

Inspection of a good school: Pallister Park Primary School

Gribdale Road, Pallister Park, Middlesbrough TS3 8PW

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Outcome

Pallister Park Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Heather Adams. This school is part of Our Children 1st Multi-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, Heather Adams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julie Davies.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pallister Park Primary School is a calm and purposeful learning environment for children from the age of two. The school teaches pupils to behave through their school ethos of 'work hard, play hard'. Staff set the expectations for behaviour, modelling the school rules 'ready, respectful, safe' from Nursery. Pupils know these rules and, as a result, pupil conduct is exemplary.

The school has high expectations for pupils. These are realised through the secure end of key stage outcomes.

The tranquil start to the day begins with a 'book and bagel'. This allows pupils to have a healthy breakfast in a secure environment.

Pupils respond swiftly to instructions and have positive behaviours for learning. Pupils are keen to nominate their peers for an 'above and beyond' accolade, spotting little kindnesses that make a big difference.

The school has a wealth of skilled adults to support pupils with their mental health and well-being. 'Soft starts' to the school day, where some pupils arrive early, ensures that pupils can regulate their emotions in readiness to learn.

Pupils make good use of the Christmas, Easter and summer holiday clubs provided by the school. It ensures that pupils access fun and focused activities in a safe setting during the school holidays.

The school provides leadership opportunities through the junior leadership team (JLT). The JLT impacts positively on improving the school. For example, they instigated planting shrubs and installing exercise equipment on the playground.

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

The school prioritises a love of reading. All pupils receive a book for their birthday and at Christmas. This school puts reading at the heart of the curriculum. Adults read to pupils every day. These books are selected to link to the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils are reading 'Darwin's Dragons' linked with their science unit on evolution. The books pupils read match their phonic knowledge. Pupils use their phonic knowledge to sound out new words successfully. The school checks the sounds pupils know regularly. The pupils who are not on track receive extra phonics daily.

The school has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The greatest need is communication and interaction. As a consequence, the school starts introducing the early phonic skills in Nursery. There is a focus on developing communication and language. Adults consistently model vocabulary to help to enhance children's communication skills.

The school designs its wider curriculum to encompass and facilitate '50 things to do at Pally Park'. These 50 experiences are thoughtfully linked to the curriculum. For example, in Year 3, pupils experience a cave walk linked to their history unit of the stone age. There is some variability in the quality of the curriculum sequencing. Most subjects are well considered, however, there is further refinement needed in some subjects to ensure that pupils are building their knowledge and skills over time.

The school makes checks on what pupils know in the wider curriculum. However, these checks do not give an accurate overview of achievement. For example, in some subjects, the statements the school uses to check pupils' knowledge are broad and do not give enough detail on how well pupils have performed.

There is a well-sequenced and progressive mathematics curriculum from Nursery to Year 6. The early years provision is number rich, with the youngest children learning about numbers through rhymes and songs. Pupils in Year 5 speak confidently about their recent learning in mathematics and show a secure understanding of concepts such as place value, decimals, angles, and time. Staff provide practical resources to support mathematical understanding. This is particularly effective for pupils with SEND. The school recognises that some pupils struggle with some mathematical concepts. As a result, staff training is enabling them to provide tasks that make mathematical links to real-life scenarios. This is engaging pupils more readily in mathematics.

An agreed whole-school approach has been adopted to teach pupils about relationships. The school has made decisions about which explicit language to use with pupils around sexual harassment. Pupils know to use the 'ask it basket' if they have a question they would like to ask anonymously. Adults address these at the end of each day.

The school shows determination to improve pupil attendance. As a result, the school has implemented penalty fines and positive incentives, such as the Friday reward assembly to encourage good attendance. However, persistent absence remains high meaning some pupils miss out on essential learning.

Staff work in large teams. This effectively reduces their workload as they share preparation and resources. There is an ad-hoc approach to enable subject leaders to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. This means that subject leaders do not currently have an up-to-date evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement in each subject.

The trustees have a good understanding of improvements the school has made since the last inspection. They hold leaders to account to ensure that there is continuous school improvement that focuses on impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's assessment system in the wider curriculum is not precise enough. This means the school does not have an accurate overview of what pupils know and remember. The school should ensure that their processes inform future planning and are consistently applied.
- The school does not effectively monitor the implementation of some of the wider curriculum. As a result, the school makes assumptions about the quality of their curriculum. The school should ensure that subject leaders have time to monitor the wider curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is considerably higher than the national average. This is showing little sign of improvement. These pupils are missing essential learning. The school should take effective action to continue to work with families to reduce persistent absence rates.

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/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 good in July 2019.

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	144136
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10346680
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	658
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Davies
Headteacher	Heather Adams
Website	www.pallisterparkprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	03 and 04 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school formed Our Children 1st Multi-Academy Trust in April 2017. It is the only school in the trust.
- The trust has members and trustees. The trustees have ultimate accountability for the management of the school.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has nursery provision for two-year-old children.
- The percentage of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is well above the national average.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, staff, and pupils.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum structure in history.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 views of parents and staff were considered from meeting with them and from the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.
- The views of pupils were considered from meeting with them.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Florence

Ofsted Inspector

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