

Pallister Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111631
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	325418
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	459
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Peacock
Headteacher	Mrs C Wain
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gribdale Road Pallister Park Middlesbrough TS3 8PW
Telephone number	01642 242174
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. It is set in an area of very high social and economic deprivation. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a Support Base which makes provision for 10 pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. Each of these pupils has a statement of special educational need. The school holds a number of national awards, including the Healthy Schools Gold award and the Sportsmark Gold award. The school has continued to grow in size since the last inspection and is now heavily over-subscribed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pallister Park is an outstanding school. Everyone in the school community is extremely well valued, supported and encouraged to succeed and do their very best – and they do. Every aspect of the school's work is of excellent quality because dedicated staff, led by an inspirational and caring headteacher, are committed to getting the best for and from every pupil. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and show their gratitude in comments such as, 'Children are made to feel special and wanted by every member staff, from the headteacher to the dinner ladies and the crossing patrol.'

Pupils make excellent progress in their learning so that, despite starting from a very low base in Nursery, by Year 2 and Year 6 they reach standards that are at the national average in English, mathematics and science. Their achievement is outstanding. The trend of rising standards has been very well maintained in the school since the last inspection. Standards in music and physical education are exceptionally high and they are reflected in the huge array of regional and national awards and trophies that are proudly displayed in the school. Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils behave extremely well, show a great enthusiasm for learning and are very caring and supportive of each other. They are keen to follow a healthy lifestyle by eating the right foods and taking plenty of exercise. They relish helping to improve the school and willingly take on responsibility. By the time they leave, pupils are very well prepared for the future.

Excellent teaching and a vibrant, exciting curriculum with 'loads of trips and clubs', provide the foundation for pupils' exceptional academic and personal progress. Teachers make learning fun. Because they know their pupils so well, they are able to plan activities and tasks that capture their interest and motivate them to work very hard in lessons. They involve pupils in tracking their own learning and this spurs them on to do even better. The curriculum is very well adapted so that all pupils are able to join in learning at their own level and benefit from visits and visitors to enrich and extend their learning. School clubs develop pupils' social skills very well and allow them to develop their talents and special interests. Pupils eagerly participate in the wide range of sports activities available. Along with opportunities to join in musical and dramatic productions, these activities serve to raise their self-esteem and confidence through very high levels of achievement.

Staff provide outstanding care and support for pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and are alert to any changes in performance or behaviour. The school's systems for providing individual support are meticulously planned and designed to provide a swift response whenever a pupil or their family is in need of support. Pupils' learning is well supported through excellent monitoring of their progress and clear guidance on how to improve. All of these systems and procedures give pupils an immense sense of security and well-being. Many pupils firmly believe the school needs no improving, because, 'It's just right as it is'.

Leadership, management and governance are excellent. The headteacher and senior leadership team give excellent direction and impetus to the work of the school. Leadership and management roles are well distributed amongst all staff so that teachers and teaching assistants play a significant part in improving the school. Teamwork and staff morale could not be better. Excellent use is made of highly effective tracking data to set and meet challenging targets. These have ensured that standards have risen significantly since the last inspection. Financial management is excellent and ensures that the school environment is of the highest quality and

that the school provides excellent value for money. The school is extremely well placed to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Early Years Foundation Stage provision is outstanding. It is a strength of the school, because it gives children such a good start to their education and ensures that they want to come to school. Children start Nursery with attainment and skills that are much lower than usually seen for this age. They make rapid progress in all areas of learning because they feel safe and secure in the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults give very high levels of care and support. Routines are well established which allow children to take responsibility, to make choices and to contribute to the smooth running of their class. This helps them make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Excellent teaching and very well planned learning activities ensure progress is very good in all areas of learning so that by the time they reach the end of Reception most children have reached the expected level for their age and some have exceeded it. The exception is in communication, language and literacy where a minority do not reach the expected level. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage were below those expected nationally. Assessment is very well used to track learning and plan the next steps. The marked rise in standards seen in 2008 is due to the improvements made to provision, especially in the teaching of letters and sounds and number and calculations. Children are happy and thrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their achievement is excellent. Parents are very happy with the provision made for their children and know that they are well cared for. Teamwork in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent and makes a strong contribution to the effectiveness of provision. Excellent leadership and management keep provision continually under review so that it is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no issues that the school is not already tackling.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are average, and the achievement of pupils is excellent. Pupils make excellent progress from very low starting points to reach average standards in Year 6. Standards by the end of Year 2 are now broadly average after a significant improvement in performance in 2008. This is the result of improvements to provision for literacy and numeracy in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, which have improved pupils' access to the whole curriculum. Running alongside these improvements there has been a decline in the numbers of pupils who are placed on the school's register of special educational needs, because the vast majority of pupils have their needs met by normal classroom provision.

There has been a significant rise in standards for pupils by the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. This is reflected in the school's five year upward trend in performance. Provisional results for 2008 show that pupils reached broadly average standards in national tests and that there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. This shows impressive progress from these pupils' starting points when they joined the school. Inspection evidence and school data show that Year 6 are on track to meet very challenging targets in the national tests this year, which would continue the trend of improving standards.

