

Elliston Primary Academy

Elliston Street, Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire DN35 7HT

Inspection dates

20–21 February 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The principal and vice principal have an exceptionally clear vision for the future. This strong vision is shared by all school staff and has brought about significant improvement since the school became an academy in 2015.
- Leaders know their school well. Their impressive depth of knowledge is clearly reflected in the accuracy of their evaluation of the school as well as in the clear pathway forward identified in the school improvement plan.
- The quality of teaching and learning within the school is very strong in nearly all areas. Staff have high expectations and an unwavering belief that pupils can and should make excellent progress.
- Teachers and support staff meet at the end of each school day to plan the next day's learning. They are highly reflective and discuss the progress of each individual pupil, ensuring that learning overall very closely matches individual pupil's needs.
- Children very often start Nursery with skills and knowledge well below those of similar age. Nearly all transfer to the Reception class where they make very good progress, particularly in personal and social development and mathematics.
- Last year, most Year 6 pupils reached standards expected nationally despite high levels of pupil mobility and low starting points. This represents outstanding progress over time.
- Pupils are recognised as individuals and feel their opinions are listened to and valued. Their excellent behaviour reflects their feeling of pride at being a member of the school community.
- Parents and carers spoken with were unanimous in their support for the school. They particularly value relationships with senior leaders.
- Governors are knowledgeable and use this knowledge to hold leaders to account. They work closely with the trust leaders, who offer high levels of support and challenge to the school leadership team.
- Last year, children in the early years made less progress in writing than in other areas. Currently, children are on track to make much greater gains this year.
- A small number of pupils do not make as much progress as they could in developing their phonics skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of phonics teaching in Year 1 so that the proportion of pupils reaching the national standards in the phonics screening test is at least in line with the national average.
- Make sure that children in the early years have sufficient opportunities to develop early writing skills, in order to accelerate further their progress in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and vice principal have a very strong vision for the future of the school. Their determination to ensure that pupils make as much progress as possible during their time in school underpins all that they do.
- Senior leaders' very close attention to detail is a clear hallmark of their success. The methodical and reflective approach taken by both the principal and vice principal has enabled them to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Leaders have recently successfully spread leadership responsibilities across the school. Teams of staff in different key stages and subject areas are given areas of responsibility. Staff spoken with said how much this innovative approach had increased their understanding and participation in the management of the school.
- Senior leaders have an encyclopaedic knowledge of each pupil who attends school. This comes from the continuous checks they carry out with class teachers on the progress of each child towards the ambitious targets set for them.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very strong in almost all areas of the school. Teachers and support staff work very closely together to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met and none are left behind. As a result, pupils make rapid progress.
- Staff spoken with described the many training opportunities offered by the trust to improve their skills and develop personally. Middle leaders confirmed this and explained how extra training had enabled them to further develop their roles and have ambitious plans for the future. This has strengthened the effectiveness of leadership across the school.
- Staff feel their contributions are valued by senior leaders. They described how a culture of respect for all had been introduced across the school by senior leaders. This, staff felt, had changed the approach taken in classrooms. Now, staff feel that pupils know their opinions matter, which has led to their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is well organised and leads to exciting learning. Approaches used within English and mathematics lessons enable pupils to develop the skills to reason and solve problems from a very young age. Developing these building blocks gives them the skills to tackle new challenges with enthusiasm and confidence. This has led to an acceleration in pupils' progress in English and mathematics
- Pupils are offered a very wide range of opportunities to develop new sporting skills and interests. For example, in this half term, the school is running clubs in drama, archery, gymnastics and football. Next half term, a further range of opportunities to learn a new skill and sport are offered to all pupils. Attendance at clubs is high across the school and demonstrates the school's effective use of sports premium monies to increase pupils' health and well-being.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. From very low starting points, pupils often make exceptional progress across the school. The current progress made by disadvantaged

pupils is exceeding that of peers in the school and others nationally. This clearly shows that differences between disadvantaged pupils' progress and the progress of other groups are diminishing at a fast pace.

