

# Hilgay Riverside Academy

Church View, Hilgay, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 0JL

## Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leadership has not been fully effective. Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school provides a good quality of education.
- In recent years, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have been below the national averages in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching has not been consistently good over time. This has resulted in some pupils not making the progress they should have done.
- Phonics is not taught well enough. Some teaching staff do not have sufficiently strong subject knowledge to teach phonics well.
- Children in the early years do not get off to a strong start with learning to read and write, because staff do not know enough about these areas of learning.
- Pupils do not make strong progress in a range of subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Expectations of pupils, both of their behaviour and what they can achieve, are sometimes too low.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is a very strong and highly effective leader. There is clear evidence that the school is now improving as a result.
- The multi-academy trust supports the school very well. It provides effective support and challenge that is helping to move the school forward rapidly.
- The effectiveness of the governing body is improving. Governors are now better able to support the school and hold leaders to account.
- The school is a happy and friendly place. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils usually behave well and follow the school's rules.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils rightly feel safe from bullying.
- The school's curriculum has been reviewed recently. It is suitably broad and balanced.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, and thus raise outcomes in English and mathematics to at least the national average, by ensuring that:
  - pupils receive consistently good teaching as they progress from class to class
  - all teaching staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave
  - all teaching staff have the strong subject knowledge necessary to teach phonics effectively.
- Develop the school's curriculum further so that pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Ensure that all early years teaching staff have the knowledge and understanding necessary to teach early reading and writing skills effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school is on a clear upward trajectory, because of the current headteacher's decisive and effective leadership. Although the headteacher has only been in post for a little over a year, there is already demonstrable impact of the actions she has taken. For example, outcomes are improving strongly throughout the school.
- The headteacher has focused well on improving the quality of teaching in the school. She has an excellent understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning. Her expectations of herself, her staff and her pupils are very high. There are early signs that the expectations of teaching staff are starting to rise too.
- The headteacher has analysed the development needs of all teaching staff, including both teachers and teaching assistants. She has ensured that staff are now being provided with the continuing professional opportunities they need, in order to improve their work. This is starting to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- The multi-academy trust supports the school well. A range of measures have been put in place to help the school to improve, such as visits from early years and English advisers. A lead officer from the trust visits the school every term to ensure that the school is moving in the right direction. There is clear evidence that these actions are having a positive impact on the school's development.
- The school's curriculum is developing well. The headteacher and staff have reviewed what they teach and how they teach it, to ensure that the curriculum is fit for purpose. They have focused successfully on ensuring that the curriculum is interesting and exciting, so that pupils develop a love of learning. These improvements have not been established for long enough to have had an impact on ensuring pupils' good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- The subjects that pupils learn about are enhanced by visits to relevant places of interest and visitors to school. For example, during the week that the inspection took place, pupils in key stage 2 took part in an 'evacuee day'. They travelled by train and took part in role play activities, in order to further their understanding of what it might have felt like to be an evacuee during the Second World War.
- Hilgay Riverside Academy is a very small school. This means that leadership other than that provided by the headteacher is limited. The school is now starting to make better use of the knowledge and skills that exist across the federation in order to distribute leadership responsibilities more widely.
- A member of the federation staff is currently being supported by the headteacher to gradually take on the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is becoming more effective as a result.
- Most parents and carers are positive about the school. Many chose to make positive comments, either to the lead inspector directly or as a free-text comment via the Parent View website. Parents said that they like the school's small size and 'family feel'. Several commented on the improvements they have seen since the current

