

Nunthorpe Primary Academy

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

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have created an ethos of high expectations. Their determination that each pupil will succeed is coupled with a forensic attention to detail. Pupils gain excellent skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Additional funding is used superbly well to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make equally excellent progress and any differences diminish swiftly.
- Teaching is highly effective in accelerating pupils' progress. Teachers are skilled in using well-designed questions to probe pupils' understanding.
- The school uses an extensive network of partnerships to create a rich curriculum which provides pupils with memorable experiences. This fires pupils' enthusiasm and engagement in learning to a high degree.
- Leaders are restless in their pursuit of excellence. Their sharp evaluations and careful monitoring ensures that no underachievement is missed. Occasionally, improvement planning lacks precision.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils are self-assured and confident learners.
- All adults are committed to supporting pupils to be the best they can be. Adults know exactly how their contribution adds to pupils' experiences and achievement. Consequently, staff morale is extremely high.
- Governors know the school very well and play an important role in challenging and supporting the school to focus on seeking new ways of improving the school.
- Leadership, provision and teaching in the early years are excellent. Strong teamwork coupled with thoughtful learning activities ensure that children's curiosity is harnessed effectively to develop their learning.
- Leaders track the progress pupils make very effectively in mathematics, reading and writing. The school's tracking of pupils' progress in science, creative and foundation subjects lacks the same detail and flair.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine leaders' improvement planning so that it clearly identifies precisely what success will look like and how it will be measured.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress in science, foundation and creative subjects so that it matches the robust systems for reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have established a strong culture of learning. The headteacher's implacable determination that all pupils will achieve their full potential, regardless of any difficulties they face, is reflected in the high expectations teachers have for their pupils and that pupils have for themselves. As a consequence, pupils make rapid progress and develop a confident approach to learning.
- Leaders have also ensured that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. Excellent partnerships with parents ensure that teachers know pupils' needs precisely and make finely tuned adjustments to pupils' learning so that they can excel. Leaders make best use of a range of smart-phone applications, websites and emails to engage parents and, consequently, parents are fully supportive of the school and are kept up to date with their child's achievement.
- Senior and middle leaders know the school well because they monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements carefully and robustly. If there are dips in teaching performance, leaders put in place carefully planned programmes of support for teachers, which they monitor closely.
- The curriculum is rich and provides pupils with a wide range of experiences and the opportunity to pursue excellence in a range of skills, including music and dance. As well as gaining subject-specific skills, pupils apply their reading, writing, mathematical, speaking and listening skills to a variety of exciting activities. This stimulating curriculum is enhanced by myriad trips, visits and visitors which all add depth to pupils' learning experiences. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities, made possible through leaders' wise use of the primary school physical education and sports premium funding, to access activities such as mountain biking and cross country running.
- Teaching is expert in a wide range of subjects, and draws effectively on external partnerships and subject specialists. For example, in science, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to engage in practical investigations. During the inspection, all years had the opportunity to do an investigation involving chicks, from Year 1 finding the best sleeping materials to Year 6 investigating whether chicks can find their way through a maze.
- Additional funding is used to excellent effect to secure improvements for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders unpick exactly what is holding pupils back and plan specifically to meet those needs, whether it is about attendance or accessing a broader range of cultural events. This is supported by detailed tracking of pupils' progress and meticulous case notes, to which all adults have access and can contribute, creating a vivid picture of an individual pupil's progress. Occasionally, school improvement planning lacks crispness in identifying what leaders expect to see at different points in time. This makes it more difficult for leaders and governors to check if actions have been effective.
- Leaders track pupils' progress carefully, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables leaders to swiftly spot any underachievement and make sure pupils have tailored work and support almost immediately to help them catch up.

However, this is not as strong for science, foundation and creative subjects, nor does it reflect the wealth of pupils' curriculum experiences.

