

Inspection of Telscombe Cliffs Academy

Telscombe Cliffs Way, Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven, East Sussex BN10 7DE

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Peter Ediss. This school is part of STEP Academy 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), Paul Glover, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ross Gardner. There is also an executive headteacher, Zoe Griffiths, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very positive about their school. They are happy about the many aspects that have improved in the last two years. They feel safe here. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent because of the nurturing environment and their positive relationships with staff. Pupils' own role in improving their school is significant. Their parliament is well established. They know that their views count and are confident to share their own opinions when asked.

Expectations of what pupils can achieve in and out of classrooms are high. Raised aspirations for all pupils have transformed the school over time. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are also benefiting from a renewed sense of purpose. As a result, pupils' achievements are improving. Their progress through the curriculum is accelerating and their motivation to do well is palpable.

Parents and carers talk positively about the quality of provision in early years. Children in Nursery and Reception Years understand what is expected and what is not. Routines are well embedded and a mantra of 'choose it, use it, put it away' is firmly established. Learning is fun here, but equally as purposeful as elsewhere in the school.

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

Much has changed here in a short period of time. Staff understand their roles well and welcome recent changes to improve the school. Their professional development has a high priority because leaders at all levels know the importance of a motivated and effective workforce. Central to this is the support of the trust. Good practice is celebrated and shared. An open and reflective culture to improve all aspects of the provision is clear to see. The impact of this has led to rapid improvements across the school.

The curriculum has undergone a significant review since the school joined the trust. Staff have worked hard to ensure that it continues to be relevant to pupils currently at the school. The school's assessment of pupils with additional needs is proactive and effective. Extra support is available for those who need it, though much of this work is carried out in an inclusive manner within classrooms. This work is still developing, though it is already having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school, as reflected in the school's improved published results in 2024.

Classroom visits showed inspectors that pupils are hungry to learn because staff make learning meaningful and enjoyable. This starts in the early years foundation stage, where children get a fantastic start to school life. This includes children with SEND and those in danger of falling behind, who benefit from focused and bespoke interventions from specialist staff.

Reading is firmly at the heart of the school's curriculum. Most pupils love to read because books and the written word are promoted overtly across the curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read are identified and supported quickly. A relatively new phonics programme

is improving pupils' ability to read fluently, though not all staff are as expert in its delivery as they might be.

Staff generally have strong subject knowledge and put this to good use across the curriculum. Overall, pupils learn well, and they talk with excitement about their achievements as geographers or scientists. However, though staff know their learners well and adapt tasks when pupils struggle, sometimes, most-able pupils are not challenged as much as they might be.

Pupils enjoy what they describe as 'off-curriculum' learning. Their talents and interests are sparked by a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, which also provide opportunities to meet new friends. Older pupils relish the challenge of learning to swim. Others talk proudly of their contributions to the school parliament or taking part in debates. Other popular activities include visits to a local art gallery and a science observatory or duties as play leaders at breaktimes.

The school's personal, social and health education programme is meaningful and well designed. Staff understand its importance. This is especially the case in keeping pupils safe when using social media. It also promotes pupils' understanding of equalities and diversity in an age-appropriate way. Consequently, most are extremely well equipped for life out of school and their next stages of education when the time comes.

Those in positions of governance know the school well. The trust has ensured that clear and well-defined levels of accountability and responsibility are impacting positively on the quality of provision. Parents are mostly very positive about recent changes here. Those who spoke or wrote to inspectors were keen to recognise the improvements made over time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the tasks set for most-able pupils do not meet their needs well enough. Levels of challenge for these pupils and expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough. As a result, their progress through the curriculum slows. The school should ensure that teachers adapt the tasks they set to meet the needs of all pupils at the school, especially the most able pupils.
- Not all staff are implementing the school's phonics programme as rigorously as they should. This impacts on the progress pupils are making on their journey to becoming fluent readers. The school needs to ensure that all staff who teach phonics are experts and that the school's phonics programme is delivered with precision.

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

Unique reference number	148927
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341912
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	565
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ross Gardner
CEO of the trust	Paul Glover
Headteacher	Peter Ediss (Headteacher) Zoe Griffiths (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.telscombecliffsacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Telscombe Cliffs Academy converted to become an academy in February 2022. When its predecessor school, Telscombe Cliffs Primary School and Nursery, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement for overall effectiveness. The school is part of STEP Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with leaders at all levels, as well as teaching and support staff. The lead inspector held an online meeting with executive officers and a trustee of the multi-academy trust. He also met face to face with two members of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and physical education. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, 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.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. An inspector also talked formally to two representative groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. An inspector talked to parents at the start of the first day of the inspection. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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