

Cliffdale Primary School

Battenburg Avenue, North End, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 0SN

Inspection dates

17–18 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The executive headteacher and her dedicated team of senior leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the school so that it provides an outstanding quality of education.
- The school is a happy and calm place of learning. Pupils' personal development is excellent because leaders and staff work very effectively together. Staff give pupils the self-confidence to try new things and achieve success.
- Parents are delighted with the school. They value the excellent support that the school provides to them and their families.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. They behave extremely well and have exemplary attitudes towards their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science, often from low starting points. All groups of pupils perform exceptionally well. This is because of outstanding teaching and assessment. Learning is tailored closely to pupils' needs. Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Provision in the early years is outstanding. Children have an excellent start to their learning because staff make sure that they are provided with the right activities. Children quickly settle into school life because they feel secure. They are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- The school's creative curriculum is outstanding. This contributes to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. No opportunity is lost to ensure that pupils make excellent progress in a range of different subjects including art, pottery, sport and music.
- Those responsible for governance provide strong support. They have very high aspirations for the school. They regularly challenge leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' rates of progress remain outstanding.
- The school has strong links with a range of agencies that provide therapies. These have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- Safeguarding arrangements are very thorough. Staff are well aware of the procedures to follow. Pupils are exceptionally well looked after.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully implement the new assessment system for tracking pupils' personal development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the school became an academy, leaders have driven through significant improvements. Leadership is outstanding because all staff share a vision that pupils at this school deserve the highest quality of education. The executive headteacher is inspirational. The senior leadership team are ambitious. They continually seek ways to improve further. Teachers are highly motivated and well trained. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress, often from low starting points.
- Parents are delighted with the school. They are appreciative of the time taken by staff to make sure that their children feel happy and ready to learn. Many expressed the view that staff at this school go 'above and beyond' what is expected. They say that workshops on subjects such as developing communication are very beneficial. Parents of pupils who have acquired verbal skills since coming to this school were thrilled with their children's progress.
- The creative curriculum is exceptionally well planned to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. The numerous extra-curricular activities contribute strongly to pupils' academic development. Personalised programmes and themed weeks provide pupils with a wide range of experiences. The curriculum has been carefully adapted for those who are most-able. For example, most-able musicians have additional instrument lessons.
- In art and design, pupils enjoy creating imaginative work using a range of materials. Exceptional work was seen in pottery, where pupils had created intricate clay Viking boats. Pupils gain a good understanding of the natural world. They develop effective communication skills when studying outdoors in forest school. During these visits, staff plan carefully to make sure that every opportunity is taken to reinforce learning. The school benefits from exceptionally strong music teaching. Pupils said how much they enjoyed singing in the choir and using the numerous instruments. Pupils have been successful in music competitions and have performed to large audiences in Portsmouth.
- Sports premium funding is effectively spent on coaching, such as in cricket and swimming. It has also enabled pupils to experience a large variety of sporting activities. Pupils regularly visit adventure centres to develop their skills in horse riding, climbing and kayaking. Residential trips, for those in Years 5 and 6, ensure that pupils become more proficient in these activities.
- Additional funding is very effectively used. Leaders and governors are highly successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are given the support they need to make outstanding progress.

Governance of the school

- The ambitious academy trust as well as the school's own governing body are dedicated to providing an excellent quality of education. Clear strategic oversight enables those responsible for governance to have a detailed understanding of all aspects of the school.

