

Cliff Lane Primary School

Cliff Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0PJ

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since opening as an academy, the school has been through a time of frequent changes in both leadership and staff. New senior leaders are now making more rapid improvements.
- In 2016 and 2017, pupils by the end of key stage 2 did not make good enough progress across the curriculum. Disadvantaged pupils achieved below other pupils nationally.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good. Teachers do not ensure that learning activities are well matched to the abilities of pupils in their classes.
- Middle leadership is underdeveloped. Middle leaders do not yet have enough impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls across all key stages.
- Leaders do not track the progress individual pupils make across a key stage with enough precision. As a result, some pupils are not given the opportunity to make the progress that they should.
- Children in Reception do not make the progress of which they are capable. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has not been high enough over a number of years.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is now improving at pace. The new principal, supported by the deputy principal, provides strong and effective leadership. They have a clear improvement plan and are monitoring the impact of their work effectively.
- Girls achieve well across the school. Their achievement is at least in line with the national average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. Pupils use their skills well and are making increasingly better progress as a result.
- Teachers ensure that reading lessons have focus and purpose. Pupils develop their understanding and comprehension skills well and demonstrate a love of reading.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong and positive. Pupils are also respectful of each other and play well together.
- The school has a strong safeguarding ethos and is a safe, calm and welcoming place in which to learn.
- Children in the early years classes are happy and well looked after.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all pupils make good or better progress across key stage 2 from their individual starting points, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - boys make better progress so more reach the expected standard and greater depth by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics
 - the proportion of disadvantaged and most-able disadvantaged pupils making good or better progress from their starting points rises
 - more boys achieve a good level of development at end of their Reception Year, so that they are better prepared for Year 1.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so it is consistently good or better by:
 - teachers effectively using the school's assessment system to plan learning activities that match the needs of groups of pupils more precisely.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - effectively using assessment information to measure the progress pupils make from their starting points
 - increasing the impact of middle leaders so they all contribute to rapid and sustained school improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school converted to become a sponsored academy with Bright Tribe Academy Trust there have been several changes in leadership. This has resulted in a period of instability and the pace of improvement until September 2016 was too slow. The appointment of the current principal was the catalyst for change at the school. She has had a very positive impact in the short time that she has been leading the school. School improvement is now moving at pace and the school is rapidly progressing to being good.
- The principal is relentless in her pursuit of good teaching, learning and assessment. She takes decisive action where the quality of teaching does not meet the very best standards. Leaders' recent appointments to the teaching staff continue to ensure that the quality of teaching is increasingly consistent and effective. As a result, pupils are starting to make better progress and achieving the standards they should.
- School leaders have developed a very clear vision for the school. This is based on high expectations, strong values and a focus on improving teaching and learning. Staff are overwhelmingly positive and agree that the leaders provide a clear direction for the school and that this helps them to know how to improve their teaching.
- Leaders monitor teachers' performance carefully through clear performance management systems and processes. Leaders provide training that is closely linked to adults' strengths or areas that have been identified in the school improvement plan. Although teaching is not yet consistently good, leaders' practice is supporting the rapid improvements seen in the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are increasingly confident in their work. In the staff questionnaire, all staff who responded stated that training is used to encourage, challenge and support them.
- Middle leaders are very committed to their roles and responsibilities. Most are very new to their positions, so they are still developing the necessary skills and expertise to be fully effective. They are beginning to check more thoroughly that any actions taken are helping pupils make better progress.
- Leaders identify barriers to learning effectively and measure the progress disadvantaged pupils make, regularly. However, leaders do not evaluate the information and check that the progress these pupils make from their starting points is as strong as it could be. As a result, the progress that disadvantaged pupils make is mixed and not enough most-able disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards.
- Parents rightly have confidence in the new leadership provided by the principal and her newly formed team. They recognise that their children enjoy coming to school. One parent commented through the online questionnaire, Parent View: 'We are so pleased our children attend this wonderful school. They get excited on a school day when they wake up: what more as a parent could you ask for!'
- Leaders use the additional sports premium funding effectively to motivate and encourage pupils to develop their fitness skills and keep active. Teachers have the opportunity to work alongside specialist sports coaches. This is helping to improve their

skills and confidence when teaching the wide range of sporting activities offered in pupils' physical education lessons.

