

Ayresome Primary School

Worcester Street, Gresham Ward, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4NT

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, turbulence in staffing has hampered leaders' and governors' efforts to offer a good standard of education.
- In all key stages, outcomes require improvement. Pupils do not make good progress from their starting points, especially in reading. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average.
- Between Years 1 and 6, teaching is variable in quality, particularly in key stage 2. Teachers do not consistently plan and set activities that match pupils' varying needs and abilities.
- Early years provision requires improvement. Checks on how well children are achieving are not used effectively to quickly intervene and provide support when children fall behind. As a result, children do not achieve well. Too many are not ready for learning in Year 1.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, particularly of the most able pupils. Pupils do not reach their full potential as a result.
- Teaching and learning do not build effectively on what pupils have already learned in previous year groups. Pupils' misconceptions in learning are not routinely tackled. This hinders their progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is resolute in her ambition to improve standards across the school. Her vision to provide the best-quality education and pastoral care for pupils is clear and shared by leaders, governors and staff. As a result, morale is high and the school is improving.
- Governance has improved and is effective. By working together, leaders and governors have successfully overcome staff turbulence and tackled weak teaching. Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge.
- Leaders are improving teaching. Revised approaches to the teaching of reading, for example, are paying off. Pupils' progress in reading is speeding up. Partnerships beyond school are used to good effect to strengthen teaching.
- Additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now well targeted. This is helping to improve pupils' achievement.
- Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provides them with a sound foundation for the future.
- Leaders instil a culture of caring. Pupils are respectful and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. A strong commitment to pupils' health, welfare and well-being is evident. Effective arrangements to keep pupils safe are in place. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their sporting skills and interests. Pupils enjoy school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' progress is consistently good, especially in key stage 2, by ensuring that all teachers and staff:
 - consistently plan and set activities that match the varying needs and abilities of all pupils and which challenge them to make good progress from their different starting points
 - successfully build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects, but particularly in reading
 - have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, particularly the most able pupils
 - quickly identify and routinely tackle pupils' misconceptions.
- Improve the early years provision so that learning gets off to a good start by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used effectively to plan learning that stimulates and challenges children of varying needs and abilities and that expectations are consistently high
 - leaders carefully check how well children are achieving and intervene quickly to ensure that effective support is provided if they do not make good progress
 - teaching places a strong focus on developing children's speech and language skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is resolute in her ambition to improve standards across the school at a faster rate. The successful partnership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has instilled a strong sense of ambition among other leaders and staff in the school. As a result of this partnership, all leaders are clear about the part they play in improving standards and improving pupils' life chances.
- Leaders, including governors, work effectively together to make improvements. Since the previous inspection, staffing turbulence has hindered leaders' and governors' drive to improve standards. However, the strong working relationship between the chair of the governing body and the headteacher has eradicated the turbulence.
- Middle leaders are supportive of the headteacher's vision to improve standards. They understand the part they play in implementing the school's priorities, especially improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders regularly monitor and review all aspects of the school. As a result, they have an honest and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. Leaders have enlisted support from external consultants in order to review aspects of the school's work, such as teaching and learning. This has provided leaders with a secure platform on which to plan effective actions to tackle weak areas.
- Leaders have established a fair and rigorous system for managing the performance of teachers. This is rooted in challenging targets for staff, all of which link to the school's improvement priorities for raising standards. Leaders ensure that appropriate training is available for staff so that they are continually developing their skills. Leaders encourage staff to be reflective in their practice, share ideas and try new ways of engaging pupils in their learning so that pupils make better progress.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is increasingly effective. Better-quality support and intervention are now in place so that, currently, disadvantaged pupils are progressing increasingly well academically, socially and emotionally. However, their outcomes still lag behind those of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders use the sports premium funding effectively to support pupils' physical health and well-being. A dedicated sports coach entuses a number of pupils to take part in a wide range of sporting activities and to achieve success in competitive sports. As a consequence, pupils develop a healthy and enthusiastic attitude to physical exercise. Staff work with the dedicated sports coach and his team to improve their skills in delivering high-quality physical education lessons.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in this diverse and inclusive school. It instils in pupils the fundamental British values of respect and tolerance. Pupils are keen to speak about how everyone should be treated equally and how, as a community, they should look after themselves and each other – pupils truly believe it is 'awesome at Ayresome'. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to exercise their democratic powers and give their views. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the advantages of a democracy and how they feel listened to by

school leaders and their teachers.