Pupils with a statement of special education need, who attend the Support Base, make excellent progress from their starting points, and though they do not reach the level expected for their age, their achievement is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. So too is their spiritual, moral and social development; cultural development is good, and is identified by the school as an aspect that could be developed further to give pupils a better understanding of our diverse society. Pupils share a clear understanding of the unacceptability of bullying and enjoy excellent relationships with each other and adults. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. It makes a very significant contribution to the happy, safe school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school: some say, 'It's like one big family'. Good attendance is testimony to pupils' enjoyment of learning and the many exciting experiences the school provides. Pupils understand about and follow a healthy lifestyle. Pupils understand the need to take care of themselves in a range of situations, including the internet, and are aware of the dangers of tobacco and alcohol and other harmful substances. They seize opportunities to make a contribution to their own and other communities. They take on responsibilities in school, make improvements through the school council and regularly raise funds for charity. Pupils are very well prepared for their future learning and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is exemplary and makes a huge contribution to the effectiveness of lessons. Planning is based on teachers' very good knowledge of pupils' needs. Activities are well chosen to motivate pupils by capturing their interest and assuring them of success. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They see learning as fun; they sparkle in lessons as they work hard to meet their targets so that they can surprise and please their teachers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptionally good progress because of high quality support which is tailored to meet their specific needs. Teachers make skilful use of questions to both assess learning and to improve pupils' thinking skills. This encourages pupils to develop and share their ideas so that their learning moves quickly and their understanding is consolidated. The pace of lessons is brisk. Teachers are extremely well organised, they have excellent routines that help pupils to change activities smoothly without any loss of time or interruption to learning. Pupils know what is expected of them, are well guided by individual targets, and their concentration could not be better. Excellent relationships create high levels of trust and respect and a very secure and happy learning environment. While teachers have very high expectations, pupils are not daunted by these, but thrive on the exciting challenges they are set because of the highly supportive climate in classrooms. Marking and feedback are of high quality and pupils are very well involved in tracking their own progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. It meets the needs of all groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils in the Support Base, exceptionally well. Provision for basic skills is excellent. It is well adapted to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, so that they all enjoy equal access to learning. The enrichment of learning through a huge array of exciting and well planned visits is outstanding. Several visits are made to areas of outstanding natural beauty, such as Cow Green Reservoir, giving pupils the opportunity to experience wonder at the natural world. Visitors to the school extend pupils' horizons by introducing them to new skills and cultural traditions. The range of extra curricular clubs and activities is outstanding and these are very well attended. While the many clubs support pupils' interests, skills and aptitudes, opportunities to excel in music and sport are exceptional. The result is that pupils from Pallister Park are well known for their success in sport. The school works closely with others in the local authority to provide challenging activities for those who have particular talents in mathematics, literacy, science and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff know pupils and their families very well and provide sustained and caring support to help pupils succeed. All procedures for safeguarding and child protection are in place and meet requirements. Pupils thrive in this nurturing and safe environment because they trust adults to help with any problems. As one pupil said, 'You can express yourself to teachers. They are always there to help in school work or with a personal problem'. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive exceptional support through well planned provision which takes very good account of their needs. There are excellent links with outside agencies and the recently appointed parent support adviser gives additional support to pupils and their families. The school is vigilant in its tracking of absence, involves other agencies when support is necessary and celebrates good attendance by individuals. Guidance for learning is excellent. Pupils receive regular oral feedback on how well they are doing and how to improve. Clear guidance in marking is given to pupils to improve their work and pupils are keen to track their own progress towards their personal targets. This helps them make excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. They have ensured that the school has made excellent progress in raising standards and improving provision since the last inspection. School self-evaluation is detailed and accurate because systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are regular and rigorous. The school's ambitions for every pupil are well reflected in exemplary inclusion practices. These ensure that pupils are enabled to achieve their best. They promote respect for self and others extremely well, so that all feel they have a voice and are equally valued members of the school community. Governors are very well informed about the school and give good support to many aspects of its work.

The headteacher's excellent and inspirational leadership provides the vision for a continually improving school. Her close attention to care and support for every member of the school

community is central to the school's success. This makes a very significant contribution to the cohesion of the school and wider community. The headteacher is extremely well supported by a deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher, both of whom are very skilled and able. Parents overwhelmingly applaud the strengths of the school and many say they feel privileged that their child attends. As one put it, 'It is a school I would travel great distances to, to ensure my children can attend as they have both thrived in the time they have spent there'.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pallister Park Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS3 8P

My colleagues and I would like to say a big thank you for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. Our inspection went by very quickly because your school has so many lovely things to see and find out about. We agree with what many of you told us – your school is outstanding and just right as it is.

One of the really good things about your school isthe pupils! Your behaviour is excellent and you show great respect by caring for each other really well. You make the school a happy and exciting place by the way you love your lessons and learn so well. We could see that you learn much faster than pupils in most other schools. This is because, as you told us, teachers make learning fun and give you lots of help to succeed; you also work very hard and don't waste any time in lessons. You all make the most of school life. We agree that your school gives you excellent learning opportunities and then makes these even better with amazing visits out of school and really interesting visitors who come in. We were astonished by the huge number of trophies and awards you have received. Well done all of you. Well done too for raising the money that you do for people who need your help. We think that your school prepares you very well for the next stage of learning because of all of these excellent qualities that you develop.

Some of you were able to explain to us really well why it is that you do so well in school. We agree with you that because you are so well cared for, supported and feel safe and happy in school, you flourish. Your families agree with you too. They are very pleased that you attend Pallister Park and are proud that you make excellent progress in your learning and reach the standards expected for your age. Please pass on our thanks to them for sending in the questionnaires telling us what they thought about your school.

Your headteacher, staff, governors and you, have all worked very hard to make your school outstanding. Congratulations and keep up this excellent work.

Thank you again for our lovely two days with you.

Best wishes from the whole team to all at Pallister Park.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector