

Inspection of Sunnyside Academy

Manor Farm Way, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough TS8 0RJ

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Julie Sutton. The school is part of Ad Astra 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, Andy Brown, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Simmons.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a highly inclusive and caring school. Pupils with additional needs work alongside each other and their classmates with a smile. Pupils say this is one of the best things about school. Pupils accept each other for being just the way they are.

Pupils are respectful of each other and patiently wait for their turn. They exude good manners. They are polite and courteous. For example, pupils open doors for one another and visitors and check on the well-being of their friends, especially those with sensory needs. Pupils embody the school rules of being 'ready, respectful and safe'.

Pupils feel safe because there are adults to help them. They know adults will deal swiftly with poor behaviour.

Teachers expect pupils to do their best. They rise to this challenge. Pupils make an effort with the presentation of work and take pride in their books. Most pupils achieve well and demonstrate a love of reading. Pupils benefit from a calm and supportive environment in which they can learn.

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

The school has made huge strides in the quality of education provided for pupils. There is a new approach to teaching reading and a strengthened mathematics curriculum. The outcomes for younger pupils now match government expectations. The school is a regional point of strength in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For a few older pupils, the legacy of previous weaknesses in teaching have led to some gaps in basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. These pupils have had less time to benefit from the improved curriculum and good-quality teaching that is now in place.

The school's curriculum is ambitious and of good quality. In most subjects, the key knowledge pupils need is spelled out clearly and linked intelligently by broad themes. The school uses assessment well. Checks are made in lessons and at points during the school year to see if there are gaps in pupils' knowledge or understanding. Extra help is given, or lessons adapted, to address any gaps identified. However, a few subjects, such as design and technology, are not as well developed. In these subjects, pupils struggle to connect new learning to what they already know.

The school's provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Pupils are supported by staff with great skill, passion and knowledge. Whether in the resource bases or mainstream classes, pupils thrive. Pupils are focused and make good progress in learning. They show great pride at being in their individual bases and achieve well. Adults develop consistently positive relationships with pupils.

The school's approach to teaching early reading is well embedded. This starts in Nursery, where children learn and repeat rhymes. In Reception, children learn how to accurately make the sounds of letters and groups of letters using their teeth and tongue, copying the teacher. Pupils in Year 1 take books home that match their phonics knowledge to practise their reading, helping them to develop their confidence as readers. Most pupils in Year 2 read with confidence and expression. Any pupil at risk of falling behind is given help to keep up.

In lessons, pupils behave very well. They are attentive and keen to learn. They say lessons are fun. Children show curiosity and imagination. Pupils move around school in a calm and orderly way. Pupils play happily together at break, line up on the whistle and return to class or their SEND bases sensibly.

The school works hard to make sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, promoting ambition and aspiration. Pupils apply to 'shadow' an adult in school, such as a site manager or a teacher. A careers fair helps to make pupils aware of different career paths, widening pupils' understanding of the world of work.

Creative arts feature strongly across the school. Pupils visit the theatre, perform shows for parents and reap the benefits of being a Royal Shakespeare associate school. Work with the local mayor and school council elections develop pupils' understanding of democracy. Pupils visit the local care home and raise money for the children's department in the local hospital. No opportunity is lost to visit places of natural beauty or historical significance.

Systems of governance are highly effective. The local governing committee provides objective oversight and challenge. The trust provides high-quality support. School staff talk of a team approach based on mutual support and an ethos of positivity. Staff new to teaching are supported well. Parents and carers are positive about school. For example, one parent captured the views of many in describing the school as 'a nurturing environment where pupils are treated with respect.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few gaps remain in some older pupils' basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. This is holding them back from achieving as well as they could. The school must ensure that the basic skills of all pupils are secure so that they reach their full academic potential.
- The curriculum in some foundation subjects is less developed than it is in others. Some pupils are unable to connect new learning to what they already know. The

school needs to make sure that the curriculum is securely developed across all subjects so that pupils learn well across the whole curriculum.

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	140503
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10290252
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	282
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Simmons
Headteacher	Julie Sutton
Website	www.sunnyside.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in January 2014.
- The school joined Ad Astra Academy Trust in April 2022.
- The school runs seven additionally resourced provisions for pupils with SEND and employs several specialist teachers. The school supports the needs of pupils who are visually impaired, blind, auditory impaired, deaf, autistic or have social and emotional needs or moderate learning difficulties.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and other school leaders. The inspectors also met with teachers and a range of other staff.
- An inspector met four members of the local governing committee, including the chair. An inspector also spoke to two trustees from the trust board, including the chair, the trust's school improvement officers and the chief executive officer.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, design and technology, and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at curriculum documents and spoke to leaders about a range of other curriculum subjects.
- An inspector listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at breaktime and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors considered the well-being and workload of staff. They took note of the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey, including comments made by staff about their well-being.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Erica Hiorns

Ofsted Inspector

Marcus Newby

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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