- Governors have a relentless drive to see the school continue to improve. For example, governors know that staff want to implement a new system for assessing pupils' personal development.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks regarding the suitability of staff are rigorous and the school maintains an accurate single central record.
- Staff are diligent in ensuring pupil's welfare and safety. All policies and procedures are regularly updated and staff are very well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Parents say that their children feel happy and secure at this school. Leaders engage well with a range of different agencies to ensure that all pupils are safeguarded.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers and support assistants have exceptionally high expectations of pupils. Progress is exceptional because teachers know exactly where to pitch activities so that they constantly challenge pupils. Often, these activities capture pupils' imagination. They frequently become totally engrossed in their learning.
- Teachers and other adults know each pupil extremely well and build strong relationships with them. The school is a happy environment. In an assembly that was visited during the inspection, pupils were seen to be delighted with both their own achievements as well as those of others.
- No opportunity is lost to develop pupils' communication skills and this underpins all learning at the school. Throughout the school, staff frequently ask probing questions to develop pupils' understanding.
- In some classes, particularly where pupils are non-verbal, staff provide a range of multi-sensory experiences which pupils find enthralling. Wall displays invite pupils to discover by touch alone the characteristics of materials.
- Teachers have an excellent subject knowledge. They are highly skilled at assessing pupil's work. Progress is recorded on a lesson-by-lesson basis and small steps in learning are carefully noted. Subsequent activities are carefully planned to reinforce pupils' existing learning. When a target has been reached, pupils, including those who are most-able, are set 'stretch targets' to ensure that they are further challenged.
- In mathematics, meticulous planning ensures that each pupil has exactly the resources they need for them to practise and consolidate their understanding.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make is highly effective. A specialist teacher provides targeted additional help for those who need more support. Reading and writing skills quickly develop because staff build carefully on previous learning.
- All teachers promote equality and are highly respectful of diversity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff are highly successful in developing pupils' self-confidence and this helps pupils to become successful learners. Teachers constantly encourage pupils not to give up when work seems too challenging.
- Pupils' well-being is paramount. They settle quickly into school because of the excellent quality of care and support provided. Parents were universally delighted with how well the school looks after their children. One parent expressed the views of many when they said, 'There is nothing the school wouldn't do to help. My child comes out of school happy, smiling and singing.'
- All staff are highly sensitive to pupils' needs. Pupils' benefit considerably from a large range of therapies which are provided by both staff and outside agencies. Staff ensure that pupils have access to a range of sensory activities whenever required. This particularly helps those pupils who need to become calmer before they can learn.
- Personal safety is a priority and staff constantly remind pupils about what they need to do to stay safe. Issues relating to e-safety are carefully woven into the curriculum. Pupils are well aware of how to behave safely when online.
- Pupils are frequently given responsibilities around the school, to which they respond very well. For example, they help to set up the hall for assembly or tidy the books in the school library.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- School records indicate that usually pupils behave exceptionally well. Those whose complex needs occasionally present more challenging behaviour are effectively supported by staff. During the inspection, pupils, attitudes to learning and behaviour were exemplary. Pupils get on well with each other. All are keen to gain 'team points' for exemplary behaviour or work.
- Several pupils said that the school has really helped them to develop their self-discipline. This is because it has taught them to walk away from potential flashpoints.
- Pupils attend well and absence levels are in line with other schools nationally. Parents say that their children become most unhappy if they have to miss a day of school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils in this school make excellent progress in developing their reading, writing, mathematics and science skills.
- Staff enable pupils to make exceptional progress in developing their communication skills. During the last academic year, about a quarter of the pupils in the school were non-verbal. Due to staff relentlessly encouraging greater communication, by the end of

the year, around half of these pupils had acquired significant verbal skills.

- The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school, including those who are disadvantaged and most-able, make excellent progress due to the school's effective use of the pupil premium funding.
- Those who are most-able benefit by being in classes with pupils who have similar communication skills. This ensures that teachers can provide activities that are well matched to their needs. Extra-curricular clubs such as 'story club' promote pupils' reading and writing skills effectively. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to create their own books that are then available for others to read in the school library.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in a range of subjects, including art, music and physical education. Through developing skills in these subjects, pupils also gain life skills such as teamwork and the value of exercise.
- Due to the outstanding progress they have made, pupils are very well prepared for their next school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make excellent progress, often from low starting points.
- Caring staff ensure that children have a gentle start in Reception so as to ensure that they do not feel anxious or worried. Children flourish at this school and their behaviour and personal development is exemplary. They rapidly settle into school routines and establish strong relationships with staff.
- Leaders ensure that children's skills and understanding are carefully assessed every day. Based on this careful monitoring, children are provided with well-focused activities to move their learning forward. Consequently, children make outstanding progress and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children quickly develop their communication skills. An example of this was seen during the inspection where a child discovered that different objects roll down a slope at different speeds. He responded well to careful questioning and was delighted that he could clearly demonstrate that balls roll faster than toy fish.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that both the indoor and outdoor environments are stimulating and provide a range of different resources that stretch and challenge children.
- Parents are delighted with how well their children are progressing in the early years. They appreciate the informal coffee mornings and regular workshops provided for them.
- There are no pupils in the early years who are eligible for additional pupil premium funding.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. Children feel safe and happy in this welcoming environment.

School details

Unique reference number	139967
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10019842

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mark Mitchell
Executive headteacher	Alison Beane
Telephone number	02392 662601
Website	cliffdaleprimaryacademy.info
Email address	admin@cliffdaleprimaryacademy.info
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Cliffdale Primary School converted to become an academy in December 2013. When its predecessor school, Cliffdale Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall. Cliffdale was sponsored by Mary Rose Academy. Both schools formed the Solent Academies Trust. Redwood Park School is about to join the trust. All schools in the trust are led by the same executive headteacher, who is a national leader of education.
- Pupils who attend this school have complex learning difficulties. Many have autism spectrum disorders. All pupils are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- The school is organised into 13 classes, five of which are specialist classes for pupils who require very high levels of support. Class sizes are small, ranging from five to 12 pupils. Pupils enter the school at different times throughout the school year and into all year groups.
- The trust provides an outreach service offering special educational needs support to mainstream schools in Portsmouth. The school works with a range of different agencies, including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and educational psychologists.
- Around half of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school does not have any provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. There were 12 lessons and part lessons visited, many of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings and informal discussions were held with pupils to ascertain their views on what it was like to be a pupil at this school. Inspectors looked at pupils' files of work and listened to some pupils reading. Inspectors also considered the responses to a recent school pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of 47 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The views expressed by members of staff in 46 online questionnaires were considered.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation and policies. Information about pupils' current progress and targets was examined. Documents checking the quality of teaching and learning and records relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Sackett

Ofsted Inspector

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