

Great Yarmouth Primary Academy

Dickens Avenue, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 3DT

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The management of pupils' behaviour is weak. The systems in place to improve the very poor behaviour of a small proportion of pupils are unsuccessful. This impacts disproportionately on the work of the school.
- Too many pupils have poor attitudes to learning. Low-level disruption to learning is commonplace.
- The frequency of fixed-term exclusions is high and not reducing. Levels of persistent absence and unauthorised absence are increasing.
- Leaders have not demonstrated their capacity to improve the school. A raft of specialist support is in place, but is not having the necessary impact, particularly on securing acceptable behaviour, a positive climate for learning and effective teaching.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is unrealistically generous. The self-evaluation summary glosses over weaknesses.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that teaching is effective. Their assertions that teaching, learning and assessment are improving rapidly are not borne out by inspection evidence.
- Too often, teachers are ill-equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively. Their subject knowledge is not secure.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is unacceptably low. Around half of pupils leave the school ill-prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils do not have a secure knowledge of phonics to help them read successfully. This impairs their ability to access the curriculum.
- Pupils' presentation of work, handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills are weak and not improving adequately in most year groups.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not effective, particularly when pupils also struggle to manage their behaviour.
- Teaching in early years does not meet children's needs and interests well. Outdoor provision does not promote learning well.

The school has the following strengths

- Those responsible for governance are determined to make a difference.
- Pupils respect differences between people.
- The curriculum is coherent, well planned and based on worthy intent to develop all pupils' vocabulary and knowledge systematically.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, management and governance, by:
 - urgently reviewing and improving the systems and procedures to effectively manage pupils' poor behaviour
 - taking a realistic and systematic approach to self-evaluation that identifies weaknesses as well as strengths
 - ensuring that support from the leaders in the school is effective and that it prioritises improvements based on urgent need
 - providing effective support and training for teaching staff to ensure that they can all deliver the curriculum effectively
 - evaluating the impact of support for pupils with SEND and taking necessary action.
- Improve teaching, learning, assessment and achievement, by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of phonics is effective so that pupils have the reading skills they need to access the curriculum
 - the standard of writing improves across the school
 - teaching and behaviour management strategies support progress, and do not hinder it through time being wasted in lessons.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils, by:
 - making sure that the school's systems and procedures for managing the most challenging behaviour are effective, including the use of the reflection room
 - providing effective training and support for staff who regularly manage challenging behaviour.
- Improve the effectiveness of early years by:
 - ensuring that teachers use their assessments well to plan for the needs, interests and stages of development of children
 - providing more challenging and purposeful opportunities for children to practise and develop their early reading, writing and number skills when choosing their own activities
 - reviewing the allocation of resources, including staffing, to ensure that they are sufficient to help children develop well across all areas of learning, including when outdoors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school is in a period of leadership transition. The experienced vice-principal was appointed as interim principal in September 2018. A substantive principal has been appointed for January 2019. The trust recognised that this is a period of vulnerability for the school and has put support in place. However, this support has come too late to sufficiently stem a decline in standards since 2016, particularly at key stage 2.
- The systems and procedures that leaders have implemented to improve behaviour at the school have failed. Leaders and other staff spend much of their time attempting to manage the disruptive behaviour of a small proportion of pupils. Some staff report that leaders do not give them the support they need to manage serious incidents of poor behaviour.
- Leaders demonstrate ambition to make improvements. They previously recognised that the curriculum did not serve pupils well and have been implementing a new and well-planned curriculum, beginning with one cohort in the school and now spreading across key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, any improvements to teaching, learning and assessment to implement the curriculum have been insufficient to improve the standard of education in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Attainment at key stage 2 has been low for the past two years and shows little sign of improvement.
- Staff are not well trained to deliver the curriculum. They frequently lack the expertise to ensure that pupils make adequate progress. Leaders' efforts to make improvements have had limited impact.
- The interim principal's evaluation of the school's effectiveness is inaccurate and over-generous. It is not helpful, to those responsible for governance, in holding leaders to account. The school's plans for improvement do not focus on the most urgent issues or they lack depth, for instance in relation to improving pupils' writing.
- The most recent poor outcomes in the phonics screening check came as a surprise to leaders. Leaders now track pupils' attainment in tests regularly, but the information they collect and review does not sufficiently cover important weaknesses in pupils' achievement, notably their insufficient progress in developing elements of writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- When leaders notice that the progress of pupils is not as positive as they had hoped for, their planned actions in response focus too much on preparing pupils for tests, rather than thinking constructively about how to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Additional funding for pupils with SEND is not used effectively for pupils who also have the most difficulty managing their behaviour, which undermines their equality of opportunity.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide targeted support for pupils to improve aspects of learning, including speech and language development, outcomes in reading and attitudes to learning. Attainment in key stage 2 for disadvantaged pupils was above that of other pupils in the school in 2018, but the pupils are not catching up with