- The school maintains a positive relationship with the local authority and contributes effectively to supporting leadership networks. The Ironstone Trust has also been an effective partner by providing an objective view of the quality of the school. For example, through peer reviews when headteachers of other schools look at the quality of the school's work.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective and thoughtful. They know the school well and minutes of their meetings demonstrate the support and challenge they offer to the school. They have ensured, with the headteacher and senior leaders, that the school's priorities are intrinsically embedded in the performance management of all adults, thus ensuring that all adults know exactly how their work contributes to the work of the school. The range of skills of governors ensures that not only do they have the ability to keep on top of the strengths of the school, but also to spot where there are relative weaknesses and challenge so that the school's progress is sustained.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is embedded throughout the school. Policies and procedures are strong, ensuring that recruitment checks are appropriate and vulnerable pupils are extremely well supported. Relationships with external agencies are robust. The school keeps detailed records of contact with external agencies and staff are tenacious in seeking the right support.
- Staff training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and online dangers. A weekly briefing ensures that staff training is embedded and adults are kept abreast of any concerns that arise.
- The curriculum supports pupils in maintaining their own safety and assessment of risk. For example, pupils are knowledgeable about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers are highly skilled and their enthusiasm and knowledge inspires pupils. Pupils benefit from teachers' confidence in bringing learning to life. For example, Year 6 pupils moved seamlessly from learning about angles to applying that knowledge in calculating bearings on a map. Thus, the challenge for most-able pupils and those who are also disadvantaged is finely honed.
- Teachers know their pupils well and pitch activities that meet their needs very well. Teachers' incisive questions encourage pupils to think deeply and also swiftly reveal any misunderstanding. When pupils do not grasp a concept or skill straight away, teachers act quickly to diagnose the difficulty and then put in place sharply focused intervention so that pupils catch up rapidly.

- Assessment is detailed and accurate. Teachers are well aware of what pupils can do and what they need to be able to do to fulfil their potential. Teachers' high expectations result in pupils making rapid progress in improving their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Teachers are vigilant in spotting opportunities to deepen pupils' learning and, because of their success in promoting pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, are able to respond flexibly when they see the chance to create memorable moments. For example, moving the lesson outside to read a story to create a more authentic experience.
- Pupils' writing, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, improves quickly across the school because of teachers' careful planning. For example, teachers identified that boys' writing was relatively weaker in key stage 1 and on entry to the early years. Teachers designed finely tailored activities which enthused boys and provided a range of readily accessible writing materials; consequently, boys writing is improving quickly.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly skilful. Pupils are taught in small focused groups. They can move fluidly between the groups when extra challenge or support is required. As a result of this detailed planning, all pupils reached the required standard last year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well because teachers are acutely aware of their specific barriers to learning and assiduous in making sure pupils can overcome them. Disadvantaged pupils also have detailed plans to support teachers in pitching work at exactly the right level.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils settle into school life quickly and develop a love of learning. They are caring and kind to each other. They accept and celebrate the differences between them so that, for example, low-attaining readers do not hesitate to read aloud to most-able readers, confident that they will be listened to with respect and have help if they need it.
- The curriculum supports pupils in developing confidence and vulnerable pupils benefit from high-quality support. Detailed record-keeping ensures that those in need of support access exactly what they need. Staff, led by the example set by the headteacher, do not stint in their efforts to support families in difficulties.
- Pupils speak articulately about the school's rules and the reasons for them. They are comfortable talking about difficult subjects and say they feel safe. 'Share and care' boxes ensure that pupils can easily make adults aware of any difficulties they are experiencing.
- The school council take their responsibilities seriously and play a part in helping pupils resolve disagreements. Older pupils act assuredly as ambassadors for younger pupils when they are upset. The ambassadors are confident in knowing when they should seek adult help. Year 6 pupils also act effectively as play leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning have a significant impact on their rapid progress. Pupils behave very well in the classroom, around the building and at playtimes and lunchtimes. They are keen to contribute in lessons and they help each other to tackle difficult work.
- The relationships pupils have with adults and with each other are warm and trusting. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their attendance, which is above average. In recent years, disadvantaged pupils did not attend as well as others, but effective use of additional funding has diminished the differences successfully.
- Pupils understand all forms of bullying and the steps they should take if they encounter such behaviour. They are confident that should they need adults to take action, they could turn to any adult in the school.
- Pupils with identified behaviour difficulties are supported very well to overcome their difficulties. The rich curriculum is adapted to meet their needs and ensure that their learning does not slow.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points right across the school and from the outset in the early years. Pupils' progress in mathematics, writing and particularly in reading is strong and improving.
- Most pupils gained the expected level of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. Consequently, pupils were well prepared for their move into key stage 2, where they continue to make rapid gains across a broad range of subjects.
- Pupils' progress in writing did not quite match the high levels they reached in mathematics and reading in key stage 2 in 2016. However, work in pupils' books demonstrates that current progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils and the most able, is impressive. Pupils write frequently and at length. They are very keen to acquire their 'pen licence' and some pupils manage to achieve this as early as Year 2.
- Gaps in the progress made by boys and girls have diminished because leaders have ensured that activities are engaging and designed to meet specific needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making strong progress because their specific needs are tackled. For example, teachers have put a great deal of effort into designing activities to help pupils who have difficulty holding their pen correctly to strengthen their grip by improving their fine motor skills.
- Pupils' love of reading is engendered by an environment which is rich with text. Pupils are frequently seen choosing a book, talking about what they reading or settling down to read a good book. The most able and less able readers, including those who are also disadvantaged, access equally stimulating material designed to challenge them. Less-able readers make good use of their phonics skills to sound out unfamiliar words, they are resilient and rarely give up when they come across a tricky word.

