

# Croftway Primary Academy

William Street, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2HP

## Inspection dates

19–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders and governors are not monitoring the impact of recent initiatives and training rigorously. As a result, they have not recognised that the quality of teaching is not improving rapidly enough to ensure that pupils are making good progress throughout the academy.
- Progress made by all pupils across the academy, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, is not consistently good across year groups and subjects.
- In the early years, boys and the most able children are not making good enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. They do not use information about their pupils' learning to plan lessons and activities which meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers' feedback does not always show pupils how to improve their work and teachers do not always check that pupils act on the advice given.
- The roles of some middle and senior leaders are not clearly understood. As a result, they are not having the impact that they should on pupils' progress.
- The leadership of the curriculum, and the subsequent impact on pupils' learning, is weak and inconsistent across the academy.

### The school has the following strengths

- Achievement by the end of Year 6 in mathematics has improved over time. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved due to focused leadership and improved provision.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support the needs of some pupils.
- Pupils behave well and have a strong sense of responsibility and determination to learn.
- Leaders and staff at all levels have established strong relationships with parents.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. Their physical, emotional and pastoral needs are met well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. The headteacher and inspectors jointly observed the quality of teaching in four lessons.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books. They scrutinised data on pupils' targets and current levels of achievement and checked these against the work they looked at.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the academy and held more formal meetings with pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, middle and subject leaders, class teachers, governors, directors of the academy, an external advisor and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the academy's evaluation of its own performance, minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took into account the 52 responses the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the academy's own records of surveys of parents. They spoke to parents in the playground at the start and end of the academy day. They also considered the 26 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Suzanne Lithgow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Evans

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lucie Stephenson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children attend part time in Nursery and full time in Reception. The early years comprises one Nursery class and two Reception classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium is higher than average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There has been a considerable number of changes in staffing since the school became part of The Blyth Quays Academy Trust in June 2013. The current headteacher took up post in September 2013, and other leaders have taken up their posts during this year.
- The academy runs a breakfast club and after-school provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good, thereby improving learning and progress for all pupils by:
  - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations and take fuller account of what pupils can do by using all of the information available to plan challenging activities
  - ensuring that marking provides pupils with specific actions to improve their work
  - ensuring that all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged, are able to extend their learning through having opportunities to undertake more open-ended tasks
  - making sure pupils in the early years have more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through interactive and practical activities
  - making sure that the impact of actions to improve teaching leads to a consistency in the quality of teaching in all classrooms.
- Leaders and governors must act quickly to address the aspects of teaching that require improvement by:
  - rigorously monitoring the impact of teaching and acting promptly, in a sharp and focused manner, on the findings
  - planning and providing a curriculum which motivates and inspires all pupils
  - ensuring that leaders' roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and result in a greater impact on academy improvement
  - ensuring local governors and directors gain information about the progress of the academy from a range of sources so that they are not over reliant on the headteacher.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time work to strengthen the quality of provision and pupils' achievement has lacked the focus and precision necessary to drive change at a brisk enough pace. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress that they should and teachers' assessments are not always accurate.
- The headteacher has identified the right priorities and taken appropriate actions, and while some improvements have started to have an impact, progress has not been rapid enough in tackling weaker aspects of provision. For example, leaders have not acted promptly enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Actions for improvement are not communicated clearly enough to governors. As a result, the governing body is not clear about the picture of improvement.
- Recent appointments have strengthened the leadership team. Leadership skills are still developing and leaders are not always given enough time or direction to carry out their roles effectively. Senior leaders are not clear enough about what is expected of middle leaders.
- Over time gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy and nationally in reading, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling have not been narrowing quickly enough, thus leading to some inequality in outcomes. More effective use of the pupil premium is now starting to have some effect on this achievement gap and on improving equality of opportunity. Despite this move in the right direction, the impact of pupil premium spending is not always evaluated clearly enough.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is being led and managed effectively following a key appointment in September 2014. This has ensured that interventions are now monitored carefully and are closely matched to each individual pupil's needs. As a result, this group of pupils is making good progress.
- Physical education (PE) is led well and additional government funding has been deployed effectively. The academy is an active member of the Blyth and Bedlington Sports Partnership. The impact of the funding has been to ensure that pupils have additional opportunities to develop their skills in a range of inter-school activities and staff have developed their expertise in this vital area of the curriculum.
- The roles of middle leaders overall need further development. In particular, the role of middle leaders in checking on the quality of pupils' work is insufficiently precise to help staff develop their practice in this area.
- While there are good opportunities for staff training, linked to individual teachers' needs, leaders are not measuring the impact of these activities precisely enough to ensure that teaching improves. Procedures for checking on the performance of teachers are in place, but teachers' targets are not sufficiently challenging because they do not reflect the expectation for all pupils, including the most-able, to make at least good progress.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Procedures are firmly established and the day-to-day management, care and protection of pupils are sound.
- The academy provides many opportunities for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Recent improvements to the academy environment have further contributed to this. Activities permeate the curriculum that help ensure tolerance, respect, the rule of law and democracy are explored and examined by the pupils. This is underpinned by the academy's core values of respect, resilience, confidence, teamwork, determination and honesty. These help to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders at all levels have established very strong relationships and systems for engaging with parents. Staff care about the pupils and always go the extra mile to ensure that their well-being and safety are paramount.
- The Directors of the Blyth Quays Trust have established working groups for leaders with responsibilities for special educational needs, early years and assessment. It is still early days and the groups have started to assess the impact of their actions.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the appointment of the current headteacher, governors are better informed about the quality of teaching in the academy. However, more needs to be done to ensure that governors are not over-reliant on the headteacher for information about the impact of actions taken by the academy to improve its work.
  - Systems are in place to ensure that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is tackled.