headteacher took up her post.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has been through a very challenging time. Membership of the governing body dropped dramatically, to skeletal proportions, when the school became an academy. Four governors showed great tenacity and resilience by continuing in their roles despite the significant challenges.
- Although standards dropped during this time, the four-strong governing body did everything in its power to support and challenge the school, given the constraints of its much-reduced capacity. For example, they secured the appointment of the current headteacher and they ensured that the building work was completed successfully.
- The number of governors has now risen once again. There is now a good mix of skills and experience, enabling the governing body to be fully effective. There are now sufficient governors to share the corporate responsibility for the strategic leadership of the school.
- The trust has supported governors by finding and appointing an experienced and successful chair to lead the governing body. It is too soon to see the full impact of this appointment but it is clear that the governing body is now much better placed, both to support the school and to hold leaders to account.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have put strong and effective practices in place to ensure the safer recruitment of staff. Leaders and governors receive and act on the regular safeguarding updates supplied by their human resources provider. As a result, the school's practices are up to date and their single central record meets statutory requirements.
- Leaders ensure that staff are provided with regular training to enable them to identify and respond to possible signs of abuse and neglect. Safeguarding records show that staff notice and report such concerns, following the school's set procedures.
- Records show that leaders respond appropriately to concerns and that timely action is taken, where necessary, to keep pupils safe. Leaders have started to review and improve individual records of child protection concerns. They are making appropriate changes to ensure that records are always of a suitably high quality.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- There have been numerous changes of teachers in recent years. The very small size of the school means that each change has a disproportionately large impact on the effectiveness of teaching in the school. This has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Some groups of pupils, particularly in upper key stage 2, have experienced weak or disjointed teaching over several years of schooling. This has had a detrimental impact on the progress some current pupils have made.

- Some weaknesses in the overall quality of teaching remain. Some teaching staff do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should behave. Where this is the case, some pupils fidget and call out because it appears to be acceptable for them to do so.
- Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve academically have been too low over time. Although expectations have risen, they are not uniformly high. As a result, some pupils do not attain as highly or make the strong progress that they should.
- Phonics teaching remains inconsistent. Some teaching staff have a good understanding of how to teach phonics and, where this is the case, pupils are making better progress. However, some teaching staff do not know enough about phonics and this leads to inaccuracies in teaching. Pupils repeat these errors, and this slows their progress.
- The quality of teaching is now improving. Assessments of the progress pupils make are accurate. The school's assessment system is well established and appropriate. The headteacher has very high expectations of the progress she expects pupils to make. She monitors the work in pupils' books regularly to identify whether they are achieving this or not.
- The learning environment is improving and, in some cases, is a strength. For example, in the mixed-age Year 3/4 classroom, pupils are provided with a good range of resources that enhance their interest in, and enjoyment of, their learning about their topic work. Similarly, pupils use the prompts and reminders displayed on the classroom walls to help them with, for example, aspects of spelling and grammar.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Teaching staff know pupils well and are now better able to meet pupils' individual needs. This is starting to have a positive impact on the progress pupils make.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They learn about road and bike safety, as well as safe use of the internet. Practices to help to keep pupils safe both in and out of school, such as 'the walking home book' in the mixed-age Year 5/6 class, are well established.
- A few parents expressed concerns about bullying and how it is dealt with. The inspection did not find evidence to support these concerns. Pupils told the inspector that there is little bullying at the school and that it is sorted out quickly by staff when it does occur. Pupils feel safe at school and they know that they can talk to any adult if they are ever concerned about anything.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and well mannered. They spoke confidently to the inspector throughout the inspection. Pupils were keen to speak about the school and the topics that they are learning about.
- Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy their learning and having opportunities to play with their friends. Several parents and pupils said that the school's 'happy, family feel' is the thing that they like most about Hilgay Riverside Academy.

- Pupils are starting to take greater pride in their work. Pupils' exercise books show clearly that pupils are now making much more effort to present their work carefully and to take care with their handwriting.
- On the whole, pupils show good attitudes to equality. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of different beliefs and cultures are limited. Leaders have started to address this issue. For example, the headteacher has now introduced a scheme of work for teaching personal, social, health and economic education, where previously there was none.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils know and understand the school's system for encouraging good behaviour and the consequences for not following the rules. They enjoy earning points that lead to the class receiving 'golden time', where they can choose their own activities and play with their friends.
- Where the quality of teaching is better, pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they show excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils show a keen interest in the subjects that they learn about. They work sensibly and with maturity, sustaining their interest and concentration for extended periods of time.
- Hilgay Riverside is an inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed, whatever their needs. Some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities sometimes show challenging behaviour. A small proportion of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of these pupils. Inspection evidence did not support these concerns.
- Although the overall rate of absence remains higher than the national average, it is improving. Leaders and governors are now taking much firmer action to tackle unnecessary absence, and this is starting to have an impact. Very little learning time was lost to absence during the first half term of the 2018/19 academic year.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- The small number of pupils in each year group means that great caution must be taken when considering published assessment information. Results in both key stages for the past two years were below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The work in pupils' exercise books shows that weaknesses in the quality of teaching over time have left a legacy of low outcomes for some pupils. That is, some of the oldest pupils are still not doing as well as they should be because teaching has not been good enough over time.
- There is little evidence that pupils are making strong progress across a wide range of subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils learn about the full range of national curriculum subjects but there is less evidence of improving progress in areas such as history and geography than in reading, writing or mathematics.
- In 2018, there were too few pupils in Year 6 for the results of the key stage 2 national tests to be discussed in any detail without risk of identifying individual pupils. Nonetheless, results in reading, writing and mathematics were clearly much better in

