

# Pallister Park Primary School

Gribdale Road, Pallister Park, Middlesbrough TS3 8PW

## Inspection dates

3–4 July 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</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 good school

- The headteacher has devoted much of her career to the pupils and parents and carers of Pallister Park. She places pupils' best interests at the heart of all decision making and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
- Assistant headteachers are recently appointed. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and provide additional capacity for the school to improve further. However, their improvement plans are not focused sharply to the gains in pupils' outcomes desired.
- Overall, pupils' outcomes in reading and writing are improving at key stages 1 and 2 as a result of improvements to teaching approaches. The teaching of mathematics continues to enable pupils to make consistently effective progress over time.
- Leaders' actions have led to a reduction in pupils' absence rates. Likewise, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is also reducing and is now much closer to the national average. Leaders see this aspect of their role as a continuing priority.
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been variable over time. Current outcomes indicate that the improvements seen in 2018 have not been sustained. This is because teachers use resources from a range of schemes that do not consolidate pupils' phonics skills effectively.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. It provides a haven of calm and security for pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is always a trusted adult in whom they can confide. Those parents who spoke to inspectors endorse this view.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous and polite to visitors and are proud of their achievements. They have contributed to the new behaviour policy, which is resulting in fewer behavioural incidents at the school.
- Schemes of work for subjects in the wider curriculum vary in quality. In physical education (PE), music and science, schemes of work map out the progression of knowledge and skills carefully, and pupils make good progress as a result. In geography, modern foreign languages and history, schemes of work are less well developed and pupils' progress is variable as a result.
- Children get off to a good start in Nursery. They settle quickly because of the warm and trusting relationships that are quickly formed.
- Children's progress in Reception is too variable. Teachers do not systematically build upon children's knowledge and skills as effectively as they could. As a result, in 2018, fewer than half of children in Reception reached a good level of development and were ready for Year 1.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of the early years, specifically in Reception, by:
  - ensuring that staff intervention in children’s free-choice activities extends and deepens their learning
  - using assessment information more precisely to ensure that planned activities build on what children already know and can do effectively, so that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development increases and they are ready for Year 1.
- Improve leadership and management further, by ensuring that:
  - improvement planning is focused sharply on the gains in pupils’ outcomes desired, so that these can be evaluated precisely
  - schemes of work for history, modern foreign languages and geography identify precisely the progression of knowledge and skills required to enable pupils to attain an age-appropriate understanding
  - efforts to improve pupils’ attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly away from school are continued.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further, by ensuring that:
  - there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, including in early years, that places greater emphasis on developing pupils’ fluency and blending skills
  - planned activities offer challenge to pupils, so that they can achieve as highly as they are able to.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Over time, the longstanding headteacher has brought much stability and a strong sense of direction to the school. She has steered the school through academy conversion and established the foundations for expansion into a multi-academy trust effectively. More recently, she took decisive action when pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 dipped in reading, writing and mathematics, following a period of staffing change. As a result, current pupils' outcomes, particularly at key stage 1, are improving.
- The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who is equally committed to the school. Along with three recently appointed assistant headteachers, they provide the capacity needed to return the school back to outstanding quickly.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They have implemented a consistent approach to teaching in their subjects that is applied in key stages 1 and 2, and that is bringing about improvements to current pupils' outcomes.
- A detailed programme of professional development and training is available to staff. A review of courses offered highlights the strong commitment to succession planning, so anyone joining the school can access a leadership progression pathway, should they wish to. This means that there is a ready crop of inspiring young leaders keen to take on additional responsibility.
- The PE curriculum is highly structured and enables pupils to excel in sport. An impressive array of trophies and certificates greets visitors to the school and reflects leaders' commitment to supporting pupils to stay healthy and keep fit. The PE leader ensures that additional PE and sport funding is used effectively. It is used to provide an extensive after-school activity programme, as well as many opportunities for pupils to represent their school in competitions.
- The science curriculum is equally well developed and ensures that most pupils acquire age-appropriate knowledge and skills. There is sufficient focus on practical activities to ensure that pupils develop their scientific enquiry skills well. However, in geography, modern foreign languages and history, schemes of work do not build pupils' subject specific knowledge and skills progressively and pupils are unable to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The majority of pupils qualify for the pupil premium grant, although this varies between year groups. Leaders ensure that it is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and to provide additional support for them and their families when it is needed most.
- Parents are very positive about the school's culture and ethos. They value the high levels of support and advice that they and their children receive. Staff are equally positive and feel very well supported to develop their skills. As a result, this is a very happy school and morale is high.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is recently appointed and has not fully developed her role. She has ensured that there is an up-to-date special

educational needs register in place and has organised a training programme for staff so that they have a suite of skills to support a range of additional needs effectively. However, although pastoral and social targets are precisely identified, some pupils' academic targets are too broad to be effectively evaluated. Senior leaders have taken action to remedy this.