Governors are clear that there is no automatic reward for staff if performance is not at least good. However, the lack of challenge in performance targets means these systems are not driving improvement in the academy rapidly enough.

- Governors receive training so that they are better able to understand the academy's own data, nationally published data and the newly implemented system to track pupils' progress across the academy. However, they are not always clear about how to use these data to get a clear picture about the quality of teaching and how to tackle underachievement.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good behaviour is seen as a strength by most staff, parents and pupils. Recent initiatives by leaders have been effective in establishing and sustaining good behaviour at the academy. This improvement is recognised and welcomed by pupils, parents and staff.
- Effective systems reward good behaviour and deal with poor behaviour. These are understood well by the pupils and are responded to positively.
- Leaders and academy staff have worked hard to support a number of pupils with emotional needs and to improve their well-being. The introduction of 'Place2Be' has been instrumental in ensuring that pupils' needs are met well.
- Pupils are well mannered and courteous when moving around the academy. Pupils are smart, with tidy uniforms. The academy environment is clean and tidy because pupils take a real pride in it.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They work well as individuals, in pairs and in groups. Sometimes pupils become less interested but this is because the work is too easy. As a result, progress slows.
- Pupils report that where there is name-calling, it is dealt with efficiently by members of staff. There have been a few racist incidents which were reported correctly and dealt with to good effect.
- The academy's core values are reflected in pupils' behaviour. Pupils are respectful, resilient, confident, determined and honest. Pupils are eager to serve and support others and are also ambitious for themselves and for others. For example, the academy's Young Leaders' scheme involves Year 6 pupils working with younger pupils, especially at playtimes, supervising and developing their play and interpersonal skills.
- Behaviour around the academy and in the playground is good. Pupils respond well when challenged by staff and respond quickly to instructions.
- Pupils take their responsibilities around the academy and in the community seriously. A strong academy council readily takes on responsibility, for example as monitors. All of this is helping pupils gain a real sense of responsibility for themselves and others.
- Robust systems and clear expectations communicated to parents have ensured that incidents of lateness and absence from the academy have reduced significantly. The academy has addressed previous poor levels of attendance effectively. The Trust has helped assure that this is sustained through the deployment of an Education Welfare Officer who is shared across the three Trust academies. Pupils' attendance is tracked and rewarded rigorously, both individually and as a whole class.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Safeguarding procedures are good with all policies and training in place and practices secure.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to go to if they are worried or need to talk. Pupils make good use of the yellow 'worry' boxes, when they are having difficulty or are worried.
- Questionnaires and the academy's own records of contact with families indicate parents feel that their children are safe and that staff are approachable if parents have any concerns about their children.
- A range of outside agencies and professionals is used effectively to keep pupils safe. Where necessary, pupils have access to programmes such as counselling and play therapy to help them improve their attitudes to, and enjoyment of, school.
- Pupils report that they know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They have very regular support in this from the academy through assemblies, regular workshops, to which parents are invited, and through the curriculum.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils are capable of and, as a result, expectations are often too low.
- The academy has a marking and assessment policy. However, it is unclear how staff marking of pupils' work helps them to improve. Too often teachers' marking does not help pupils understand precisely what they need to do next to improve.
- The approach to the marking of spelling does not always help pupils to learn how to spell correctly. Too often in the work books scrutinised by inspectors, teachers were not checking that pupils write out their spelling corrections accurately, in line with academy policy. As a result, some pupils are continuing to make the same mistakes.
- The curriculum is insufficiently varied and interesting. Too little emphasis has been placed on the importance of the wider curriculum beyond English and mathematics. This is now being addressed, but there is still some way to go. The work set in subjects such as science and history, for example, does not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their skills as scientists and historians.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving across the academy, especially in Key Stage 2, because more emphasis is being placed on pupils developing their skills and then applying them in a range of 'real life' situations. Pupils report that they enjoy solving problems and manipulating shapes and numbers.
- Pupils at the academy have an increasingly good grasp of basic skills in English. However, more needs to be done, especially in Key Stage 2, to give pupils opportunities to write at greater length, so that they can develop their ideas through sustained writing and argument.
- Physical education is a successful feature of the academy's curriculum. Pupils report that they enjoy the opportunities this subject gives them to develop their team-building and physical skills. The academy offers a wide range of sporting and physical education activities.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support particular individuals and groups of pupils. A strong feature is their joint planning with teachers. Their assessments of the progress that pupils make feeds directly into the planning of next steps. The academy is effective in developing the skills of this group of staff through carefully targeted training and other opportunities for professional development.
- Teaching does not provide a consistently good enough level of challenge for the most able pupils. Work is not always set at the right level and there are insufficient opportunities for these pupils to 'stretch' and develop their skills and knowledge through open-ended activities. This is hindering the progress and limiting the creativity for the most able pupils.
- Teachers regularly ask questions to check for understanding. However, this questioning is too often limited to literal answers. It focuses on the 'what' rather than the 'how' and 'why'. Opportunities are thus missed to challenge pupils' initial ideas and to explore alternatives. Too often pupils do not deepen their understanding as fully as they might.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving rapidly. As a result of effective leadership, staff are increasingly able to identify the needs of individual pupils accurately and provide appropriate support. Pupils receiving additional support are catching up successfully through carefully targeted action which is now monitored regularly. Outside specialist help is used to identify specific learning needs of pupils and parents are fully involved.
- The quality of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and mathematics has improved recently. Teachers' questioning is very specific in lessons where more progress is being made, and pupils are using a range of skills during the activities.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the academy. Attainment by the end Key Stage 2 slightly improved in 2014, but remains below average in mathematics and reading. The amount of progress pupils make by the time they leave the academy has improved to be broadly in line with that nationally, except in reading where pupils make less progress.
- The actions taken by academy leaders to halt historical underachievement are starting to make a difference. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are now making better progress than in the recent past, but this still needs to be faster. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to be closer to the national averages for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, due to accelerated progress across the year.
- Disadvantaged pupils left Year 6 approximately three terms behind pupils nationally in reading, writing