- The curriculum is increasingly broad and balanced. Adults plan activities around themes, which are carefully chosen to meet the needs as well as the interests of pupils. In a physical education lesson where pupils were investigating balance, they were encouraged to develop their own balances, ensuring that they were inspired and motivated. They learned and developed their skills well.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is enriched by additional visits and visitors to school. As a result, pupils have rich opportunities to learn new skills and extend their learning and personal skills.
- The principal has developed effective links with a local secondary school and a special school, which provide additional and effective external support. Recently, the secondary school supported a new approach to the teaching of mathematics for Cliff Lane Primary. This new initiative has been welcomed by the parents. One said, 'We do like the new maths programme as it appears to support all learning styles.'
- Leaders provide effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about fundamental British values. The school council makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Members are involved in whole-school decision-making. For example, the recent review of extra-curricular activities involved pupils and led to the provision the school now has in place.
- Additional special educational needs funding is used effectively to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well. The special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of the pupils who need additional support. She tracks carefully the progress that these pupils make and ensures that external support for teaching assistants is provided. Any specific or additional needs are identified at an early stage.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The directors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have an accurate view of the current position of the school. They provide increasingly effective support and challenge to hold school leaders to account for the progress that pupils make.
- The newly formed 'Drive' team governors know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where it can improve further. They are dedicated to the success of the school and have the capacity and skills to support the school in its journey to good and better.
- Both the multi-academy trust board and the local 'Drive' team provide a good balance of challenge and support to leaders and hold them to account effectively for the school's performance.
- The executive principal visits regularly to monitor the impact of school leadership. The progress of the school is communicated frequently to the board of trustees.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. For example, every room in the school has notices which help ensure that school staff are clear regarding the safeguarding procedures and practices required.
- Leaders have clear and consistent practices to ensure that safeguarding is given the focus that is necessary. Staff spoken to during the inspection knew what procedures to follow if they had any concerns. As a result, staff are vigilant and follow processes well.
- Of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, almost all agreed that the school keeps their children safe.
- There are two senior leaders who are trained as designated safeguarding leaders and these are well supported by the trust. This ensures that there is always an effective safeguarding leader available to staff, should any concerns arise and that the designated person has support if needed.
- Leaders check that everybody who works with pupils is suitable to do so. Records of employment are kept well and in good order.
- Leaders of the school and trust ensure that any referrals to external agencies are acted upon rapidly and efficiently. Leaders follow through to ensure that the appropriate outcomes are in the best interests of the child.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet as effective as it could be. This is because teachers do not use the assessment information they have precisely enough to plan learning activities that meet the needs and abilities of groups of pupils. Consequently, some pupils, particularly the most able, have not made sufficient progress over time.
- Teachers use the school's chosen assessment system to track the progress pupils make on a regular basis. However, adults focus on the progress pupils make in a single year, rather than from pupils' original starting points. Consequently, some pupils, especially boys, still have much ground to make up by the final year of their education.
- On occasion, teachers' expectations are too low. They set work and activities that do not provide sufficient opportunity for the most able pupils to demonstrate their skills and abilities. For example, pupils' mathematics workbooks from key stage 2 demonstrate that pupils carry out a large number of calculations, even when they have already mastered the skills needed. As a result, these pupils have less opportunity to extend and apply their learning in a range of different ways.
- While pupils have some opportunities to apply their writing skills, they are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their literacy skills across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are not making the progress that they could in writing. In Year 6, for example, not enough pupils are demonstrating the evidence required to show how they meet the expected standard. This is the case especially for boys.
- Teachers usually target their questions effectively to ensure that pupils understand the

concepts being taught during lessons. Some of their questions are helpful in challenging pupils, but this is not yet consistently the case for all groups of pupils, such as the disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged.