- Leaders have invested in an innovative provision to teach all pupils computing. This innovation suite provides pupils with an exciting and vibrant area where they are actively encouraged to solve problems independently. Pupils are enthused by such learning opportunities.
- The arrangements for supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have strengthened and are increasingly effective. Leaders now use additional funding well so that support is well targeted and helps pupils to fill any gaps in their learning. Pupils' reading skills, for example, are now improving at a good rate. However, the information contained in the plans established to support learning does not always make clear strategies that are to be used to overcome pupils' barriers to learning. For some pupils, this continues to hamper progress.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have completed a detailed skills audit and, as a consequence, have reorganised the way that they operate. Committees have been revised so that governors' skills are now used more effectively to challenge and support the school's work.
- The chair of the governing body is highly astute. He has established a strong and effective governing body whose close working relationship with the headteacher and the school is making improvements. As a group, governors share the headteacher's resolute and determined vision to raise standards for all pupils.
- Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. This ensures that governors are fully aware of all aspects of the school's work. They carefully check the impact and effectiveness of actions taken.
- Governors oversee the use of resources available to the school and they monitor the impact of spending, such as the pupil premium funding and the sports premium. As a result of this monitoring, governors challenge leaders about what is and is not working to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Governors make appropriate checks on the school's safeguarding arrangements. They attend all relevant training and are kept updated of any changes. A designated safeguarding governor has been appointed because of his expertise and understanding of safeguarding. This has further strengthened this area of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that they keep the school's single central record of staff and visitor checks in good order.
- In an extremely complex environment, the designated safeguarding leaders provide training and support for staff. They regularly update members of staff with the latest guidance. As a result, staff are well trained and they are aware of their collective and individual responsibilities to keep children safe. There is a culture of vigilance, and staff quickly report to designated leads any signs that suggest a pupil might be vulnerable.
- Leaders make sure that policies and procedures are up to date. They regularly monitor

the school's system for logging incidents and referrals. This ensures that no information regarding a pupil's welfare is missed. The headteacher and other staff ensure that safeguarding is a priority in the culture of the school.

- Pupils say that the school is a safe place. They agree that bullying is rare and that staff deal with any issues quickly and effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite some notable improvements since the previous inspection and some strong practice evident, the quality of teaching is variable and inconsistent across the school. This is particularly the case in key stage 2.
- Not all teachers match learning tasks to the different needs and abilities of pupils. Work set is not routinely challenging for pupils, particularly the most able. As a result, teaching does not extend or deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Too often, the most able pupils are completing work that does not challenge their thinking or extend their problem-solving skills. As a result, they do not make the progress they are capable of, particularly in English and mathematics.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations are not high enough, and in these instances tasks set do not take into account pupils' different starting points or what they do or do not know. Where this is the case, pupils' concentration wanes and they become restless.
- Some teachers' questioning does not check pupils' understanding or probe pupils' thinking; as a result, some teachers do not tackle misconceptions quickly enough so that pupils can make faster progress.
- Where teaching is more effective, pupils try and are eager to learn. Teachers plan activities that meets pupils' varying needs. For example, in Year 3 in religious education, pupils enjoyed discussing the differences between the Christian and Muslim faiths. They were challenged to apply their knowledge and use specific terminology to aid their understanding.
- In the main, teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to provide support for identified pupils. They provide the necessary help and guidance so that pupils do not fall behind in their learning.
- Staff provide helpful feedback to pupils by following the school's marking policy. Pupils particularly enjoy using the 'purple pen of power' to correct and improve their work.
- Leaders have put in place a robust system for improving the quality of teaching across the school. Senior and middle leaders have, and model, high expectations for staff and pupils. While such systems have been successful in tackling weaker teaching, leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to improve teaching across the school so that it is consistently good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff place high importance on ensuring that pupils' welfare and well-being

are central to their work. The school promotes pupils' self-confidence and resilience. This centres around pupils' respect for each other and for others' points of view. Pupils are encouraged to actively promote and articulate the values of respect and tolerance.