their peers nationally. The pupils' attainment remains too low overall.

- The physical education and sport premium funding is used effectively to widen pupils' participation in sporting activities and to provide training for teachers and teaching assistants. Over 90% of pupils say that they enjoy sport.
- Pupils have a developing awareness of British values. They learn about democracy and responsibility through the work of the school council. They show respect and tolerance for people who are different from themselves. They have a growing understanding of different faiths. Pupils take pride in the awards they receive, including for pupil of the week.
- The school provides a wide-ranging programme of after-school activities in the extended day programme. While many pupils enjoy some of these opportunities, others say that they do not look forward to the activities when they are chosen for pupils and not by them.
- It is recommended that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the local governing body is very involved and liaises with school and trust leaders regularly. The role of the governing body has been strengthened recently, including through the appointment of a new chair.
- Trustees recognise that, in the past, the school's curriculum was not appropriate. They have directed resources to the school to research and implement a new curriculum. This work continues.
- Trustees recognise that outcomes for pupils are too low. They have ensured that support is provided to the school and more is planned. However, this support is not having the desired impact across the school.
- Minutes of meetings show that trustees have asked questions about improvements in pupils' behaviour, but leaders' responses focus on attendance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable. She ensures that staff are appropriately trained to identify and report any concerns about pupils.
- Staff referrals to the safeguarding lead are considered, and appropriate action is taken in a timely way.
- Safeguarding information is regularly updated to ensure that it is foremost in the minds of staff. Regular bulletins provide useful information about risks in the local community, including 'county lines' drug dealing and domestic violence.
- Leaders ensure that the necessary pre-employment safeguarding checks are made on new staff joining the school and safer recruitment practices are followed.
- The school has a system in place to identify those pupils who are allowed to be in corridors during lessons. Pupils understand that staff need to be sure that pupils are

where they should be.

- The school has secure systems to check on pupils when parents and carers do not report absence, which includes visiting pupils at home.
- The school's policy for the use of mobile telephones is not well understood and not always followed. During the inspection, staff and visitors frequently used their mobile telephones, including in front of pupils, despite the signs displayed prohibiting their use.
- During the inspection, errors in information about staff recruitment and the status of safeguarding leads were corrected. These did not undermine the culture of safeguarding, which is embedded.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Too many teachers do not demonstrate the necessary skills and strategies to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers lack a secure understanding of the subjects they teach, which leads to pupils' misconceptions and lack of progress.
- Common low-level disruption is not managed effectively. Time is regularly wasted when pupils wait for others to listen. Teachers do not make good use of teaching time, for instance when pupils queue to have their work marked, and this leads to further off-task behaviour.
- Teachers do not routinely guide pupils to improve their writing. Their expectations of pupils' writing are too low and often limited to the amount of writing they should produce, with little thought for its quality. Pupils are not helped to improve their presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation.
- The newly introduced mathematics curriculum is not well understood by teachers. This is evident when teachers read from a given script and pass over tasks they do not understand. They do not take time to explain links between the calculations pupils complete, which hinders pupils' understanding. Some teachers are yet to be convinced of the value of this curriculum. Teachers worry that the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- The teaching of phonics is not effective. It does not ensure that pupils have fluency in their phonic knowledge to help them tackle unfamiliar words.
- Teachers either do not routinely explain new vocabulary, or they explain it poorly, leading to misunderstandings, particularly for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers do not adequately check the understanding of pupils who are not taking part in the choral responses to questions or when teachers give quick quizzes to pupils.
- Strategies to improve the disruptive behaviour of a small proportion of pupils with SEND are unsuccessful, which means that learning is regularly missed.
- The impact of support in key stage 1 and key stage 2 on pupils' progress from their starting points is not measured. Staff do not know how well pupils are progressing. Support for other pupils in their emotional and social development is proving successful for some.