- The vice principal is also the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Systems in place to track and monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are very well organised. Targets set for improvement are aspirational. As a result, the overall progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong.
- Through activities such as raising money at Christmas for a woman's refuge and having fun on Red Nose Day, coupled with learning the importance of democracy, pupils learn the importance of British values. The work pupils undertake in religious education on other faiths, together with the school motto 'together we dream, believe and achieve' enables pupils to develop a strong understanding of the needs of others. This contributes to their excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Governance of the school

- Since the school became an academy, governance has been undertaken by a local governing body and members of the trust.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the needs of the school and visit school often. Through different committees they are allocated different aspects of school development, for example supporting senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This has enabled governors to make a direct contribution to school improvement.
- Governors are knowledgeable and bring to the governing body a wide range of skills and knowledge which they use effectively to both support and challenge senior leaders.
- The governing body is very clear about how extra monies to support disadvantaged pupils are spent and the effectiveness on disadvantaged pupils' progress. Minutes from governing body meetings confirm that governors effectively challenge senior leaders on the impact of spending on pupils' progress.
- Trust leaders maintain an overview of governance and ensure that the school's budget is used appropriately. Senior leaders within the trust also set targets for improvement of senior leaders of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders ensure that safeguarding pupils is a key priority across the school.
- Staff spoken with were knowledgeable about recent developments in safeguarding both nationally and locally. Regular updates from leaders keep all staff in touch and ensure that the strong culture of safeguarding is continuously built upon.

- Leaders are not afraid to tackle safeguarding issues which may crop up on a day-to-day basis. In discussion, examples were given by senior leaders of direct support for parents and children in times of crisis. Examples included the purchase of emergency supplies of clothes for children outside school times. Actions such as these clearly show school leaders' continuing commitment to children and their families.
- Analysis of secure online school records demonstrates the very close work school leaders undertake with outside agencies which helps to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Staff at all levels believe that pupils can and should all become successful learners. This high aspiration for all pupils is shared with parents and with pupils when they start school.
- Staff encourage pupils from a very young age to look critically at their own and others' work. This enables pupils to develop an understanding of how to improve their work continually. For example, during the inspection pupils were observed working in groups on a piece of work using information technology (IT). Once they were satisfied with what they had achieved, they exchanged their work using wireless transfer to another group in the room. The two groups then looked at each other's work, commenting on how it could be even better, before sending it back for further improvement.
- Pupils quickly learn how to give thoughtful and constructive feedback to others without upset. This is a skill which staff believe improves pupils' behaviour outside the classroom.
- Teachers and support staff work very closely together and use a highly reflective approach to planning learning for individual pupils based securely on pupils' previous performance. For example, if staff feel that a pupil has not understood a new concept, learning is planned specifically to ensure that the pupil gains a better understanding the next day.
- Mathematics is taught through an approach which enables pupils to continually and systematically develop and apply a range of different skills and concepts. Work in pupils' books clearly shows the very strong progress pupils make in using and applying their skills and knowledge. Pupils develop resilience to try again if a calculation is not right first time. This shows clearly the strong level of challenge offered across the school.
- After a dip in reading results in 2016, school leaders made reading a priority across the school. Staff developed a wide range of different strategies to make reading exciting and fun. Links with authors and libraries have ensured that pupils develop an early love of books. Successful links with parents have been developed which have increased the numbers of pupils who now read regularly at home. As a result, reading standards have risen sharply across the school.
- Some pupils in the recent past have not reached national standards in the phonic screening check. This is because the quality of phonics teaching is sometimes inconsistent. School leaders are aware of this and are already planning action to bring about improvement.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils show exceptionally mature attitudes to learning in classrooms across the school. Their inquisitive approach to finding out as much as possible is evident, as is their delight at discovering new knowledge and facts.
- Pupils show polite and very respectful attitudes to staff, each other and visitors. For example, pupils walked calmly and quietly to and from assembly and listened intently as Year 6 pupils retold a story as part of their reading development.
- Parents spoken with during the inspection praised the work of the school and said they felt school not only kept their children safe but taught them how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils spoken with agreed with this view, saying that they now knew you needed to be 13 before having many of the different social media accounts.
- Several parents also commented on how much they appreciated the support given to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and particularly medical needs. Examples were given of how senior leaders had shown empathy and sensitivity beyond that expected for the well-being and welfare of their children, for example buying clothes and toiletries for pupils in emergencies and offering direct support and flexibility to the parents of sick children. This approach had enabled pupils to join in school life as fully as possible and to make progress despite exceptionally difficult circumstances.
- Pupils spoken with were aware of the different forms bullying can take. They were clear about what action to take should they encounter a problem. Pupils explained that most staff are very good at sorting out incidents. Parents responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed with this opinion.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- School leaders recognise the importance of excellent behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils with exceptional behaviour and attitudes to school are rewarded by becoming school 'Champions'. These pupils are highly regarded by staff and pupils and are clearly recognised by their light grey school jumpers. They make a very strong contribution to successfully promoting excellent behaviour across the school.
- Classrooms are typically calm, with pupils consistently engaged in purposeful learning.
- Behaviour outside the classroom is also very calm. Few incidents of inappropriate behaviour are logged in school records. Pupils spoken with confirmed they felt very safe in school. Occasionally play is boisterous, particularly in the playground with a small number of boys. At the time of the inspection some lively behaviour was observed. Pupils, when asked by a member of the inspection team about their behaviour, explained that their new topic was 'going wild' and they were practising being wild animals.

