

# Inspection of Cliffe Woods Primary School

View Road, Cliffe Woods, Rochester, Kent ME3 8UJ

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Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Karen Connolly. The school is part of the Aletheia Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Carey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Till. There is also an executive headteacher, Tim Muggridge, who is responsible for this school and two others.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2015. The school received an urgent inspection under section 8 of the Act on 13 September 2016. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The sense of community at Cliffe Woods Primary School is striking. Pupils thrive. They are kind and welcoming to visitors, as well as to one another. Pupils are keen to talk about what makes their school special, including events such as 'Mother's Day tea'. Pupils are justifiably proud of their work with school leaders, for example in jointly constructing the school's behaviour policy.

Pupils are curious and positive. They notice if someone needs help and are confident to step in. Pupils learn about an appropriate range of risks. They report feeling safe in school and trust staff to support them. In the event of unkind behaviours, pupils say they are 'upstanders not bystanders'.

Expectations of behaviour are high right from the time children start in Reception. The school environment is eminently happy, and adults and pupils interact positively. The school's values, including compassion and respect, are actively demonstrated in the day-to-day life of the school.

High expectations for learning and attitudes permeate the school. Pupils work hard and learn well. They are proud of their workbooks. Pupils learn to read with success and enjoyment. They are delighted to earn and spend tokens in the school's reading book vending machine.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school is determined that all pupils should learn to read confidently. Staff are trained well. They possess expertise and enthusiasm in teaching phonics and early reading. Pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access effective support to help them catch up and keep up.

In Reception, children develop their reading knowledge very well. For example, children learn to identify and talk about sounds that they hear. They can talk with accuracy about digraphs and trigraphs. Across the school, pupils learn successfully how to decode unfamiliar words.

A love of reading is developed thoughtfully. Pupils hear and read a wide range of texts including poetry, fiction and non-fiction. The school intends for pupils to see themselves reflected in texts they encounter, as well as to help further their cultural understanding. Pupils enjoy visits to the local library and taking part in events such as World Book Day. The reading ambassadors undertake their roles conscientiously, looking after the library and the lunchtime reading shed.

From the early years onwards, the school's broad curriculum is designed to engage and motivate pupils. Knowledge and skills for pupils to learn across the subjects are identified. The curriculum enables pupils to acquire, reinforce and revisit learning. Teachers use checks, including questioning, to identify misconceptions and gaps in understanding. This informs how they adapt learning activities. However, the information from these checks is

not used consistently effectively. The range of adaptations, in response to checks and pupils' differing needs, is not fully developed. Overall, pupils achieve well but sometimes pupils' learning does not build well on what has been learned previously. Consequently, some pupils progress less swiftly than they could.

Pupils attend school very well. They show highly positive attitudes to learning and school life. Expectations for behaviour are linked to the school's core values, community code and vision. Pupils appreciate the importance of kindness, mutual respect and inclusive behaviour. This was seen in interactions in the early years, where children helped each other navigate scooters around the 'roadway'. Older pupils provide daily support, helping ensure that younger pupils experience happy playtimes.

Provision to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils' experience responsibility through roles such as prefects and playground leaders. In pupil-led assemblies, pupils address moral and spiritual issues, and each year, pupils participate in a Holocaust memorial event. Trips and visits enhance the curriculum and provide wider, meaningful experiences. Extensive opportunities exist for all pupils to participate in clubs, to develop their talents and to experience competitive events.

Leaders at all levels discharge their roles effectively. The local governing body carries out its delegated role successfully. It challenges and supports the school in equal measure.

Staff feel valued and know that leaders consider their well-being and workload. Leaders convey unwavering ethical principles. Pupils, parents and carers and local communities remain at the heart of their thinking.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Assessment information is not always used effectively to adjust learning activities to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, some pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of. The school should support staff with the knowledge and skills needed to use assessment information more effectively to plan tasks that help pupils to learn and remember key content over time.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136859
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341680
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mark Till
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Stephen Carey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Connolly
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cliffewoods.medway.sch.uk">www.cliffewoods.medway.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Cliffe Woods Primary School joined the Altheia Academies Trust on 1 January 2022.
- A new head of school was appointed shortly after the previous inspection. The previous headteacher is the executive head of school and a director of education for the trust.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school offers before- and after-school childcare during term time.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the head of school, the deputy head of school and the executive headteacher, as well as with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the pastoral team, other leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the CEO, with trustees and with the chair and a member of the local governing board.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks across the school and across all subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online survey and held meetings with staff and pupils, as well as informal conversations throughout the inspection.

## Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Wakefield	Ofsted Inspector
Jody Murphy	Ofsted Inspector

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