- Teaching, learning and assessment are improving in some areas of the curriculum in parts of upper key stage 2, as a result of the project to develop the curriculum. This improvement in teaching is not sufficiently widespread across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The extreme behaviour that pupils witness regularly does not support their emotional welfare. They say that some pupils regularly leave their classrooms and describe their frustration over the poor behaviour in school.
- The reflection room, where pupils go when they behave poorly, often enhances distress for pupils rather than giving them opportunities to reflect calmly on their behaviour so that they can return to lessons.
- Not all pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. However, those who do, report that adults give help to resolve issues when bullying occurs.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. They understand the risks of using the internet and how to take necessary precautions. They have a good awareness of the potential danger from strangers.
- Small-group support for some of the vulnerable pupils, provided in a calm and supportive space, provides strategies to help pupils manage their emotions and to help them feel positive about themselves.
- Pupils know the school's expectations. They know that they should listen in lessons and try hard.
- Most pupils get along well together and show consideration for each other. They say that difference is accepted in the school.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. They show pride when wearing t-shirts for the award of pupil of the week. They are encouraged to give and receive compliments for their good work.
- The school's breakfast club is popular and provides good care for pupils. The pupils enjoy the activities on offer and this has been effective in improving the attendance of some pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Those pupils who find it difficult to maintain positive behaviour regularly show disruptive and anti-social behaviour, such as calling out, talking with each other rather than staying on task, and being rude to adults.
- A sizeable minority of pupils engage in highly disruptive behaviour, such as running around the classroom, destroying learning resources, hurting other pupils and adults,

or leaving classrooms altogether. Inspectors witnessed disruptive behaviour several times during the inspection; pupils and staff report that this is typical and happens on a very regular basis.

- When disruptive behaviour occurs, staff do not typically use effective strategies to de-escalate the situation, which makes it worse. Pupils report that some pupils regularly leave classrooms and run around the school with adults chasing them.
- The poor management of extreme behaviour has led to the high number of fixed-term exclusions. During the inspection, five pupils were excluded for all or part of the inspection. In the previous academic year, 141 days in school were missed due to fixed-term exclusions. Since September 2018, there have been 44 exclusions.
- Attitudes to learning are poor. Too many pupils demonstrate disengaged behaviour such as off-task talking, slouching, fiddling with learning resources, looking around the classroom, writing notes to each other or drawing pictures not relevant to their learning. Pupils say that classrooms are too noisy.
- The low-level disruptive behaviour is evident in the poor quality of presentation that pupils show in their work.
- Pupils' attendance was broadly average for the previous academic year. Unauthorised absence has increased when compared with the same period last year, and persistent absence has also increased for the same period.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school has been well below average for the previous two years and shows little sign of improvement. This represents poor progress from pupils' starting points.
- For too many pupils, their writing skills are weak. Their work is frequently poorly presented. Pupils are not helped to develop their handwriting skills. Very few older pupils can join their handwriting. They lack stamina in writing and find it difficult to complete their work. Some pupils report that writing is too difficult.
- Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are not developing adequately. Too often, pupils do not demonstrate these skills at an age-appropriate level. Younger pupils do not routinely use capital letters and full stops, and letter formation is not secure. Older pupils do not use commas and other punctuation that they should be developing. Spelling is not progressing securely.
- Pupils' early reading skills are weak. They do not have a secure knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. Their poor reading skills impede their ability to access their learning. Often, pupils cannot read the work they are given to complete. Pupils visit the school library regularly, but a culture of reading is not evident.
- Pupils lack the knowledge of number facts that they need to complete calculations. Their knowledge of multiplication tables and other number bonds is not secure. They find it difficult to make links between one form of calculation and another.
- The new curriculum for foundation subjects and science is providing pupils with the opportunity to study these subjects in ways that build their knowledge and vocabulary. This approach is paying some dividends in some classes in upper key stage 2.