- School improvement planning reflects leaders' good understanding of the most pressing priorities for the school. However, the targets they set for improvement are too broad and do not identify precisely the gains in pupils' outcomes desired. This makes it difficult for leaders to hold staff to account effectively for the progress and attainment of pupils in their charge.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are committed to the school. They have recently managed the transition to academy status well, and have established a clear structure for accountability for the trust. The structure has been designed for future capacity within the trust.
- Governors openly acknowledge some of the difficulties they have experienced in recruiting parent governors to serve on the governing body. To ensure community involvement, they use different ways of encouraging members of the wider community to be more closely involved in the school.
- All governors are appointed for the skills they bring. A skills audit has been undertaken to ensure that newly appointed governors possess the skills they need to help them undertake their strategic duties effectively. For example, following the disappointing key stage 1 results in 2018, governors actively sought new members with a background in education to enable them to better challenge pupils' assessment information.
- Governors know the school well because of the frequent visits they make. They have a high profile in the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that all employment checks are completed on staff to ensure that they are fit to work with children. Such checks are recorded in a single central record, which is well maintained and checked regularly by the designated safeguarding governor.
- Staff access regular training to ensure that they are aware of the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. Staff know the pupils well, which means that they are vigilant in spotting any changes in pupils' demeanour. Any concerns are reported to the designated officer quickly, who in turn ensures that they are referred in a timely manner. Senior safeguarding leaders work effectively with other agencies and parents to resolve concerns.
- Safeguarding leaders have a considerable workload at the school and some records are maintained on separate systems. This means that drawing the chronology of some actions together can be time consuming. Leaders identified that they are aligning

record-keeping mechanisms following the inspection.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Strong relationships exist across the school. There are high levels of mutual respect, which enables pupils to grow in confidence and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is consistently good in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders have ensured that there is a detailed progression in calculations documents that support staff to plan activities that meet pupils' needs accurately. Planned activities provide ample opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical fluency, and problem-solving and reasoning skills. Consequently, pupils attain standards in line with national averages at both the expected and higher standard by the time they leave key stage 2. They make well above average progress from their starting points.
- The recently appointed leader for English has acted quickly to adapt approaches to the teaching of reading and writing, and address the dip in standards seen in pupils' outcomes in 2018, particularly at key stage 1. Staff now place a much greater emphasis on oral rehearsal before they ask pupils to write. There are lots of prompts and scaffolds to support this process, which allow pupils to be increasingly confident to commit their ideas to paper. This approach has proved successful for current pupils, as their attainment in both reading and writing at end of key stage assessments at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 has improved on previous years. For the first time in several years, a small proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 2 attained the higher standard in writing.
- Leaders have introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' reading outcomes and to encourage more pupils to read for pleasure. For example, a 'book and bagel' is used to start each day. Before lessons start, all pupils receive a breakfast bagel while they immerse themselves in a book of their choice. The initiative is proving successful as pupils are now reading more and talking about books more. Such is its popularity that it has had the added bonus of improving pupils' punctuality and attendance.
- Following a review of pupils' outcomes in 2018, leaders recognised that their assessment system was not fit for purpose. To address this, they introduced a more sophisticated approach to tracking pupils' assessment information that enables leaders to analyse the outcomes of pupil groups in more detail. In turn, this has led to more focused intervention and support.
- All children in early years and pupils in Year 1 receive a daily phonics lesson. Over time, teachers have devised their own resources from a range of schemes. Although an appropriate order of phonics teaching occurs, not all resources consolidate pupils' phonics knowledge as effectively or systematically as they should. Occasionally, sessions do not place enough emphasis on developing pupils' blending and fluency skills. Consequently, pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have fluctuated year on year.
- Teachers plan activities with much thought to resources and stimuli to engage pupils. However, occasionally, there is an over-reliance on published materials, which limits the input required from pupils and lacks the challenge needed to deepen pupils'

understanding effectively.

