

Elveden Church of England Primary Academy

London Road, Elveden, Thetford IP24 3TN

Inspection dates 2–3 February 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The joint headteachers, well supported by the governors, use their different skills exceptionally well. They lead the academy passionately and with unwavering determination to ensure that every pupil enjoys their education and achieves success.
- The partnership between this academy and Forest Academy ensures that the skills of all staff are used exceptionally well to drive improvement.
- Outstanding leadership at all levels makes leaders' mission 'to be able to walk into any classroom at any time and see and hear all children enjoying their learning and progressing' a reality. This is a vibrant and lively learning community.
- Leaders regularly scrutinise every aspect of the academy's work in detail. As a result, actions taken to bring about improvement are sharply focused and highly effective.
- Teachers receive outstanding guidance and support to continually develop and improve the quality of their work. As a result, pupils' learning is exceptionally well planned and supported.
- Teachers have high expectations. They manage the learning needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes so well that all pupils enjoy their learning, show curiosity and work hard to meet challenging targets.
- In all year groups, pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to attain high standards in their work. All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary: they show great enthusiasm for their learning and try very hard to succeed. They develop a strong understanding of which attitudes to their learning help them most in different situations. Leaders give safeguarding a very high priority. Pupils are well taught about the risks they face and say they feel safe at school.
- The quality of discussion in classes is very high. Pupils contribute thoughtful ideas about their learning, particularly when they are discussing aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Occasionally, the quality of dialogue is so exceptional that it is difficult for every pupil to access and understand the flow of the discussion.
- Children in the Reception class make very good progress because their learning opportunities are well planned, exciting and engaging. They particularly develop self-esteem and confidence in

their own abilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In lessons where pupils discuss aspects of their work at an advanced level, ensure that every pupil can understand and contribute to the discussion.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteachers use their complementary skills exceptionally well to challenge, support and inspire staff and pupils to do their best. Because of their highly effective leadership, the academy is an interesting, happy, busy place where pupils very much enjoy learning and achieve extremely well.
- The high standards of expectations set are exemplified in the learning environment. Classroom displays and resources provide good support for pupils to be able to develop their learning independently. They also demonstrate the quality expected of pupils' work. In other areas of the academy, important aspects of its work, such as safeguarding and inclusion, are given a high profile. No one, visiting or working in the academy, can be in doubt about the very high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal lives.
- Leaders of English, mathematics and of special educational needs provision know precisely the quality of teaching and achievement in their areas of responsibility. They have tirelessly developed a particularly well-resourced curriculum which meets the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes exceptionally well. It is intricately detailed in making expectations for each year group clear. Their expectations of teachers are exacting, and the quality of training and support high. As a result, they have an important impact on the high standards that pupils achieve.
- Other leaders are passionate, dynamic and knowledgeable. Because responsibilities are shared so well across the two academies, there is enhanced capacity in this small school. Leaders at every level evaluate the quality of provision and achievement in their areas of responsibility in detail. As a result, they quickly develop strong leadership skills and ensure that standards of attainment and teaching across subjects are high.
- Leaders meticulously plan training for all staff. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to build and share the skills they need in the classroom. Other staff receive the training they need to fulfil their responsibilities extremely well. Staff say that they feel well supported to meet expectations. Leaders expect and help all staff to compile a comprehensive analysis of their work against which their performance can be measured and appropriately rewarded.
- Checks on pupils' progress, against the high expectations set, are made regularly and rigorously. Dips in pupils' performance are picked up very quickly and immediate action is taken to help pupils catch up. This includes extra challenge and opportunity for the most-able pupils, as well as for those facing barriers to their learning.
- Leaders effectively use the pupil premium funding to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. Extra tuition, classroom support and additional wider agency provision, such as counselling, are used appropriately. While the overall impact on each pupil's achievement is understood in detail, leaders have only just started to analyse the success of each individual strategy in order to give them, and the governors, a sharper understanding of the best value for money.
- Monitoring of the academy's work leaves no stone unturned. Leaders and staff know what is happening when and to what purpose. Successes are celebrated and any aspects that need to improve are quickly targeted. Actions to continue improvement are well chosen and meticulously planned.
- Leaders and governors are extremely rigorous in securing equal opportunities for all pupils. Aspects of the school's work are planned to embed understanding of discrimination. For example, a book event enabled pupils to read and share texts exploring gender bias. Questionnaires to parents boldly include topics, such as their perception of how well the school tackles race, gender and disability issues.
- The extensive and exciting curriculum is planned in detail. The headteachers are passionate about enriching pupils' knowledge and understanding and inspiring their interest. Across all year groups, pupils are encouraged to research, hypothesise and think carefully about different aspects of their learning. Pupils are increasingly expected to use the literacy and numeracy skills they develop to a high standard in all subjects.
- The very careful thought given to curriculum planning is reflected well in the high quality of pupils' work. A 'Toy Story' topic in Years 5 and 6 was used to explore patterns of American Indian settlement and the impact of pioneers. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is taught exceptionally well. Pupils build a comprehensive understanding of other religions and cultures. They have opportunities to explore major world events that impact on people's lives. For example, the Chilean volcano eruption, the Nepalese earthquake, the terrorist attacks in Paris and Tim Peake's space-walk.
- The leader of physical education has ensured that the primary sports funding is used well. Coaching expertise is used to develop pupils' skills as well as to model high-quality work to teachers. Every member