- Pupils are friendly, caring individuals who show consideration for others. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive as they are prepared to learn and work hard in their lessons. The relationships between pupils and adults are a strong feature of the school's work and its inclusive community.
- Pupils welcome opportunities to take on different responsibilities. For example, year representatives are part of the 'School Parliament' group, and in Year 6 a head boy and head girl are supported by deputy heads. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to influence change in their vibrant school environment.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in various scenarios, for example they are well aware of how to stay safe online and in their local community. They are encouraged to assess risks, for example when playing outside and also in their sports and physical education lessons.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying and racism are rare and that they are confident that staff would take quick and appropriate action should it occur. From a very early age, pupils are encouraged to embrace and value difference. As part of the curriculum, pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs. This further encourages them to respect others regardless of their faiths, beliefs or background.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct around the school and at different times of the school day is calm and orderly. There are a few instances of restless behaviour from pupils in class. Where pupils' work is challenging, their behaviour and attitude to learning are exemplary.
- In the main, pupils take pride in their appearance and are respectful of the school's physical environment. Displays around school constantly reinforce positive messages of behaviour and conduct to pupils. 'Our Five Golden Rules' and 'Our Line up and Travelling Code', for example, clearly communicate expectations and the qualities of positive behaviour to pupils.
- Pupils are proud to be part of this school. They are polite, courteous and well mannered to each other, staff and visitors.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions remains well below average for the third year. Staff support pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, and the school's positive behaviour management system is used consistently.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the school has robust systems in place to identify when this is not the case. Staff act swiftly if attendance for any individual pupil drops. Leaders recognise that securing the regular attendance of some groups of pupils is a priority for improvement, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress from their starting points. The progress made by pupils currently, as seen in their work, is variable in too many different classes across key stages 1 and 2. This is because teaching requires improvement and some teachers' expectations are not as high as they should be; this is particularly the case in Years 4 and 5.
- Pupils' outcomes in 2016 highlighted the negative impact of turbulent staffing and weaker teaching. This was particularly the case in reading and writing across key stage 1 and reading in key stage 2.
- Leaders have implemented strategies to improve the teaching of reading across the whole school, although provisional 2017 outcomes for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 also indicate that improving achievement in reading remains a major priority. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was much lower than the national average. Pupils do not apply their phonic skills well enough. In some instances, they struggle to read or decode unfamiliar words. Even so, across the year groups, current pupils are now benefiting from better provision. Texts are now typically well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Additional reading support sessions are increasingly effective. As a result, current pupils' progress in reading is showing steady signs of improvement.
- In key stage 1, pupils do not make good progress from their starting points. Teaching does not build effectively on pupils' prior learning in the Reception Year. In 2017, assessment information indicates that there has been some improvement in the proportion of pupils working at the expected level for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, this continues to fall short of the national average.
- Pupils do not achieve well in key stage 2. In Year 6 in 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the average. Their progress from their starting points was not good. In reading, progress was weak. Provisional results in 2017 show that standards by Year 6 were still too low. Current pupils' progress across key stage 2 is still highly variable. This is because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Teaching in Years 3 and 6 is stronger than in Years 4 and 5 and, as a result, these pupils are working at a better rate.
- The most able pupils do not attain as well as they should or make the progress which they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teaching does not stretch and challenge pupils sufficiently. For example, in 2017 by the end of key stages 1 and 2, very few pupils achieved greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison to other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils in the school. Leaders have ensured that improved intervention strategies help support these pupils to achieve even more.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making faster progress from their starting points. This is because better-quality support in lessons and intervention sessions are having a positive impact on their learning. Support staff have a positive impact on these pupils' progress. They effectively support their next steps in learning.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Provision in the early years requires improvement because children are not making enough progress from their starting points. Teachers do not use children's assessment information effectively to plan learning that sufficiently stimulates or challenges them or meets their varying needs.
- Leaders in the early years have not taken sufficient action to intervene and provide planned opportunities so that children can catch up with their learning and development when they fall behind.
- Although leaders have identified speech and language as a barrier to some children's learning and development, teaching does not focus precisely enough on opportunities to improve these areas. This is particularly the case for those children who speak English as an additional language and children who are disadvantaged.
- Teaching is inconsistent and therefore children are not reaching typical standards for their age. Too many children are not ready for Year 1. Where there is stronger practice evident, staff model, scaffold and verbalise learning for children and this allows children to develop quickly their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Expectations are not high enough for what children can achieve. Some planned activities do not challenge children. They are not confident to use their phonics knowledge in a range of situations. For example, some children find it difficult to decode 'tricky words' because the strategies to do so have not been fully embedded.
- Staff promote and maintain a caring and safe environment for children. This enables staff to model cooperation, positive relationships and learning behaviours. Supportive relationships between staff and children encourage them to participate in their learning and play. Leaders ensure that all statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements are met.
- The outdoor provision provides children with a stimulating environment in which to learn and play. Children are enthused and thrive. For example, a small group of children used a selection of materials to recreate the bridge in the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' story. They worked together and talked through the sequence of the story.
- Leaders identify those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly. As a result, they deploy appropriate support to meet their learning needs.
- Children behave well and they are given activities that interest them. They are developing positive attitudes to learning.
- The provision for two-year-olds in the school is highly effective in meeting their needs. Children are happy, they cooperate and adults respond to them promptly and appropriately.

School details

Unique reference number	133659
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10036572

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	743
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Glyn Holland
Headteacher	Ms Lisa F Biggin
Telephone number	01642 244961
Website	www.ayresomeprimary.org.uk/
Email address	office@ayresome.net
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Ayresome Primary School is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- Nearly two thirds of the pupils are eligible for support from the pupil premium.
- Pupils are from a wide range of different backgrounds. A significantly high number of pupils join the school during the school year. This includes refugees, asylum seekers and children from European migrant workers' families. Pupils speak 40 different home languages as well as English.
- The school opened provision for two-year-old children in September 2015. The provision is in a separate building on the school's site called Park House.
- The school provides a wide range of before- and after-school activities for pupils in all year groups to attend, including a breakfast club.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning across all year groups and phases. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work in books.
- They held meetings with leaders and other staff at the school, including members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons and around the school.
- They checked the nine responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and looked at the free-text comments submitted by those parents. Inspectors also checked the pupil and staff survey information.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and written evaluation of its work, policies and records relating to safeguarding and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. The school's assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress and other relevant information about the work of the school were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Darren Stewart, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Olie Flitcroft	Ofsted Inspector
Jim Hannah	Ofsted Inspector
Dom Brown	Ofsted 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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