- Pupils understand from a very young age the importance of listening to the views of others. This enables them to demonstrate strong levels of empathy. For example, in the playground children are rarely alone without another child coming to invite them to play.
- Pupils spoken with said how much they enjoy coming to school. This is clearly reflected in their level of attendance, which last year was higher than the national average. Current attendance figures show a similar picture.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make exceptional progress often from very low starting points.
- Senior leaders have a very clear focus on the needs and progress of individual pupils. The system used to measure pupils' progress ensures that pupils remain on track towards the challenging targets set for them. In 2017, despite pupils' often very low starting points, they reached standards very close to others nationally at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- The vast majority of children starting at the school's nursery arrive with skills and knowledge well below what is typical for their age group. This could clearly be seen during the inspection where new-to-nursery children struggled to identify rhythms and initial sounds in a phonics session. Despite this, an increasing number of children leave the Reception classes having achieved the early learning goals. This year's cohort is on course to reach standards achieved nationally. This represents accelerated progress and is a result of the very strong teaching and support within the early years unit.
- In 2016, pupils at the end of key stage 2 made stronger progress in mathematics and writing than in reading. School leaders recognised this and a variety of different reading initiatives have been put in place. For example, teachers have all received extra training in the teaching of reading, and pupils' views are now taken into account in the evaluation of prospective books for class sessions. These initiatives have resulted in accelerated progress in reading for pupils across the school.
- Current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach standards close to and above those expected nationally from very low starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books supports this picture of strong progress over time.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next phase in their education and school records show that most settle well in high school.
- Current Year 1 pupils are on course to reach similar standards to those expected nationally in phonics. However, leaders are aware of some inconsistency in the quality of phonics teaching which led to a dip in standards last year. Plans are in place to address this issue.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Most children start in the Nursery class with skills and knowledge below those typical of children of their age, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics, as well as socially and emotionally.

- Children settle very quickly into the early years because staff understand their needs exceptionally well. Activities on offer engage children and give them a wealth of opportunities to learn and play successfully.
- Staff work closely as a team and ensure that all areas of the welfare requirements are met. For example, strict rules on hygiene are clearly in place and are followed by all staff. This reduces the likelihood of the spread of disease within the setting
- School leaders recognise the low starting points of many of the children and have also recognised the importance of making early contact with parents and carers. In response to this issue, staff now run a weekly pre-school playgroup. At the time of the inspection 12 families were attending with their children. Parents spoken with explained how pleased they were with the provision. Comments such as: 'I feel I know staff now' and 'We have learnt a lot about how to do things at home' demonstrated the impact of the provision.
- Children quickly become confident learners, and very strong relationships with staff were clear during the inspection. Children's delight in playing with the wide range of activities on offer, both inside and outside the setting, was clear.
- As a result of very strong teaching and knowledgeable staff, children make excellent progress from their starting points, particularly in early mathematics.
- Leaders have identified that progress in writing is slightly slower and are monitoring this closely. The highly effective use of IT by staff demonstrates this well. Using a tablet device, staff are able to record children's starting points and their current work. This enables staff to effectively measure the very strong progress children are making.
- As a result of the excellent quality of leadership and teaching, coupled with knowledgeable and skilful staff, children make a smooth transition to Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141773
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10042133

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jack Harrison
Principal	Caroline Patterson
Telephone number	01472 235 116
Website	www.ellistonprimary.net
Email address	head@ellistonprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Levels of deprivation within the school catchment area are high.
- The school has a higher than average level of mobility, with pupils often starting and leaving at times other than the start of the school year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited classrooms across the school and observed learning. At times, observations were carried out by the inspector alone. At other times, inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders.
- The inspection team met with groups of pupils, senior leaders, middle leaders, parents, a representative from the local authority behaviour team, members of the local governing body and representatives of the trust.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's safeguarding records, information relating to pupils' progress and the curriculum.
- The inspection team listened to the reading of a small group of pupils from Years 1 and 6.
- The lead inspector took into account the responses and comments from the 13 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The team also took into account the views of the 15 parents spoken with at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mike Tull	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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