of staff is engaged in championing a sport and leading it at a competitive level. As a result, almost all pupils participate in, and benefit from, accessing a wide range of sports, ranging from tag rugby to table tennis.

- Leaders are discerning in their selection of partnerships which enhance and validate their work. For example, they have developed the academy's vision, drawing on external support they identified as successful. Partnerships with the local high school are developing to help pupils sustain their progress when they move to secondary school. Local authority advisers visit to keep in touch with developments.
- Partnerships with parents are strong, and parents are well informed about their children's progress. They learn about the academy's work through an extensive range of open mornings, where they can see and engage with their children's learning in different subjects. During the inspection, open mathematics mornings were being held. A very lively atmosphere permeated the Years 1 and 2 class and extended into the hall as parents and children worked excitedly together to solve number problems.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have taken challenging decisions regarding the leadership of the academy by appointing the joint headteachers. The strength of this arrangement shows that their carefully considered decisions have impacted very positively on the quality of the academy's work.
 - Governors know the academy well. They know what the strengths and priorities for the academy's improvement are because leaders provide them with clear and detailed evaluation of the academy's work. Governors visit the academy regularly and draw on external adviser advice to determine how well the priorities are being met and to validate what leaders are telling them.
 - Although both the academies in the partnership have separate governing bodies, the Chair of the Governing Bodies fulfils the same role for both academies. This means that governors have strong oversight of leadership across both academies and its impact on the outcomes achieved.
 - Governors know teachers are expected to provide detailed analysis of their work so that they are only rewarded if their practice is good or better. They are well informed about how teaching improves and about what is needed to keep it at the expected high quality.
 - Governors ensure that their statutory responsibilities are fulfilled, they challenge and question leaders to ensure that their understanding of the school's work is accurate. Regular visits ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and finances are carefully monitored. They know how well additional funding supports the development of sports provision and regularly attend sporting events to validate this and engage with staff and parents.
 - Governors know how well pupils achieve and are well informed about the performance of different groups of pupils. Although they know that the pupil premium is used to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve well, they are not certain which of the strategies in place to support identified pupils provide the best value for money.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders give a high and very visible priority to ensuring that all staff, pupils and their families understand the school's responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. This is evident in displays in the academy and in policy development, which includes a children's version of the child protection policy. The administration manager ensures that all aspects of identity checks and safer recruitment practice are adhered to and that child protection and first-aid training records are up to date. Leaders have ensured that the Prevent training is in place for all staff and governors so that the risks of radicalisation and extremism are well understood. Expectations of volunteers who work with the academy with regard to their involvement and pupils' safeguarding are made very clear in a widely shared document.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is outstanding**

- In every classroom, pupils show high levels of interest and engagement in their learning. Without exception, they describe how much they enjoy their learning. Teachers use the curriculum guidance they are given extremely well to plan meaningful, vibrant and challenging learning opportunities for pupils. As a result, pupils build quickly on what they already know and confidently explore and use new knowledge and skills in their work.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what every pupil can achieve. They use extremely accurate assessments of how well pupils are doing to give them incisive feedback about their progress, both in lessons and through their marking. This helps move pupils learning on quickly and identifies any misconceptions, which are carefully addressed either during the lessons or subsequently.

- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught very effectively. This is because subject leaders painstakingly ensure that teachers know what is to be taught and how. For example, the calculation policy shows in detail how different mathematical operations can be taught and what resources are available in school to support pupils' learning. Similarly, guidance for teaching reading shows what texts will best link to different topics and how these can be used to develop and enhance pupils' skills.
- Teachers use their extensive subject knowledge very effectively to share and demonstrate high expectations of pupils' work. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they have to do and, therefore, have time to extend and develop the content of their work. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they continually use and develop their skills across subjects.
- Teachers question pupils carefully to elicit their understanding and develop their thinking. They challenge pupils to extend their ideas and to use new subject-related vocabulary in discussion and in their written work. Occasionally, the quality of this dialogue is so high that a small number of pupils struggle to follow its meaning.
- Teaching assistants work in strong partnership with leaders and teachers. As a result, they have the skills they need to support the pupils they work with particularly well. Whether pupils have a specific need or are more able and require a 'boost' for their work, they are very effectively cared for and supported.
- Because teachers give the content of their lessons such careful consideration, pupils' curiosity is developed and sustained as they move through the school. In many subjects, work is often extended through practical tasks, which give meaning to new learning. Pupils said that the weekly opportunities they are given to test out the new mathematics and writing skills they have learned help them 'combine all that we have learned in a week, methods in mathematics and new vocabulary in writing'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. From the moment they start in the early years, children and pupils are supported ably to discover and develop their own skills, confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders have an open, shared approach to ensuring pupils' well-being and safety is managed carefully. The academy's 'KIND' team is focused on keeping children safe, ensuring inclusion for all, by all, and on nurturing pupils and their families. This brings together school staff and wider agencies on a regular basis to ensure the highest level of vigilance and care for all pupils.
- Pupils are taught well to understand the different risks they may face. They know how to keep safe when they use the internet and understand what cyber-bullying is. Pupils also understand the different forms that bullying can take. They learn that people might try to make them do things they do not want to do and how to manage such situations.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the academy; they say that sometimes people are unkind to each other but that these moments do not last and are quickly dealt with by all staff in the same way. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that pupils receive the help and support they need. For example, some pupils start their day at the academy slightly early to help them manage a time of day they find challenging, or to start their early morning work.
- As pupils move through the academy, they develop an increasingly informed understanding of rights and responsibilities. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils keenly shared and debated their ideas about the British values of tolerance, respect and the rule of law. Work in pupils' books shows that they consider social and moral issues in depth using their literacy skills very effectively to explore and understand differing opinions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for, and commitment to, their learning. They listen carefully in class and concentrate well. In a Year 1 and 2 reading lesson, two groups of pupils worked independently of an adult over a good period of time. They used their phonics skills effectively, working well together to build words and write sentences.
- Pupils are taught and rewarded for demonstrating the different attributes that will help them become successful learners. As a result, they understand that persevering can help success, and learn to be reflective and resourceful when they face challenges. They also develop a strong understanding of the extent to which working together can help to develop their thinking and understanding.
- Pupils demonstrate pride in their academy and in their achievements. They know the academy's five

golden rules and what they mean extremely well. All staff consistently implement the behaviour policy. On the only occasion that sanctions were used during the inspection, pupils responded to their teacher and altered their behaviour immediately.

- Pupils' behaviour around the academy, at lunch and at playtimes, is calm and courteous. High levels of respect are evident between staff and pupils. Pupils are given a range of responsibilities which they take seriously. At playtime, an older playleader spent a significant amount of time engaging a younger pupil with special educational needs in different games to keep them positively occupied.
- Lunchtime play is managed well. All staff training is up to date. Staff involve pupils in exciting games, such as hiding and finding treasure and getting it back to base before they are caught. As a result, pupils have fun with each other and learn how to occupy their time positively.
- Attendance overall is above average. It is carefully monitored and there is good evidence to show that where levels of absence are higher, the reasons are well founded. For example, because pupils have medical needs. Pupils say that the academy is 'fun and encouraging; even if we have a bit of a cold we want to come to school'. They say they like learning about each other and working together.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- In 2015, in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 made good and better progress to reach the highest standards that have been attained since the academy opened. These were significantly above the national average.
- By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for secondary school. They become resilient, reflective learners who have well-developed literacy and numeracy skills. They use these well to develop their understanding in a wide range of subjects.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening test was above the national average. By the end of Year 2, all pupils had reached the expected standard. Pupils use these skills confidently to read and spell familiar and unfamiliar words.
- Work in pupils' books, their understanding and contributions in lessons, and assessment information shows that the high standards attained in 2015 are set to continue. Pupils have a good knowledge of mathematical concepts and number facts. They are taught methods of calculation well and become resourceful, perseverant problem solvers.
- Pupils write with increasing confidence and develop a strong understanding of how to use grammar and punctuation to good effect in their writing. Because spelling is taught sequentially, standards are high. In some instances, the quality of pupils' handwriting lets their work down. Robust actions are in place to address this.
- The development of pupils' reading skills is carefully planned. As a result, they engage with a range of texts which ignite their interest and encourage them to develop a love of literature. Teachers are expected to know the books they use to develop pupils' reading skills well. Consequently, the quality of questioning which enables pupils to understand inference and deduction and the intentions of authors is high.
- Disadvantaged pupils are very effectively supported by strong teaching and well-planned support. As a result, they make good and better progress to close the gap with their peers. In 2015, they achieved outcomes that were above those of pupils nationally and slightly below the high standards attained by their peers in school. Numbers in year groups are small so it is not possible to report year group outcomes without identifying individual pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive high-quality support. Leaders are inclusive and work effectively with families to make the best provision possible. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points. Led effectively by the special educational needs coordinator, staff have the skills necessary to support pupils in whole-class, small group and one-to-one teaching situations.
- The most-able pupils achieve well because expectations of them are high and as pupils said, 'all groups of pupils receive a boost when they need it'. Extra opportunities which extend pupils' knowledge and understanding are identified and implemented appropriately.
- Pupils also achieve well in wider subjects across the academy. Science books show a very good development of pupils' scientific knowledge and the application of this in a range of tasks, for example writing as an electron to demonstrate the passage of electricity through a circuit. Religious education and personal, health and social education books show high-quality learning and reflection. Standards achieved

in sporting competitions and musical events are increasingly high.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- 'I've got the power' echoes through the classroom. Children sing along joyously as they explore the learning opportunities on offer. Some dance with their teacher, creatively waving scarves in time to the music; others use play-dough to make models as they sing along; others paint mixing colours independently; others make books in which they use their early writing skills confidently to tell a story.
- Learning in the Reception class is made irresistible. Children confidently experiment with the new knowledge and skills they learn because the activities available to them are planned just at the right level for busy enquiring minds. Staff assess children's progress very carefully and frequently make adjustments to ensure that they are supported to take the next steps in their learning as soon as they are ready.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Children are very well supported to start at the academy and parents have the opportunity to contribute their understanding of their children's learning and development to the academy's comprehensive and now computerised assessment records.
- The partnership with Forest Academy brings experienced leadership to the early years. Exchange of roles on a Thursday afternoon enables the early years leader to work on exploratory activities outside with the children at Elveden, while their usual teacher teaches the larger class at Forest. As a result, staff understand children's needs very well and draw on their collaborative understanding to continually shape and improve provision.
- Children who have special educational needs are very well supported to work alongside and with their friends. The skilled expertise of staff enables children to make good progress from their starting points and to enjoy a wide range of activities.
- Disadvantaged children are similarly very well supported. Adults focus their time extremely well to ensure that when children experience barriers to their learning or are at risk of falling behind, they receive the help they need to make good progress.
- Staff are appropriately trained to safeguard children; arrangements are an extension of the academy's very strong strategies to identify and support children who are vulnerable or at risk. Paediatric first-aid training is in place and updated regularly.
- Key skills such as phonics and early number concepts are taught exceptionally well. Children demonstrate their developing skills competently in a wide range of work. Behaviour is so carefully and constructively managed that children persevere and develop very positive attitudes to their learning and to each other. Children develop self-confidence and self-esteem because all their efforts are valued. As a result of the excellent, highly energetic teaching and support they receive, children make very good progress.
- From a well-evidenced variety of starting points, the vast majority of children achieve a good level of development and are very well prepared to continue their learning and good progress in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139149
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10001476

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Brooks
Headteachers	Lorna Rourke and April Grimes
Telephone number	01842 890258
Website	www.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	admin@elvedenacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 March 2011

Information about this school

- Elveden Church of England Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary academy.
- A partnership agreement is in place with Forest Academy in nearby Brandon. Through this the headteachers share the leadership of both academies equally although each is currently employed by only one academy. Other leaders have responsibility across both academies, and teachers plan together. Pupils have some opportunities to participate together in trips and in a wide range of events.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The academy holds a number of awards, including the Suffolk Bronze Linguamarque, the Gold Religious Education Quality Mark and Artsmark accreditation.
- In October 2015, the academy was judged to be outstanding in its statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching at least twice in all classes. Most of these observations were carried out jointly with one of the headteachers. During these, she spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their books.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the academy's planning and monitoring information, including development planning, leaders' own evaluation of the academy's work, information from the monitoring of teaching and learning, assessment information, attendance analysis, behaviour plans and logs, records of safeguarding checks and audits and case studies of the support provided for pupils.
- The inspector looked at pupils' workbooks across year groups and subjects. She listened to pupils read and observed standards of behaviour around the academy and at lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Bodies, and senior leaders who work across both academies, and a group of pupils. The inspector visited the spiritual garden with two pupils and held a telephone conversation with the external adviser who works with the academy.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, also of the reviews undertaken by the academy leaders and governors. She spoke to parents about their views during an open mathematics morning.

Inspection team

Prue Rayner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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