- The teaching of subjects in the wider curriculum is more variable. In PE and science, planned activities are well considered and build pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially. However, in geography, history and modern foreign languages, schemes of work do not provide the guidance needed to enable teachers to build pupils' knowledge and skills progressively. As a result, although pupils experience a breadth of study, they do not deepen their understanding of these subjects as effectively as they could.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' pastoral care is excellent. Leaders ensure that pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, are very well supported. Leaders know their pupils and their extended families well and facilitate access to any additional services that they may need effectively.
- The curriculum for pupils' personal and social development is organised effectively. It exposes pupils to a range of themes to help them develop personally. Each year, pupils' understanding in a range of topics strengthens. For example, in considering health and hygiene, younger pupils learn about illness and the importance of brushing their teeth. Older pupils, meanwhile, learn about mental and physical changes that take place at puberty.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to reflect on their learning and to grow a developing awareness of their and other's cultures and beliefs.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. This is because teachers cover issues of safety through the curriculum. Pupils learn specific skills to help them to navigate the online world as safely as possible, by learning how to create a strong password and how to make effective choices and to network appropriately.
- PE is given high priority in the school. Leaders ensure that there is a strong focus on keeping fit, eating healthily and leading an active life. Actions are weaved through the curriculum. The school has successfully achieved the School Games Mark at platinum standard.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, and say that, 'it doesn't really happen, it's more fall-outs'. A review of school records would substantiate that a very small minority of pupils exchange unkind words with one another, but that leaders' actions in dealing with these issues are timely and appropriate.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning, and generally focus well in lessons. Any off-task behaviours are associated with work not being sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders have recently reviewed their approach to behaviour management and adjusted their rewards and sanctions policy. This is in response to the changing dynamics of the community, and the range of issues faced by pupils. Only a limited analysis of the impact of this has been completed so far, and although there remains a high number of reported incidents of poor behaviour in the school, incidents have reduced by 8% as a result of leaders' actions. Anecdotal evidence from discussion with the pupils and the staff indicates that behaviour has improved.
- Exclusions at the school are rare and are used as a very last resort. There has only been one period of fixed-term exclusion used by leaders since the school was last inspected.
- Attendance has improved considerably in the current school year, although it remains below the national average, with the proportion of pupils regularly absent from school well above average. Leaders have detailed, robust procedures in place, and dedicated members of staff work alongside parents to encourage good patterns of behaviour and punctuality. Although such support is systematically recorded, there remains a small minority of parents who do not ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. Leaders recognise that this aspect of their work is an ongoing priority.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Over time, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 has been well above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been broadly in line with the national average at the expected standard. Although unvalidated, current Year 6 pupils' attainment at both the expected and higher standard would represent an improvement on previous years. From lower than expected starting points, this represents good progress in reading and writing and outstanding progress in mathematics.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics dipped to be in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. Leaders have reorganised staffing and reviewed curriculum plans to improve pupils' outcomes. Observations of learning, a review of pupils' books and assessment information would indicate that current pupils' outcomes have improved as a result.
- Disadvantaged pupils represent the vast majority of pupils in the school. Their outcomes have improved in line with those of their peers. There are no discernible differences in attainment and progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make effective progress from their starting points. Although targets for pupils' personal and social needs are precise, academic outcomes are too broad to enable work to be targeted precisely. Leaders recognise this and are already taking action to address it.
- Pupils acquire a secure grasp of knowledge, skills and understanding in PE, music and

science. However, in geography, modern foreign languages and history, where schemes of work are under development, pupils are unable to deepen their understanding.

- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have fluctuated over time. In the current school year, pupils' outcomes dipped compared with those seen in 2018. This variability is due to a lack of fidelity shown towards the phonics scheme of choice, and not enough emphasis on developing pupils' blending and fluency skills.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- In 2019, submitted assessment information for those children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception fell to less than half of all children. This represents a decline in standards from 2018 outcomes. A review of children's work shows that, although children make some progress in acquiring basic skills, this is not as speedy as it could be, and means that too few children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching and learning in early years is variable. It is stronger in Nursery, where staff ensure that planned activities build on what children already know and can do consistently. However, in Reception, there is greater variability, and planned activities do not offer the challenge needed for children to make speedy progress in acquiring their knowledge and skills.
- The early years leader has ensured that all welfare arrangements are securely in place and that classrooms are well resourced. However, she has not monitored children's outcomes closely enough throughout the year to adapt activities or provide appropriate intervention to enable children in Reception to make good progress.
- The early years leader has introduced an electronic method of assessment that allows parents and carers to contribute to the process. However, currently, less than half of all parents are doing so.
- Staff work hard to plan a range of activities that will engage children both indoors and outdoors. Many activities are planned around themes that entice children, particularly boys, into creative and imaginative play, such as pirates and underwater creatures. However, in Reception, staff intervention in free-choice activities does not extend children's learning sufficiently or consolidate their basic skills enough. This is in stark contrast to the very effective intervention that happens in Nursery.
- Children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those that would be typically expected, particularly in the areas of learning associated with language and communication. Children get off to a good start because staff are skilled in providing appropriate levels of support and intervention during children's free-choice activities and adult-led sessions.
- The provision for two-year-olds is equally effective. Staff work hard to minimise any gaps in children's early development so that they can quickly become confident and independent learners.
- Staff in Reception and Nursery set high expectations for children to be respectful of each other and the environment. As a result, relationships across early years are strong, and children behave well and appear confident and happy.



## School details

Unique reference number	144136
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10086837

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	612
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Ray Brown
Headteacher	Chris Wain
Telephone number	01642 242174
Website	<a href="http://www.pallisterparkprimary.co.uk">www.pallisterparkprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:chris.wain@pallisterparkprimary.co.uk">chris.wain@pallisterparkprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is almost three times the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND and with an education, health and care plan is less than the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is the lead school in the Our Children 1st Multi-Academy Trust. It is currently the only school in the academy. It is organised with three members, six trustees and a local governing board. There remain some parent vacancies on the local governing board.
- The predecessor school was judged outstanding at its last full inspection in June 2013. It converted to an academy in April 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited teaching sessions across a range of subjects and in all year groups. Some were accompanied by members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors and trustees. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils formally and informally about their work, and heard them read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including assessment information, the school's self-evaluation report and action plans. The school's records relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- Inspectors talked to parents during sports day to gather their views about the school and also talked to staff.

## Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Wild	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wardle	Her Majesty's Inspector

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