

Ribbon Academy

Barnes Road, Murton, Seaham, County Durham, SR7 9QR

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the school became an academy in September 2012, members of the academy's board of directors, the principal, leaders and managers have brought about improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- The strategic vision of the principal has been instrumental in moving the academy forward. This, together with determined and ambitious leadership and management at all levels, is ensuring that it is well placed to improve further.
- Current pupils are on track to reach standards in line with national averages this year. Their progress from low starting points compares favourably with that found nationally.
- Pupils are very appreciative of the excellent personal support they are given. In this truly inclusive academy the skills and talents of all pupils are valued and nurtured.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and reflects the excellent way in which the academy promotes their social and moral awareness. They feel extremely safe in the academy, attend regularly and have very good attitudes to learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good, not outstanding. A minority of teaching still requires improvement and the outstanding skills of the best teachers have not yet been fully shared to ensure that all lessons are consistently good or better.
- While the academy already works closely with parents it is not complacent. It recognises that more can be done to reach all parents and families so that they can better support their children's learning and development.
- The timetable has recently been changed to make sure pupils get a good balance between being taught mathematics and English and following their own interests and working on their own. These changes have yet to be fully checked to ensure that they are helping pupils to make faster progress, particularly in English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons and part-lessons. They also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, members of the board of directors and the academy improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed the academy’s work and looked at pupils’ books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Fifty-five responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered as well as those from questionnaires completed by academy staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Pauline Piddington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ribbon Academy converted to become an academy on 4 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Murton Community Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- This academy is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which, in this academy, provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average while the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Within the academy there is a Sure Start Centre and childcare provider, 'Ribbon Daycare' both of which were not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and further accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in English, by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum gives pupils a good balance between being taught basic skills in mathematics and English and following their interests and working on their own
 - planning activities, including those pupils do on their own, which always challenge pupils to achieve their best
 - further share the outstanding skills of the best teachers to ensure that all teaching is consistently good and more is outstanding.
- Work even more closely with all parents and families to help them support their children's learning and development through consultation, listening to their views and by giving them even more opportunities to take part in the life of the academy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the academy with skills which are often well below those expected for their age. They settle quickly into academy routines and become confident learners in the well equipped and stimulating environment of the Nursery and Reception classes. Children particularly enjoyed learning as they identified and matched the numbers one to ten which were printed on the bottom of ducks that they fished out of the water trough.
- Pupils continue to achieve well as they move through the academy. Work in pupils' books, work displayed on walls and the academy's own pupil progress data all confirm the good progress that pupils are making.
- Year 6 pupils are on target to reach standards at least in line with the national average this year. Their progress compares favourably with that found nationally and more pupils are on track to make better than expected progress this year in both mathematics and English.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics has been stronger than that in English. Very knowledgeable and determined subject leadership and careful monitoring of individual pupils' progress have maximised pupils' success in this subject. Improving attainment in English continues, rightly, to be an academy priority although pupils' progress in reading and writing is now accelerating. Those who find reading more difficult are making good progress due to the skilled extra help they receive.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those few who speak English as an additional language are all making progress and achieving in line with their classmates. They receive very timely and well targeted help from teachers and teaching assistants which helps them to achieve their potential.
- Extra money (the pupil premium) is spent wisely on providing a raft of additional support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, including small-group teaching and one-to-one tuition. Consequently the gaps between the progress disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority) make compared to that of other groups of pupils is narrowing in both mathematics and English. However, their attainment remains almost two terms behind that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is usually good and in some lessons it is outstanding. The skills of outstanding teachers have yet to be fully shared, particularly with less experienced teachers, so that a minority of teaching which still requires improvement is eradicated.
- In most lessons pupils respond to the good teaching they receive by showing real enthusiasm for learning and making good progress. Teachers know their pupils well, value their skills and talents and give them very good opportunities to work on their own and become confident independent learners.
- Teachers are skilled, knowledgeable and use varied resources when teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise these skills in all areas of their work. In an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils made rapid progress as they confidently converted two-dimensional nets into three-dimensional shapes. The teacher's relaxed manner, well targeted questioning and high expectations all combined to build pupils' confidence so they achieved their best.
- In a few lessons which require improvement teachers' expectations are not as high. Activities, particularly those pupils do on their own, are not always sufficiently challenging to allow pupils to achieve well.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in lessons because both teachers and teaching assistants give constructive extra help to those who need it. Disabled pupils and those with

special needs benefit from specialist, expert teaching when this is required.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted particularly well in lessons. Pupils work in groups and on their own equally well. They share information and ideas willingly and support each other extremely well in their learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and give them challenging targets so they are clear about how to improve their work further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are typically extremely well behaved both in lessons and around the academy. They are very kind and polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. In lessons they work hard, answer questions readily and are very keen to succeed.
- Pupils have great pride in their academy. They really enjoy learning and make an exceptional contribution to their own achievement. Pupils attend regularly and arrive at the academy on time. Records show that incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are extremely rare and are always dealt with very effectively.
- A strength of the academy is the support it gives to all pupils and their families, but especially those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. A very talented team of teachers and other experts work seamlessly together to make sure that the varied needs of each individual pupil are fully met. This care for every aspect of each pupil's development is instrumental in promoting their excellent behaviour and high social and moral awareness.
- Pupils say how very safe they feel in the academy and parents' comments confirm this view. They have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and a very sensible attitude to risk-taking. They are extremely knowledgeable about different types of bullying including cyber-bullying.
- Pupils really enjoy taking responsibility. They speak enthusiastically of their duties which vary from being prefects and house captains to tending the chickens and the vegetables the academy grows in their well stocked polytunnel.

The leadership and management are good

- Academy directors and staff, under the talented strategic direction of the principal, continually strive for improvement. Consequently pupils' progress is accelerating and their attainment is rising. Staff are not complacent and clear priorities for further improvement have been identified.
- For example, although the academy already works closely with parents, staff recognise that more can be done to reach all families and parents so that they are better placed to support their children's learning. Closer consultation with parents and more opportunities for them to give their views and take part in academy life are all areas which the academy, rightly, feels it can develop further.
- Responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View show that the vast majority of parents are very pleased with the education the academy provides.
- Staff feel valued and morale is high. Their performance is managed well, and although teachers' skills can be shared further, good quality advice and training is readily available including that from the academy improvement partner. Lessons are observed regularly and teachers are given constructive advice on how to improve further.
- Recent changes to the curriculum have meant that teachers now spend more dedicated time teaching basic skills in mathematics and English. However, pupils still have good opportunities to follow their own interests and study other subjects on their own. Getting this balance right is an academy priority and recent changes have yet to be fully checked to make sure they are having the desired effect of speeding up pupils' progress even further.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development well. It has particular strengths in the excellent range of enrichment activities including many trips and visits which the academy provides. Pupils speak with enormous enthusiasm about camping trips, sporting events and visits to places as far apart as France and the local beach.

- All groups of pupils are given excellent equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated at Ribbon Academy.
- Safeguarding meets requirements. Staff are very well trained and have an excellent knowledge of child protection and risk assessment procedures.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the school became an academy the board of directors has streamlined its procedures for meetings and made sure that its expertise is used efficiently. Directors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching, the performance of staff and how teachers are rewarded and underperformance tackled. They are becoming increasingly well informed about the academy's performance data and they hold the academy to account for the way in which pupil premium monies are spent.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138633
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	411914

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Appropriate authority	Directors of the Ribbon Academy Trust
Chair	Stephen Ball
Principal	Philip Scott
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0191 517 5900
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