- Pupils' skills in mathematics are also strong and develop extremely well during their time at school. They use their understanding successfully in other parts of the curriculum, especially in science, where they are confident in applying their skills and explaining why they have chosen particular methods of measurement, for example.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The majority of children come into the early years with skills that are typical for their age. Highly effective teamwork and thoughtful planning ensure that children make rapid gains in their learning and development.
- Adults develop highly positive relationships with parents, who appreciate the regular updates and emails they receive. Parents told inspectors how their children had blossomed since joining the school, gaining confidence quickly and rapidly expanding their vocabulary. Learning journals capture children's learning and development vividly, enhanced by parents' contributions about children's learning at home.
- Children make rapid progress because of the skilful work of adults, who spend time modelling skills and spotting opportunities to build on children's interest and curiosity to extend their learning. For example, while children were playing with 'dinosaur eggs', the adult helped the children to count them in and out and to introduce words to describe the increasing and decreasing numbers, such as 'most' and 'least'.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating and offer a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children readily help themselves to resources such as clipboards and, consequently, they develop confident writing skills. There are quiet corners where children happily handle books and develop a love of reading and stories.
- The early years leader has high expectations of her team and they respond very well. Assessment, for example, is detailed and coordinated, ensuring that adults know exactly what children are learning and are then able to help children to move their learning on as they make fluent and purposeful moves from task to task.
- Children maintain their concentration well. They are kind to each other and learn quickly how to share and look after each other because adults have established strong routines.
- The proportion of children gaining a good level of development has been consistently above the national average over the past few years and is improving consistently. Additional funding is used effectively to provide extra adult support to help disadvantaged children focus on the acquisition of basic skills. Boys' literacy skills, in particular, have improved in recent years.
- The excellent environment, focused leadership and skilful teaching ensure that children are extremely well prepared for their move into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	140919
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10032032

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy convertor
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Gordon Greer
Headteacher	Alexa O’Gara
Telephone number	01642 315508
Website	www.nunthorpe.ironstoneacademy.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@nunthorpeprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school became a convertor academy in June 2014 and joined The Ironstone Multi-Academy Trust in October 2016. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational need and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and made some short visits to classrooms. The headteacher joined the inspectors for some of the observations.
- On the second day of the inspection, Year 5 pupils were on a residential visit.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books across all years. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes was observed.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and held formal meetings with pupils from Years 4 and 6.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders. In addition to this, inspectors met with members of the governing body, staff responsible for safeguarding and attendance, and a group of middle leaders. The lead inspector also met a representative from the local authority and the chief executive officer of the school's trust, The Ironstone Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, school improvement planning, and documents monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They also looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's own policies, and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents during the inspection, as well as 51 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the staff throughout the inspection and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

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