

Cliffe Woods Primary School

View Road, Cliffe Woods, Rochester, ME3 8UJ

Inspection dates

17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The outstanding headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and the pupils. He is well supported by his senior leaders and a highly committed staff team.
- Achievement is excellent. At the end of Year 6, all groups of pupils, including the most able, are reaching standards which are well above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make exceptional progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They provide early support to fill any gaps in pupils' learning. This helps them to increase their rate of progress. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide excellent support for the pupils with whom they work.
- Children make outstanding progress in early years because adults provide exciting activities which enable children to play and learn together extremely well.
- Leaders and managers, together with governors, are fully committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Their actions have had a direct, positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors, expertly led by the Chair, are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide a very good balance of help and challenge, and are ambitious for continued improvement.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and want to learn. They are respectful and kind to each other, to staff and to visitors alike.
- Pupils feel very safe. This view is supported by the vast majority of parents and all staff. Pupils thrive and develop into confident and polite young people who are fully prepared for their next steps in education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons and parts of lessons, four of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders, the inclusion leader and with representatives from the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with the local authority. Inspectors talked informally to pupils at lunch and break times, and observed them in assemblies and around the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' books and a wide range of documentation. This included the school's evaluation of its work together with its plans for improvement, checks on teachers' effectiveness, records of pupils' current standards, progress and attendance and safeguarding documents. Minutes from governing body meetings were also considered.
- The inspectors took account of 60 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 20 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning of each school day during the inspection.

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Alison Marshall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cliffe Woods Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Cliffe Woods Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 July 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Cliffe Woods Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a member of the Strood and Hoo consortium, a cluster of 21 primary schools.
- There are 12 classes, including two Reception classes. The Reception children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- There is a privately run pre-school on the school site. It is inspected separately.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education (LLE). Although he has supported schools, he is not currently supporting a school.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the outdoor learning environment for children in the early years is improved to provide the children with increased, rich and varied learning opportunities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. He has the support of a highly committed team of assistant principals and governors. Together they have the drive and determination to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest possible levels of success.
- Following a turbulent year when five teachers left because they had gained promotion, the school is now enjoying a period of stability. School leaders have ensured that there is a strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning. Monitoring of all lessons is focused on pupil progress. This robust leadership has created a culture in which teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- Leaders at all levels, including subject leaders, focus sharply on making sure that all pupils fulfil their potential. This includes ensuring that pupils have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination. All staff share this vision, as shown by the wholly positive responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Additional government funding is used in a highly effective way to support the needs of eligible pupils. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as, or better than, other pupils nationally and other pupils in the school in their reading, writing and mathematics. The school's success in making a positive difference over time has been commended by the Minister of State for Schools in a letter to the school sent in February 2015.
- The leadership of those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is highly effective. Their needs are quickly and accurately identified, and their progress is assessed regularly so that they do not fall behind.
- The rich curriculum extends the experience of pupils extremely well. It creates many opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their community and the wider world, preparing them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Pupils engage in a wide range of visits. These include visits to local museums, the cathedral and the theatre, as well as longer journeys to Belgium. All visits contribute to making learning an extremely enjoyable and memorable experience.
- During the inspection, a drama specialist used their expertise to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding in the story of *The Selfish Giant*. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy learning to play the violin and Djembe drums. Pupils can choose from a wide range of after-school clubs and sports activities. All these promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully.
- Communications with parents are very effective. Fostering good relationships is a shared responsibility for everybody in the school's community.
- Primary school physical education and sport funding is carefully allocated. Planned expenditure focuses on improving staff skills and confidence in teaching a variety of sports. The school is also using the funding so that more pupils participate in a much wider range of sports, including handball, golf and hockey. Pupils are full of praise for the opportunity to have supervised sport over lunchtime.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and fully in place. All paperwork and policies are accurate, up to date and meet statutory requirements.
- As the school is an academy, the local authority does not provide support for the school. However, there have been links through the headteacher's support for other primary schools in his role as a leader of education. The headteacher is a member of the Strood and Hoo consortium and school staff benefit from the ability to network with other leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body, led expertly by the Chair, is highly effective. The Chair provides expert leadership. Governors are highly committed to the school and know it well. They play an active role and visit the school regularly. As regular visitors to the school, and through the discussions they have with school leaders, governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the link between the teachers' performance and salary progression. They ensure that good teaching is recognised and rewarded. Governors tackle underperformance robustly.
 - Governors challenge the performance of the school in terms of achievement and attendance. They are very well trained and know exactly how well the school performs compared to other schools nationally.
 - The governing body uses the valuable range of expertise among its members to improve the school's performance. They understand parents' views through their attendance at the regular 'have your say' parents' meetings.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school's policy to promote good behaviour is highly effective. Pupils are very proud of their school, as they readily told the inspectors. Comments received from visitors, supply teachers and from feedback gained following school visits support the view that pupils know how to behave very well. Pupils are friendly and polite and very welcoming to visitors.
- Almost all parents agree that their children are happy at the school and well looked after. Informal discussions with parents during the inspection confirmed this view. Staff unanimously agree. The school enjoys very positive relationships with parents.
- Good behaviour in the school has resulted in a calm, purposeful environment where pupils learn exceptionally well. Pupils move very sensibly around the school and in their lessons. They say that the headteacher and all the teachers are calm and 'really do listen to you'.
- Attendance is above average. The importance of regular attendance and arriving at school punctually has a high profile within the school. The school's newsletters highlight the importance of coming to school on time every day so that pupils learn well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils agree that they feel very safe at school. One pupil stated, 'I feel school is like my second house – it's that safe.' The vast majority of parents confirm that their child feels safe when they are at school.
- Pupils are taught how to take responsibility for keeping themselves extremely safe, including when they use the internet. All the older pupils in the school receive high quality e-safety training. All staff have online awareness training. This supports the high level of pupils' safety.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the school system for managing behaviour. They understand the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They agree that any incidents are rare and dealt with quickly when they do occur. Pupils know that all staff at the school look after them carefully and well and that they trust them all.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The impact of high quality teaching on learning and achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics is clear. Across the school, all pupils sustain excellent progress over time. Consequently, they achieve exceptionally well. Teachers track each pupil's progress carefully. They are quick to spot if any pupil is at risk of falling behind and adapt their lessons appropriately. Pupils are taught extremely well in an atmosphere where all are valued.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations of all pupils. Pupils respect the achievement of others. In a Year 2 letter writing lesson, they commented positively on the work of others. They particularly liked the phrases 'I can assure you' and 'I am writing because I loved your spectacular garden'. They were also able to point out improvements such as the incorrect spelling of 'castle'.
- The marking of pupils' work is very effective. Pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work. They are given encouragement to build on what they have done well. This leads to quick and sustained improvements in pupils' skills and the quality of their work.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning and progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who find learning more difficult. All support given, both in and out of the classroom, is carefully planned. This, together with regular checks on pupils' progress, ensures that this support is highly effective. Consequently these pupils make outstanding progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptionally strong. Teachers continually encourage pupils to take a mature and sensible approach to learning and pupils respond very well. As a result, pupils have very high expectations of what they can achieve. This has helped to ensure their very good progress and enabled them to be responsible members of their community.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics in every year group. They say they like the real-life learning and the extra help they are given when they do not understand their learning. Older pupils say that 'feedback is guaranteed so we know how we can improve'.
- The teaching of reading has given pupils a great enjoyment of books. They are eager to share their favourite books and authors. They are keen to wear their 'Reader Achiever' badges, which they do with pride.

