

# Inspection of a good school: Acklam Whin Primary School

Carlbury Avenue, Acklam, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 8SQ

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Inspection dates:

24 and 25 October 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Most pupils are happy at Acklam Whin Primary School. They feel safe and cared for well. Most pupils behave well. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils understand the school's motto, 'Respect, Responsible, Safe'. The school deals with rare incidents of bullying swiftly.

The vast majority of parents feel pupils are safe. All pupils spoken to during the inspection feel safe in school. One pupil said, 'The headteacher is very good at making the school feel safe and respectful.' Pupils are confident to talk to an adult in school if they have any worries.

There is a calm atmosphere around the school. Historical timelines, world maps, displays and information about the school's values reinforce the school's main messages to pupils.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being reading buddies and librarians. Pupils look forward to visiting the new school library. They benefit from reading a diverse range of books.

The teaching of phonics is not consistent. The school's weakest readers are not supported as well as they should be. In some subjects, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly in key stage 2, are not ambitious enough.

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

The school's mathematics curriculum is well sequenced. Teachers check for any misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively. Teachers receive high-quality mathematics training. There are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit previous

learning. Teachers model the most efficient calculation methods confidently. In the early years, adults help children to order objects and count aloud well.

The teaching of phonics is not consistent. Some staff, who support pupils who find learning to read more difficult, have not been trained to deliver the school's phonics programme. The books that pupils read are not well matched to the sounds that they know. Some pupils struggle to hold a pencil correctly and form letters well because they are not taught to sit up properly.

In some subjects, teachers are not clear about the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know. They do not check that pupils understand what they have been taught well enough before moving on to new content. Pupils' knowledge of the school's curriculum in some subjects, for example in history and religious education, is superficial. In some subjects, particularly in key stage 2, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' written work. Pupils are not prepared well enough for their next stage in education.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum. Guidance for teachers about how to support pupils' individual needs is becoming more specific. A small number of parents and carers of children with SEND are unhappy about the support their children receive and the communication between home and school. Currently, the school is considering ways to further improve communication between home and school.

Most pupils behave well. Any behaviour issues are dealt with quickly. Bullying, including the use of inappropriate language, is dealt with promptly. Pupils contribute to class discussions and talk confidently to their peers about their learning. In the early years, routines are well established. Adults in the early years model effective behaviour, including taking turns, well to the children.

The school places high importance on pupils attending regularly. Systematic analysis of attendance patterns and trends ensures that staff identify and address any barriers to pupils attending school.

Many pupils enjoy the range of sporting activities the school provides. Year 6 pupils developed their team-building skills well on a recent residential visit. Leadership opportunities, such as being a member of the school council or an art leader, enable pupils to develop their confidence. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. However, they find it difficult to remember what they have been taught. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe online and offline. Pupils do not have an understanding of consent or the importance of fundamental British values.

Governors consider the well-being and workload of staff, including the headteacher. Early career teachers are well supported by leaders and their mentors.

In recent years, the school has experienced challenge in leadership. The school has prioritised the development of leaders' skills and expertise and raising academic standards. The school is outward-facing and seeks advice and support when needed.

Leaders know which aspects of school life require development. Governors and leaders have a shared purpose and vision to improve the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Weaker readers are not supported well enough to catch up quickly. The school needs to ensure that the school's phonics programme is taught consistently well by well-trained staff. The school also needs to ensure that the books given to pupils to practise reading are precisely matched to the sounds that they know.
- In some subjects, the most important knowledge and skills that pupils must learn and remember from the early years to Year 6 are not clear. Pupils find it difficult to remember what they have been taught. They have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The school needs to ensure that the most essential knowledge and skills are identified in every subject and that teaching and assessment prioritise the most important content.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111586
<b>Local authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290004
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	475
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Janet Lucas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzie Prince
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.acklamwhin.co.uk">www.acklamwhin.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has appointed a new headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher was acting headteacher for a period of time before becoming the school's substantive headteacher in December 2022.
- There is a new chair of the governing body since the previous inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils attending alternative education provision.
- The school shares the site with a private day-care provider.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of 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.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, talked to pupils about their work, looked at samples of pupils' work and held discussions about the curriculum. The inspector also visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and held discussions about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector met with a group of Year 5 and Year 6 girls.
- The inspector met with several staff, early career teachers, the school's special educational needs coordinator, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector met virtually with the local authority's senior standards adviser and a headteacher who has supported the school.
- The inspector met with most of the school's governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the school's governing body.
- The inspector considered the views of staff, pupils and parents who completed Ofsted's surveys.
- The inspector talked to some parents at the end of the school day when they were picking up their children from school.

### **Inspection team**

Michele Costello, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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