

Inspection of a good school: The Avenue Primary School

The Avenue, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS7 0AG

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

Outcome

The Avenue Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil to achieve well. Pupils benefit from a high-quality curriculum in many subjects. Pupils value and follow 'The Golden Rules', as do staff. The rules of being kind, gentle, honest and respectful help staff to ensure a calm and respectful environment where pupils learn well. Pupils say they enjoy assemblies about the golden rules because these help everyone to get along.

Pupils are eager to contribute to lessons. Most pupils focus well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are supported effectively by staff, who know how to manage individual needs well. This means that lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils value the staff, who help them to resolve friendship problems. They say that this helps to prevent bullying. Pupils know about different types of bullying and unkind behaviour. Bullying is rare. When it occurs, staff act quickly to sort it out. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders are determined that every pupil contributes towards their school and wider community. Pupils learn leadership skills through a range of roles, such as being a member of the junior leadership team. They enjoy meeting with the head of school to represent all pupils in having a say about the choice of after-school clubs and sports.

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

In the core subjects, leaders have defined the knowledge, vocabulary and skills they want pupils to learn at each stage. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to build upon prior learning. They use assessment effectively to check pupils' knowledge and plan next steps in learning. In reading and mathematics, knowledge is well sequenced. Links between topics are clear. In Year 2, pupils learn to measure using centimetres and metres. In Year

3, pupils move on to measuring using millimetres. However, leaders have recently begun to change the curriculums in the foundation subjects to ensure they are well sequenced.

Each morning, in mathematics, pupils practise content learned in previous lessons. This helps pupils to gain confidence and develop fluency in number. However, some pupils do not remember what they have been taught previously in history. Some pupils struggle to remember important knowledge. This is because they do not have the opportunity to regularly revisit essential knowledge and skills.

Pupils learn phonics from the start of Reception Year. Staff teach the phonics programme well. Pupils who need extra help with reading receive support to catch up quickly. Most pupils enjoy reading books at the correct level of challenge. However, in key stage 1, the books that some pupils read do not match their phonic knowledge accurately. This means that these pupils cannot read the books to practise fluency and to gain confidence.

Most pupils say they love to read. They enjoy the range of stories read to them. In the early years, staff often read stories such as 'The Ugly Duckling'. This helps children to learn new vocabulary. The school council recently chose a wide selection of books for the school. Pupils enjoy choosing the class novel. They like making visits to the local library to select new books to read.

Pupils with SEND are supported well throughout their time in school. There are effective procedures in place to identify and support pupils with SEND. Training ensures that staff have expertise to meet individual needs. For instance, staff work alongside pupils in lessons to ensure instructions are manageable. This ensures that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Attitudes to learning are positive. Staff have expertise in providing support for pupils who sometimes struggle to manage strong emotions. Pupils enjoy time to reflect at the end of the day. They say that this helps them to feel calm. At breaktimes, 'playground buddies' ensure that everyone joins in with activities. Pupils say that 'everyone in this school is a friend.'

Pupils participate in a range of activities that benefit their broader development. Pupils understand how to stay healthy and safe. They have a strong understanding of the dangers of social media and digital gaming. Many pupils enjoy singing in the school choir. Everyone learns to play a range of musical instruments. Pupils take part in educational visits connected to the curriculum. Recently, pupils in Year 6 visited Ripon to explore Victorian buildings. Teachers help pupils to develop their understanding of a range of cultures. They learn about major events in the news, such as the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Pupils chose to raise funds to help those affected.

Staff are positive about the support they receive from leaders. They appreciate that leaders consider their workload and well-being. They value the range of training opportunities that are on offer. They enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that everyone who works in the school receives safeguarding training. Staff know about issues such as the impact of online gaming on pupils' well-being. They make sure that pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online. Staff are alert to the signs of different types of abuse. Leaders keep thorough safeguarding records. They take prompt action to contact outside agencies when necessary. The pastoral support leader works hard to prioritise the welfare of all pupils.

Leaders ensure that all relevant checks are completed to confirm that all staff are safe to work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, such as history, leaders have not identified the precise component knowledge that pupils need to learn at each stage. Pupils do not have the opportunity to regularly revisit key knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently able to connect their current learning with previous learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums for foundation subjects set out the knowledge and skills pupils need to know and when. They must ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to revisit knowledge so that pupils are well prepared for future learning.
- The books that some pupils read in key stage 1 do not match their phonic knowledge. This means some pupils do not develop their fluency when reading independently. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils receive books that match the sounds they know so that every pupil can practise reading to build fluency and confidence.

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. 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 predecessor school, The Avenue Primary School, to be good in September 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	146252
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10255783
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	442
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Parker
Headteacher	James Hunter (head of school)
Website	www.theavenueprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The head of school took up post at the school in September 2022.
- The school is a larger-than-the-average primary school. It has two classes per year group.
- The Avenue Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor, The Avenue Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the James Cook Learning Trust.
- The school uses one alternative provider at River Tees Primary Academy.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and senior leaders. The executive headteacher is also the chief executive officer of James Cook Learning Trust.
- The inspector met with several members of the local governing body, including both chairs of the local governing body and trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Additional discussions were held with leaders for personal development and the designated officers for safeguarding. A review of safeguarding procedures and documentation was also undertaken.
- The inspector reviewed free-text responses of parents and carers and considered the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector also reviewed responses to the staff survey and met with staff separately.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector considered the responses to the pupil survey and met with pupils to discuss their learning and their understanding of behaviour and how to keep safe.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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