The achievement of pupils **is outstanding**

- The school's success in being in the top ten per cent of schools nationally for its 2013 and 2014 results has been recognised in letters of congratulation by the Regional Schools Commissioner. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently high by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their needs are accurately identified from an early age and highly effective strategies put into place which help them learn very well indeed. Their progress is outstanding year on year.
- Disadvantaged pupils attain as well as, if not better than, all other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. They also attain as well as other pupils in the school. The school is hugely successful in closing the gaps.
- Achievements of the most-able pupils are in line with other pupils nationally at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Many older pupils attain Level 6 in mathematics and writing and are in line with national averages in reading in 2014. School information, pupils' work in books and inspectors' observations confirm that most-able pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are achieving higher standards this year in mathematics and writing. Some of them are already working four years ahead of what is expected for their age in these subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. This is because information on learning and work in lessons is used very effectively to check on how well these pupils are learning. It is also used to plan their future learning needs. Additional support and guidance are planned outstandingly well by the school's inclusion manager.
- Current school information on learning and work seen in pupils' books provide secure evidence that standards across the school continue to rise. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are all on track to meet the challenging targets they have been set for 2015.

The early years provision **is outstanding**

- Children enter Reception with skills and experiences that are typical for their age. Routines and expectations are quickly established. This helps children to settle well and make a good start to their learning. By the end of the year, children are well prepared to start Year 1 as most reach levels which are above those typical for their age.
- Strong leadership ensures that the numbers of children who achieve or exceed expectations is much higher than seen nationally. In 2014, all the children made at least expected progress or better in reading and writing.
- Current checks on children's progress are rigorous and accurate. These are carried out by advisers from outside the school as well as senior staff in the school. A focus on reducing the differences between the learning of boys and girls is showing that there is no gap. Activities are carefully tailored to children's learning needs. Boys as well as girls enjoy finding the words on their chart in a phonics (the sounds letters make) session. One boy immediately recognises 'from' as he says 'it was on all my birthday cards'.
- Leadership and management are of a high standard. Special attention to the early development of reading, writing and mathematics skills ensures that children are ready to face the challenge of Year 1.
- Children play together happily and well. They enjoy the opportunities to play, learn and explore in the woods adjacent to the school field as part of their lessons.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff work well together as an effective team. They know the children very well indeed. Planning ensures that the unique nature of early years education is recognised as supremely important. Displays celebrate children's individual drawings. One shows how they have carefully drawn parts of the body with white chalk on a black background. These 'X ray' pictures demonstrate their developing understanding of the human skeleton.
- Parents are highly supportive of the provision for children in their early years. Staff maintain continual contact with parents through home-school books, drop-in sessions and workshops over the year. Children celebrate achievements at home through 'wow' comments that are displayed in their classrooms.
- The school is very conscious of all aspects of children's safety. For example, while a roof is being repaired, they enter school via the front entrance rather than the side. Children's behaviour is outstanding whether they are in the classroom, walking to the hall or in the whole-school assembly.
- Currently, although children do have some access to activities outside as well as inside, the outdoor space is limited. Plans for building a new outdoor area have been costed and are a priority in the current school

development plan.

What inspection judgements mean

School

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136859
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	449703

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

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	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dianne Foreman
Headteacher	Tim Watson
Date of previous school inspection	not previously inspected
Telephone number	01634 220822
Email address	admin@cliffewoods.medway.sch.uk

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