However, in other classes, pupils have poor understanding of their learning, and the writing that they complete, as part of this work, shows the same weaknesses as in their English books.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Many children enter early years with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. For the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception was just below the national average.
- Teachers do not currently use assessment information sharply to meet the needs of children. As a result, teaching is not consistently matched to children's learning needs and interests, including for the most able, which weakens progress.
- The promotion of early reading, writing and number skills in Nursery and Reception is not well developed. There are too few planned opportunities for children to practise and apply these early skills.
- Timely identification of speech and language difficulties leads to expert intervention for children, which is proving effective.
- The physical learning environment in early years is welcoming. However, children typically make more progress when working directly with an adult than when undertaking activities on their own. This is because adults do not make the most of the learning environment to provide a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities, particularly outdoors.
- The outdoor provision does not meet children's needs well enough. It provides insufficient opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the world, their problem-solving skills and their creativity. Adults confirmed that they do not have the resources they need to develop the area or to ensure that children have good access to it.
- Children are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. Adults encourage children to manage their behaviour and apply self-control to make progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Relationships between adults and children are supportive and caring.
- Adults readily engage children in conversation. They model language well, introducing children to new words.
- Adults communicate and work well with each other. Safeguarding is effective, and all welfare requirements are met. Adults get to know children and their families prior to starting school through home visits and play sessions in school. This helps children settle well when they start school.
- Adults work effectively to continue positive and supportive relationships with parents once children have started school. There is a range of events when parents come into school to find out how to support their children's learning at home. This includes a variety of practical workshops.
- The experienced early years leader has an accurate view of what is working well in early years, and what needs to improve. However, plans for improvement are not

tightly focused on improving provision and children's outcomes.

School details

Unique reference number	138793
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10078217

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	404
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Tibble
Principal (interim)	Jon Bugg
Telephone number	01493 855304
Website	www.inspirationtrust.org/greatyarmouthprimary
Email address	office@gypa.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 September 2014

Information about this school

- Ultimate responsibility for the school rests with the trust as the proprietor, with the trustees responsible for the strategic direction of the school. Operational responsibility is delegated to the chief executive and leadership team, including the interim principal. Governance and oversight are provided by the local governing body, functioning as a committee to the trust board.
- The interim principal has been in post since September 2018. A substantive principal has been appointed to start in January 2019.
- The school became an academy in September 2012 and is part of The Inspiration Trust, serving pupils from Nursery through to Year 6. There is no provision for two-year-olds at the school.
- The trust provides substantial support to the school, including for the interim principal.
- The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is almost three times

the national average.

- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is 50% higher than the national average, with 17 different languages spoken.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is almost twice the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and offers an extended day to key stage 2 pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team gathered evidence from lessons in all year groups across the school, including some jointly observed with senior leaders. They looked at pupils' work in lessons and a sample of books provided by senior leaders. They talked to pupils in lessons, around the school and in three arranged meetings. They heard pupils reading.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils. An inspector also checked the school's single central record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors looked closely at a wide range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans; the school's use of the pupil premium; curriculum information; records about the attainment and progress of pupils; records of pupils' attendance; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching; and the work of those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors held several meetings with the interim principal and other leaders from the school, and trust employees.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body and had a telephone conversation with the chair of trustees. She also met with the chief executive officer.
- The inspectors considered four responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 25 responses from the staff questionnaire. There were no returns from Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- During the inspection, several members of staff were absent from the school.

Inspection team

Michelle Winter, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Al Mistrano	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Webb	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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