

Inspection of an outstanding school: Nunthorpe Primary Academy

Swan's Corner, Guisborough Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough TS7 0LA

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 October 2023

Outcome

Nunthorpe Primary Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Alexa O'Gara. The school is part of Ironstone 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), Carl David Faulkner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen David Elliott.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be a part of Nunthorpe Primary Academy. Leaders have made the school a nurturing place for pupils and staff. Pupils treat each other with high levels of respect. They celebrate each other's achievements. There is a palpable sense of aspiration in the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong. Adults in school keep pupils safe.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout school. The school rewards academic achievement, kindness and positive behaviour in a variety of ways. Pupils love receiving raffle tickets to win the special cushion each day or a golden pencil at the end of the week. These rewards keep them motivated to try their best.

The school has extremely high expectations for pupils' attainment. Staff's expertise is exceptionally good. The curriculum is ambitious and exciting. It brings learning to life for pupils. Pupils achieve well at Nunthorpe Primary Academy. All pupils, from the youngest children in Nursery to the oldest in Year 6, talk about their learning with confidence and enthusiasm.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of experiences the school provides. For example, pupils in Year 6 developed their understanding of careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) during an educational visit to the Nissan car factory. Outdoor education residential visits begin in Year 3. These develop pupils' independence and resilience as they try new and challenging activities. Pupils thrive in this school.

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

Pupils benefit from the highly ambitious curriculum in the school. This begins in the early years. Staff's expertise is exceptionally wide. Foundation subjects, such as geography and physical education, are enhanced by the staff's subject-specialist expertise. Knowledge-rich lessons bring learning to life for pupils. They immerse themselves in topic-themed days and educational visits. The curriculum creates lasting memories over and above the learning.

Reading is a high priority in this school. The reading curriculum is carefully planned from the early years to Year 6. The school has invested time and resources to ensure staff are experts in teaching reading. Pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers. The school provides superb support for pupils who need extra help with reading. This support is meticulously delivered and monitored. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress. Pupils enjoy reading in this school. They are introduced to an excellent breadth of books and poems. Pupils read with joy.

The school gives children an exceptionally strong start in the early years. The relationships between adults and children are nurturing and aspirational. The clearly defined and well-equipped learning areas maximise each interaction. The provision captures children's imagination. For example, adults strengthen children's understanding of number as they play 'frogs jumping into the river'. The quality of learning is evident in every activity. Adults prioritise developing children's communication and language. As a result, children have eloquent conversations about their learning.

Teachers and teaching assistants are experts at delivering the school's ambitious curriculum. The school has highly effective systems in place to check what pupils know and remember. It uses well-chosen questions to help pupils deepen their understanding. Any misconceptions or gaps in learning are addressed immediately. Lessons are interactive and well resourced. Pupils are highly motivated and share their ideas with their peers. They talk about the learning they do in classrooms and in the outdoor learning environment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from excellent individualised support. Specialist staff lead the recently established 'Rocket Room', in which they deliver small-group activities to deepen pupils' learning further. As a result of the school's exceptional support, pupils with SEND achieve very well. These pupils take a full and active part in the vibrant life of the school. They are well represented in pupil leadership positions.

The school has highly effective strategies to promote pupils' regular attendance. There are well-established systems to promote positive behaviour and kindness throughout school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Newly introduced systems encourage pupils to consider their feelings, and the feelings of others, throughout the day. Pupils self-regulate their behaviour exceptionally well. They handle occasional friendship issues in a calm and reflective way. The school has ensured that all behaviour systems act as character development opportunities for pupils.

Pupils attend a variety of educational visits and residential trips. The carefully curated curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the wider world extremely well. Subject

leaders have skilfully updated the curriculums for history and geography to support pupils' understanding of equalities. Pupils refer knowledgeably to personal, social and health education lessons when discussing healthy relationships and identifying risks.

Staff's well-being is a priority in this school. Leaders have implemented changes to the marking policy and email management to alleviate staff's workload. Those responsible for governance are deeply committed to maintaining high standards in all areas of school life. There is a culture of supportive challenge from governors. Leaders contribute to trust-wide developments with enthusiasm and diligence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

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	140919
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10290261
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen David Elliott
CEO of the trust	Carl David Faulkner
Headteacher	Alexa O’Gara
Website	https://nunthorpe.ironstoneacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of six schools in the Ironstone Academy Trust.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

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.
- The inspector spoke to senior leaders, including trustees, and members of the governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils from different year groups read.
- 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 also spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector analysed the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They reviewed contributions to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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