and mathematics. They left Year 6 with their reading half a term, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling two terms, and mathematics about one and a half terms behind of that of their peers in the academy. Data provided by the academy suggest that attainment and progress gaps are beginning to close.

- Although improving, pupils' current achievement in mathematics, reading and writing fluctuates across classes and year groups. This reflects the inconsistencies in teaching.
- Most children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for children of their age. They make expected progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, although this is slightly slower for boys. Those children who join the academy with skills and knowledge in line with those typical for their age are not making enough progress across the early years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers. This is because provision and interventions for these pupils are managed well to ensure that strategies are targeted well to meet their specific needs.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of reading for younger pupils that led to a higher proportion meeting the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 in 2014 compared to other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils are not attaining as well as they should be and are not making enough progress. The proportion of pupils leaving Year 6 at the higher Level 5 is below what is expected in mathematics, and well below in reading and writing. This is because teachers are not using information and data to plan challenging enough activities to ensure that pupils achieve higher levels.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- Most children make steady progress across the early years but, given their starting points, this does not ensure all children are ready for Year 1. Boys in the Reception class and the most able children are not making enough progress.
- Targeted support by well trained staff ensures that children with additional needs are cared for very well and have their educational needs met appropriately. They are making steady progress in the early years.
- Leaders and staff work well with parents in the early years, engaging and motivating them through a wide range of creative activities to help their children to make progress and thus ensuring a smooth transition into the next class.
- Leaders have identified correctly that children's communication skills are less well developed than their skills in other areas of learning when they join the academy. However, leaders have not made sure that indoor activities that children choose for themselves and outdoor provision allow for adults working with children to ask questions which encourage extended responses.
- The curriculum in the early years supports pupils' physical and emotional health, their safety and well-being effectively.
- The leader with responsibility for the early years understands that further work is needed to make sure that all members of the early years team have well-developed knowledge and skills to ensure that good progress is being made by all children.
- Teaching is not consistently good, as not all activities have a practical enough focus to ensure that children understand fully the concepts they are being taught.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139743
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	453404

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	477
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Grey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shirley Clement
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 353258
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 797531
<b>Email address</b>	shirley.clement@northumberland.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