2018 than in the previous year.

- Overall, pupils are now making better progress, although progress is not yet strong enough. Scrutiny of pupils' exercise books shows that both the quality and quantity of pupils' work is improving. In a few cases, pupils are making substantial progress in both English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their classmates in the school. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in the school to make comparisons with other pupils nationally without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- On the whole, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points. In some cases, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slower. Where this is the case, leaders can provide valid explanations for it and explain clearly what is being done to rectify it.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The early years teaching staff do not have sufficient understanding of how young children's early literacy skills develop. This is reflected both in phonics sessions and in writing activities. As a result, some children do not learn to read and write as quickly and easily as they could. This means that some children are not as well prepared for the move to the national curriculum in Year 1 as they should be.
- This lack of understanding is evident in children's work. For example, children are asked to copy underneath an adult's writing when the text is too long and too difficult for them to read and includes letters and sounds that they have not been taught. This makes writing a negative experience for some children and something to be avoided.
- Leadership in the early years is developing. The headteacher and the early years teacher from the partner school lead the provision jointly. Between them, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. This has enabled them to put suitable support in place to start to improve the weaker areas.
- For example, the early years staff have worked with an early years adviser to improve the learning environment, both in the classroom and outside. As a result, children are now provided with an appropriate range of interesting learning opportunities to choose from at times when they can select their own activities.
- Relationships between adults and children are positive. The teaching staff speak kindly and warmly to the children, encouraging them to 'have a go' at unfamiliar activities. This makes the early years classroom a welcoming and friendly place. At this early stage in the school year, the children have already settled well into school life.
- The children behave very well in the early years. They persevere with activities, maintaining their concentration, for extended periods of time. The children learn the school's rules quickly and follow them well.
- Generally, children join the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are typical of their age. The proportion of children that attained a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen steadily over the past two years. In 2018, the proportion of children that reached a good level of development was just below the national average. This demonstrates the improvements that have been made to the

early years provision.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 142526   |
| Local authority         | Norfolk  |
| Inspection number       | 10053506 |

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 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 66   |
| Appropriate authority               | Board of trustees  |
| Chair                               | Clive Jeffries   |
| Headteacher                         | Sarah Turner   |
| Telephone number                    | 01366 387 685  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.hilgayriverside.norfolk.sch.uk">www.hilgayriverside.norfolk.sch.uk</a>       |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:office@hilgayriverside.norfolk.sch.uk">office@hilgayriverside.norfolk.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school has had four headteachers since it became an academy in January 2016. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2017.
- The school works in partnership with Ten Mile Bank Riverside Academy. Together, the two schools are known as The Riverside Federation. Some leadership arrangements, including the headship and governance, are shared across the federation.
- Both schools in The Riverside Federation are sponsored by the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust. Hilgay Riverside Academy is a Church of England school. The school has not yet received a section 48 inspection since converting to academy status.
- Significant building work has taken place since the school became an academy. Two new classrooms have been built and the hall, previously used as a classroom, has been returned to its original state.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. The inspector observed parts of nine lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked closely at the work in exercise books and talked to pupils about their work. The inspector looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with leaders, governors, a representative of the multi-academy trust and a group of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection. The inspector took account of the 34 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 34 free-text comments that were received.

## Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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