there are no follow-up tasks that challenge the most-able pupils' thinking; when pupils have finished work they have to wait for further instruction. Sometimes, when pupils are being taught in a large group, teachers do not always pick up quickly on misunderstandings and provide further guidance.
- Pupils' progress in writing is sometimes held back because teachers do not ensure that pupils use the skills they have learned in literacy lessons and phonics to develop their writing, particularly when they are writing in other subjects such as history or geography.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress once they have entered the Reception class and the majority reach a good level of development by the time they leave the early years. They are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. They leave Year 2 with standards in reading and writing that are broadly in line with the national average and above average in mathematics.
- The school's recent focus on raising achievement in mathematics has been successful and pupils confidently apply the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to solve mathematical problems.
- Visits to the school from various authors have raised the profile of reading and the importance of books and literature. Pupils enthusiastically share their enjoyment of reading, even when they find it difficult. They use the attractive library to choose from a good selection of books and in class show an ability to sustain concentration for reading for a good length of time.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Regular checks on their progress mean that they receive tailored support both in class as well as additional teaching that is clearly effective and helps pupils make good progress.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 in 2014 was lower than other pupils, both in the school and nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. A quarter of these pupils joined the school later than the usual starting point and nearly half had additional needs with particular learning difficulties in language and communication. The school provides well for these pupils with additional support and programmes of learning to help close the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils in the school.
- In the 2014 phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard had improved from 2013 but was still below the national average. This improves in Year 2. However, pupils' understanding of how to use phonics to help them write are not developed fully. In their literacy books, pupils use a range of writing skills to explain, recount, write instructions or write a story, but they do not always apply these skills when they write in other subjects.
- The most-able pupils make equally good progress as other pupils. A greater than average proportion left Year 2 in 2014 having attained the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics, while the proportion reaching this level in writing was average. The progress of the most-able pupils is sometimes slowed by

having to wait for instructions or finding extension tasks too easy.

The early years provision is good

- Parents are very positive about the school's provision for their children. As they enter school children settle well because the Reception Classes offer bright and stimulating places to learn and there are good relationships with adults as well as each other.
- Children enter Cliff Park from a wide range of pre-school providers and are at different stages of readiness for school. Their skills and experiences are below those typical for their age when they start school, particularly in communication and language. They make good progress during their Reception Year and their achievement when they enter Key Stage 1 is now nearer to the national average and is continuing to improve.
- The new leadership in the early years has brought about a clear focus on improving the quality of learning for these young children. This is particularly evident in the outside area where children learn through the exciting activities with plenty of opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Challenges are provided for children to solve problems, act out in various role play areas or construct something using logs, bricks, tools and even a cement mixer.
- Children's behaviour is good, both the classrooms and the outside area provides a safe place to learn. Children are keen to hone their physical skills using tennis rackets, balls, bikes and walking on stilts are mindful of playing safely to protect themselves and each other.
- Teaching is good and the needs of individual children, including the small number of those with disabilities or special educational needs, are well met because all adults make frequent checks on what the children can do and what they need to learn next. Adults use questioning well to move children's learning on and make them think about what they are doing and how they might improve.
- Children have phonics lessons in different groupings across the three classes but there is not a consistent approach to the teaching of letters and sounds. When children repeat spelling mistakes, these are not always addressed quickly to enable them to write with confidence and with a higher degree of accuracy.

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	139535
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	449971

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alleisha Turner
Headteacher	Phil Reid
Telephone number	01493 661523
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Email address	admin@cliffparktrust.org

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