- The use of additional adults is not yet consistently effective. In some classes, additional adults are used well to support pupils' learning. They use their knowledge of the pupils and offer support and intervention in a timely manner. In other year groups, however, additional adults are not guided precisely enough. Occasionally, teaching assistants complete too much of the work for their pupils. When this happens, it is difficult to know whether the pupil has mastered the skills or achieved well in the learning activity.
- When pupils learn well, teachers use their subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject well. They use creative and interesting approaches to bring the learning to life and keep pupils interested and motivated. For example, in Year 2, following a lesson about queens in history, pupils discussed the importance of the Royal Family and whether it was crucial to the rule of law. As a result, most pupils were inspired to practise their skills effectively and make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy effectively. Pupils can easily explain whether their work is correct, or what would make their work even better.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read and they demonstrate a love of reading. There is a strong culture of reading in the school. Teachers ensure that reading lessons have a strong focus and purpose. New and more stimulating books have been introduced for pupils to enjoy, and these are motivating boys to read more. Pupils are increasing their knowledge, understanding and comprehension skills at a faster pace as a result.
- Phonics is taught very effectively in the early years and key stage 1. Children and pupils use their good phonics knowledge to help them read difficult words and to help them with their spelling. One pupil, proud of his reading, stated, 'I like tricky words. I am getting confident at reading them.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are a credit to the school. They are friendly, polite and respectful of each other and adults.
- In discussions, and in response to their questionnaire, pupils said they feel safe in school. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and in a range of situations in and out of school.
- Pupils reported that they are well looked after and that the 'adults are there to help you'. Their view was endorsed by parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Parents' written comments were all highly positive. One parent summed up the views of a number when she said, 'The staff are just amazing. My children love coming to school.'
- Pupils are respectful of one another and celebrate differences, which helps to support the positive atmosphere in the school. Parents recognise this. One said, 'Teachers

teach kids how to behave towards others from other countries.’

- Pupils want to be successful. They take pride in their work, their school and their appearance. The school’s focus on helping pupils understand how to become successful learners is having a significant impact. Most pupils are generally not afraid to try things out because the principal has worked tirelessly to enable them to understand that they can learn by their mistakes. One pupil stated, ‘If you fail it means you have made your first attempt in learning.’
- Pupils who attend the breakfast or after-school club receive a safe, happy and sociable start or end to the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and are keen to learn. They are happy to share their work with adults and many pupils spoke to the inspectors confidently about their learning.
- Around the school, during break and lunchtimes, pupils behave sensibly and show care and consideration for others. In class, pupils encourage each other well and are happy to help if they see one of their classmates struggling with their work.
- The school and representatives from the trust rigorously monitor attendance and lateness. They take appropriate measures if pupils do not attend school well enough.
- Occasionally pupils’ attitudes to learning wane when teaching is not as effective as it should be.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved. Almost all staff agreed that pupils’ behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because in 2016 and 2017 the amount of progress that pupils made by the end of key stage 2 in writing and mathematics was not good enough. Although pupils are starting to make better progress, the impact of some weaker teaching previously is still apparent.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in writing and mathematics was below the national average. The progress that pupils made overall was significantly below that of all pupils nationally in writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils’ progress in 2017 was below the national average for writing and mathematics, while their attainment was in line with the national average for writing and mathematics.
- Across the school currently, disadvantaged pupils are not making enough progress from their starting points in mathematics and particularly in writing. This is being addressed by leaders. However, it is too soon to see the effect of their work on the progress disadvantaged pupils make.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2017 was below the national average. This has been the case for the past three years. However, in 2017 the principal took the bold step of changing how phonics was taught

in the middle of the last academic year. Pupils made better progress as a result. This year, the progress pupils are making in phonics is a strength of the school.

