

Cobholm Primary Academy

Mill Road, Cobholm, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 0BA

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017 and
16–17 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Frequent changes in staff, including in the senior leadership team, have limited the impact of leaders', managers' and governors' initiatives to secure good teaching and pupils' good outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Teaching has not enabled pupils to make swift progress overall in key stage 2.
- Previous weaknesses in teaching have meant that gaps in pupils' basic reading, writing and mathematics knowledge have not closed quickly enough in key stage 2.
- In the past, checks on pupils' learning have not given leaders and governors a fully reliable picture of pupils' progress in key stage 2.
- Some pupils do not behave as well as they could or respond readily to instructions and requests from staff. Pupils' learning is sometimes affected by disruption in lessons.
- Leaders, managers and governors have introduced improvements to the curriculum. These have not been in place long enough across all key stages to show a sustained impact on pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6.

The school has the following strengths

- Cobholm Primary is improving. Leaders, managers and governors have driven improvements, particularly in early years and key stage 1.
- Strong leadership has raised children's outcomes in the early years provision. From low starting points, children leave the Reception Year well prepared for Year 1.
- Phonics is taught well in early years and key stage 1. Pupils enjoy reading and read unfamiliar words confidently.
- Developments, including to the curriculum, books for pupils to read and playground equipment have helped to improve pupils' attitudes since the school opened. Rates of pupils' attendance are rising.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' progress, particularly in key stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - teachers adopt the school's approach to teaching, learning and assessment throughout key stage 2
 - gaps in pupils' basic skills close rapidly
 - the new curriculum is fully in place in all year groups
 - pupils know what to do when they have finished their work so that learning time is not lost
 - pupils' learning is not interrupted by instances of unsettled behaviour
 - teachers deal effectively with any disruption.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff about the behaviour that is expected.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school opened, leaders, managers and governors have worked successfully together with staff to secure improvements to key aspects of the school's work. Pupils said, and the school's records show, that incidents of poor behaviour have reduced. Attendance rates have improved and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has diminished.
- Outcomes for children in the early years have risen steadily over recent years. From generally low starting points, children make swift progress and leave the Reception Year with standards that are in line with national averages.
- Through high-quality training for staff, leaders have improved the teaching of phonics in early years and key stage 1. Pupils make strong progress in reading. Effective management ensures that phonics teaching is well matched to pupils' prior learning, including for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Leaders, supported by the academy trust, have significantly developed the school's learning environment. Improvements, including new reading resources and playground climbing apparatus, have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of books they can choose to read in the school's new library.
- Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors, and those who responded to Parent View, are highly supportive of the school. They acknowledge the improvements that leaders, managers and governors have brought about. They expressed confidence in the staff team.
- Leaders, managers and governors are ambitious to develop the school's curriculum and approach to teaching. Staff are motivated to improve their practice. The new curriculum is in part strongly focused on strengthening pupils' knowledge of numbers, including multiplication tables and number bonds, vocabulary and spellings.
- Pupils said that they enjoy learning about different periods of history, about historical figures including Julius Caesar, and art activities such as making Roman mosaics. Where initiatives have been implemented, they have delivered better outcomes for pupils. However, the new curriculum and teaching approaches are not fully established throughout the school.
- During the extended school day for all pupils in key stage 2, pupils receive support tailored to their needs, including help for pupils at risk of falling behind and additional challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities. Musical performances, themed days to promote British values, and listening to authors who visit the school help to enrich pupils' learning.
- The physical education and sport premium is used effectively. All pupils take part in at least one after-school sports activity each week.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. In assemblies, leaders foster pupils' understanding of the school's core values including

responsibility and striving for excellence. Pupils willingly take on responsibility, for example as members of the school board, pupil leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors.

- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in a variety of ways. For example, leaders have actively encouraged parents to work closely with the school through supporting pupils' personal and social development. Action to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has had a positive impact. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved substantially.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used carefully and helps to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of these pupils.
- All these strengths show leaders' proven capacity to secure improvements. However, the impact of some key initiatives to improve teaching, learning and assessment have been more successful in early years and key stage 1 than in key stage 2. Since the school opened, frequent changes in leadership and in teaching staff have hindered the school's improvement in Years 3 to 6.
- In the recent past, procedures to measure pupils' progress towards the standards expected by the end of Year 6 were unreliable. As a result, leaders and governors did not identify quickly enough where pupils were not achieving as well as they should in key stage 2. Through training for staff and partnership work with other schools in the academy trust, leaders have a more accurate view of pupils' progress this year.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees meet regularly and work closely together. The governing body has successfully recruited members who have relevant expertise in order to support the school to improve. Governors visit the school frequently and discuss their findings with leaders. All governors have attended training and understand the school's approach to the curriculum and teaching, learning and assessment. They understand the actions that leaders are taking in order to build pupils' knowledge of basic core skills.
- Governors challenge leaders about aspects of the school's performance. They are aware of the differences in teaching quality between early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 at the school. They look carefully at assessment information and challenge leaders about the progress of different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors know how additional funding is used to support eligible pupils. They check the impact on pupils' outcomes of Saturday camps for selected pupils in Year 6, the extended school day in key stage 2 and guidance offered to parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding where keeping pupils safe is central to the school's work. Leaders know and implement all statutory requirements. All staff receive regular training and updates regarding child protection and other aspects of safeguarding, including online safety and how to recognise pupils who may be at risk from radicalisation.

- Leaders are very aware of the specific safeguarding issues that may affect pupils in the school's community. They provide support for individuals and tackle wider issues through the curriculum. For example, leaders worked in partnership with a charitable organisation to provide guidance for pupils about safe and positive relationships.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and well maintained. Leaders act swiftly in response to any concerns. They work with parents and external agencies when appropriate to make sure that action is taken so that pupils are supported and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Staffing changes have limited the impact of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stage 2. As a result, gaps in pupils' core knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, caused by previous weaknesses in teaching, have persisted. This has hindered pupils' progress over key stage 2 in the recent past.
- In the past, leaders and governors have not had a reliable measure of the progress pupils make towards the standards expected at the end of Year 6. This year, leaders have drawn on expertise within the academy trust to sharpen the accuracy of the assessment information gathered. These improvements have not been in place long enough to show their impact on pupils' outcomes in national assessments at the end of Year 6.
- Sometimes in key stage 2, learning time is wasted when pupils who finish tasks quickly spend time waiting for teachers to set further work. At other times, teachers do not manage pupils' disruptive behaviour well, and pupils' learning drops.
- Teaching of phonics is effective and, as a result, children in early years get off to a good start with reading and pupils continue to make good progress in reading in key stage 1. Teachers carefully model the sounds that letters represent and provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise sounds so that pupils remember them.
- Well-established routines typically help lessons to flow smoothly in all year groups. Teachers select interesting activities that broaden minds. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed strong empathy with the issues raised in a text about a soldier who experienced life-changing injuries.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have significantly improved pupils' confidence and pride in the school. Pupils wear their school uniform smartly and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils understand the school's core values and know what is expected of them at school. A number of pupils said that what they like about school is 'learning'.

- Pupils are well supported by adults and said that school is a place where they feel safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils know what information they should and should not share online and what to do if they encounter anything that worries them.
- Pupils know what constitutes bullying and what does not. Pupils said that bullying is rare and that adults deal effectively with any incidents that may occur. Parents agreed that bullying is dealt with well by leaders.
- Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths and demonstrate positive attitudes towards diversity. One pupil commented, expressing the views of many, 'We are all unique, girls are different to boys and one girl is different to another girl and the same with boys.' Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds including pupils who speak English as an additional language get along well together.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils need reminding about the conduct that is expected in class and do not respond swiftly to instructions or requests from staff, particularly in key stage 2. Sometimes, the behaviour of a minority of pupils disrupts the learning of others.
- The school's records show that over the course of last year and in the current academic year, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced. Leaders' actions to address poor behaviour have been effective. These include working with parents and the use of positive incentives to reward pupils for behaving appropriately.
- Leaders encourage regular attendance by making the school a welcoming place for pupils, for example through the improvements to the playground. As a result, attendance rates have improved. The number of pupils who are frequently absent has decreased, resulting in a substantial reduction in persistent absence overall.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils' progress is uneven across year groups. In the past, pupils in key stage 2 made less progress from their starting points compared with pupils' progress in early years and key stage 1. Results in national assessments at the end of key stage 2 show that pupils were not well prepared for the next stage in their education when they left the school at the end of Year 6.
- In key stage 2, weak teaching in the past has affected the development of pupils' basic reading, writing and mathematics. Previously, the curriculum was not effective in building pupils' basic skills and supporting pupils' progress in subjects across the wider curriculum. Turnover in teaching staff since the school opened has also hindered pupils' progress.
- Recent changes to teaching and the curriculum advance pupils' basic skills more securely than in the past. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 is strengthening, including for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, particularly in Year 6.

- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books in key stage 2 show that pupils' handwriting, punctuation and confidence in number work are improving over time and that previously weak standards are rising.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils and in some year groups they make stronger progress than others.
- Teachers and teaching assistants help pupils who speak English as an additional language to develop their knowledge of English from their starting points when they join the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language build their knowledge of phonics quickly in early years and key stage 1. In key stage 2, these pupils make similar progress to other pupils.
- Pupils make strong progress in reading. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose in 2017 and was average. Throughout the school, pupils develop positive attitudes to reading. The most able pupils in key stage 2 read regularly and enthuse about the types of books they enjoy reading most.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated in key stage 1. Provisional results suggest that attainment rose at the end of Year 2, particularly in reading and writing, so that pupils are better prepared for Year 3 than in the past.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in the early years foundation stage from typically low starting points. Leaders have successfully improved teaching and the environment. In particular, the outside area has been significantly improved so that children enjoy playing and learning in the well-resourced and attractive early years areas.
- Leaders and staff know the children well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Arrangements to help children settle when they start school, as they move from the Nursery to the Reception Year, and from Reception to Year 1 are effective.
- Leaders make sure that children have a wide range of motivating activities to choose, both indoors and outside, that are tailored to their needs and interests. For instance, adults planned activities involving vehicles and animals because the children were particularly engaged by them.
- Children learn to understand risk through exploring the school's woodland area. They enjoy collecting twigs, flowers and insects and practise counting how many they had gathered. Working with adults, children practise letter formation by writing with chalks on a blackboard outside.
- Children show independence and perseverance, for example when filling the waterwheel with sufficient water in order to make it rotate. Children sustain their role play without adults needing to encourage them.
- Children behave well in early years because adults reinforce regularly what is expected, for example by reminding children to take turns. Children readily tidy away the toys because routines are established early on. They work and play well together because social skills are encouraged through working together.

- Adults support learning well and help children to think hard and deepen their understanding. For example, children discussed a book's illustrations with adults using specific vocabulary, such as volcano and lava, to describe precisely what they could see.
- Children are well prepared for the start of key stage 1. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen since the school opened. It was average in 2016, and in 2017 provisional data.

School details

Unique reference number	141359
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10036096

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Sponsored primary
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jim Longfield
Principal	Louise Scott
Telephone number	01493 602 653
Website	www.inspirationtrust.org/cobholmprimary
Email address	cobholmoffice@inspirationtrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The predecessor school converted to academy status, sponsored by the Inspiration Academy Trust, in December 2014.
- The chief executive officer has overall responsibility for governance and works with the school's local governing body, Inspiration Trust trustees and trust members. The chief executive officer has overall responsibility for the management of the school, and works together with Inspiration Trust senior leaders and with senior leaders at the school.
- Inspiration Trust senior leaders provide formal support to the school.
- The school is smaller than average. Children in the nursery attend part time in the morning. Children in the Reception Year attend full time. There is no provision for two-year-olds.

- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who are supported by an education, health and care plan, or statement of SEN, is similar to that found nationally.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The school was initially inspected on 26 and 27 September 2017. On 16 and 17 January 2018, two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors returned to the school to gather further evidence around pupils’ outcomes. The evidence gathered over all four days was used to inform the inspection judgements.
- The inspectors observed learning in all classes, including some observations carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books and listened to pupils in key stage 1 and Year 6 read. They looked at assessment information to consider pupils’ progress and learning over time.
- Inspectors took account of leaders’ evaluations of teaching and learning and a range of the school’s documentation. They reviewed the school’s website.
- Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents and considered the 13 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. They visited an assembly and held discussions with pupils.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, including leaders who work across the Inspiration Trust. They met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to members of the Inspiration Trust. They spoke to a representative of the regional schools commissioner’s office. They also met with the leader for English and with the school’s SEN coordinators.
- Inspectors reviewed policies and procedures related to safeguarding, including the school’s checks on staff suitability.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Stephen Cloke	Ofsted Inspector
Madeleine Gerard	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	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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