- In key stage 1 in 2017, attainment was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books demonstrates that currently pupils in key stage 1 tackle activities that are generally appropriate for their age.
- The progress that boys currently make is too variable, particularly across key stage 2. Although they are making better progress in reading, not enough reach the higher standard expected of them by the end of key stage 2. Not enough boys make good or better progress.
- There is a rich culture of reading across the school. Pupils enjoy reading and benefit from the well-resourced environment. Pupils can talk about a wide range of books and enjoy responding to their reading during their focused reading lessons. Leaders are implementing strategies that are having a positive impact this year on progress in reading.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- For the previous three academic years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years has consistently been below the national average. This shows that for many children, progress from their starting points requires improvement. They are not catching up with their peers nationally quickly enough. Consequently, not all children are well enough prepared for Year 1. The new early years leadership team is addressing this issue.
- Leaders in the early years do not have a sufficiently accurate view of children's starting points into the Reception Year. Changes in staff and new leadership have meant that leaders do not yet have a strong enough grasp on the progress that individuals need to make to ensure that more children achieve a good level of development.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in the early years. There is a noticeable difference between the activities that boys and girls choose. This in itself is not unusual but does limit the opportunities boys have to develop their reading and, particularly, their writing skills. Boys do not regularly choose to begin writing and they do not develop their skills quickly enough.
- Adults observe children to see what they know, can do and understand. Staff record these observations in children's learning journals. Based on these observations, teachers plan further activities using children's interests as an integral part of learning. For example, as a result of seeing a spider on the ceiling, the children drew spiders, counted legs and then found out about how and why spiders spin webs. However, at times some children miss these additional opportunities.
- The use of additional funding for disadvantaged children is targeted to meet their individual needs, but this is not making enough of a difference. The proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development is below the national average. This means that they are not as well prepared for the demands of Year 1.
- Parents are encouraged to take part in their child's learning. They now contribute more towards sharing information about what the children achieve at home and bring this into school so that it links up with the children's school achievements. This ensures that

the school captures all aspects of children's learning and ensures that there is a positive working partnership between home and school. Parents spoken to, and those who contributed to the school's own survey, confirmed this to be the case.

- Where adults ensure that the provision is more effective, there is a productive, creatively resourced, and calm environment in which children can learn. Adults provide a wide range of interesting activities, both inside and outside, that are on offer to children throughout the day. For example, children demonstrated great skill and care when seeing how many golf tees they could hammer into a pumpkin in a timed period. They were very proud of their results.
- Adults ask a range of questions to extend children's thinking and encourage them to articulate their thoughts, wishes and opinions. As a result, the children speak confidently to the adults and each other. Behaviour in both Nursery and the Reception classes is good.
- Children in the early years are well cared for and are happy at school. They are confident in the classroom and in the outside area. Children engage well with activities and work happily with their teachers and other adults. They focus on their tasks and on their play. This is due to the high level of care and support that children receive from staff. There are no breaches of safeguarding.

School details

Unique reference number	141591
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10036245

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mary McKeeman
Principal	Nadia Bosse
Telephone number	01473 251604
Website	www.clifflaneprimary.org.uk
Email address	admin@clifflaneprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Cliff Lane Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 December 2014. When its predecessor school, Cliff Lane Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority background is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Children attend the Nursery class on a part-time or full-time basis. They attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class. This included visits made jointly with the school leaders to observe the work of classes from the Nursery to Year 6.
- Inspectors looked through a wide range of pupils' work across the curriculum and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day and took into account the views of 46 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, together with the 27 responses made on the free-text service.
- They observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes, when pupils were moving in and around the school and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, the 'Drive' team, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting and also a telephone conversation with representatives from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils' attendance and behaviour records, including records of bullying incidents.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice as well as speaking with staff and children.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to the staff survey and 63 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Susannah Connell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ashley Best-White	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Hall	Ofsted Inspector

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