

# Pallister Park Primary School

Gribdale Road, Pallister Park, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, TS3 8PW

**Inspection dates** 4–5 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils have excellent educational experiences which enrich their lives and prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education.
- The youngest children settle quickly into school routines and thoroughly enjoy learning in a calm yet vibrant environment which promotes excellent progress in their learning.
- Pupils' overall achievement is good. However, the school's excellent systems for keeping track of pupils' progress and a thorough scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils' progress is rapidly improving and attainment is set to continue to rise over a sustained period of time.
- Although improving, attainment in writing lags slightly behind reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding. The school's investment in the recruitment of extra teachers and teaching assistants has brought new strengths to the school and has ensured that the needs of all pupils are met through highly focused and personalised support programmes.
- Training programmes designed to improve the quality of teaching are highly effective. Hence, the best practice is shared across the school.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. Their behaviour cannot be faulted. They have exceptionally positive attitudes, enjoy learning and strive to achieve their very best.
- The headteacher's drive and leadership are outstanding. Senior leaders support the headteacher very effectively. Together, they have built a very strong staff team, all of whom share the same high aspirations for pupils and staff.
- The curriculum is exciting and well matched to meet pupils' needs. It provides them with a wealth of enjoyable and inspiring learning experiences. The performing arts and the vast range of sporting and leisure activities feature highly when pupils talk about aspects of the school which they enjoy most.
- The governing body plays an important and successful role in supporting and challenging the school to drive improvements forward at a rapid rate.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons of which three were joint observations carried out with the deputy headteacher and a senior leader. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Year 2 to Year 6, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority. Short discussions were held with pupils at break times and lunchtime.
- The inspectors took account of 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and had discussions with parents at the end of the day to ascertain their views of the school.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and took into account the work in pupils’ books, the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, the school’s improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding were also considered.

## Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Peter Bailey

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Pallister Park is much larger than an average-sized primary school.
- In September 2012, the school was awarded National Teaching School status. It is the lead school in the Middlesbrough Schools' Teaching Alliance.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the continuing rise in pupils' attainment, especially in writing, by:
  - encouraging and expecting pupils to write at greater length across a range of subjects other than English
  - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of how pupils present their work in all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The overwhelming majority of children start school with skills that are exceptionally well below those typically expected for their age in most areas of learning, especially in reading, writing and numeracy.
- Children settle quickly when they start school. They make excellent progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the outstanding teaching, the exciting range of well-planned activities which take account of their individual needs and the sharp focus on speaking and listening to improve children's language and communication skills. By the time they enter Year 1, their attainment has risen much closer to but still below average.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been consistently low for a number of years. However, recent changes to the way classes are organised and an increase in the number of teachers and teaching assistants has resulted in pupils making rapid gains in their learning. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has risen sharply and is now in line with the national average.
- By the end of Year 6 attainment is average. This represents good progress when taking into account pupils very low starting points. Lesson observations, a thorough scrutiny of pupils' work and listening to pupils read confirms that the rate at which pupils make progress throughout the whole of Key Stage 2 is continuing to increase and attainment is improving rapidly.
- Progress in reading is more rapid than in writing. This is because pupils in some classes are not given enough opportunities to apply the writing skills they learn in English lessons to other subjects.
- The handwriting of some pupils is untidy as there is no consistent style and teachers do not always expect the highest standards of presentation.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The systematic teaching of linking letters and sounds is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. This is reflected in the average proportion of six-year-olds who reached the nationally expected level in the check of pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make in Year 1 in 2012. Given their low literacy skills on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage, this represents excellent progress. As pupils move through the school, they develop a love of reading, relishing the opportunities, as exemplified by one Year 6 pupil who said, 'You can just drop into another world and become any character you choose.'
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers. Sensitive, well organised support from teachers and teaching assistants enables these pupils to gain confidence in their own ability and promotes their learning exceptionally well.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make at least good progress and attain standards similar to that of their classmates in English and mathematics. This is because they benefit from the careful and considered allocation of this funding to ensure their needs are met.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Recently appointed teachers and teaching assistants have brought new strengths that have added to the overall quality of teaching. As a result almost half of the lessons seen were outstanding and none were less than good. This is reflected in the rapidly improving levels of achievement throughout the school.
- Teaching is often inspirational. Lessons are typically lively, capturing pupils' interests and imaginations. This has helped pupils to develop outstanding attitudes to learning.
- Teachers discuss with pupils what successful learning looks like. When, on occasions, pupils are unclear about what is expected of them, they confidently ask for and are given the support they require to move their learning on very quickly. This is because of the excellent relationships

between pupils and teachers, the exceptionally well organised classrooms and pupils' knowledge that their teachers want them to be the best they can be.

- In almost all lessons, pupils respond with eagerness and enthusiasm and soak up learning. For example, teachers and their teams of teaching assistants each focused on groups with different needs. Within minutes of entering the room each adult had pupils working enthusiastically on meaningful activities which challenged their thinking. They questioned, challenged and consolidated the learning of each group without putting the learning of others on hold. This promoted good understanding and excellent progress.
- Teaching assistants liaise closely with teachers and are often responsible for small group and one-to-one tuition. They are highly effective in giving pupils a boost to their learning. This work is carefully monitored, ensuring that no pupils fall behind in their work and each is given excellent opportunities to achieve their best.
- In a small minority of lessons, there are missed opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their writing skills in subjects other than English and to encourage pupils to present their work neatly.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. All pupils know their targets for improvement and are eager to talk about exactly what it is they need to do to improve.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The school provides an exceptionally caring and supportive environment in which all pupils are valued.
- Pupils take pride in themselves and their school, making every effort to do their best. In lessons, around the school and on the playground they are courteous and polite. Excellent behaviour is nurtured from the time they enter school. Adults continually congratulate pupils on their good manners. Hence, the school is a very happy, harmonious and friendly place.
- Teachers manage behaviour extremely well and resolve issues swiftly and quietly. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils are carefully nurtured as individuals and those with behavioural difficulties learn how to regulate their own behaviour. They are aware of all the different forms of bullying, reflect on the impact of their actions on others and take full responsibility for their personal conduct. Consequently, incidents of bullying are rare.
- Pupils are confident in sharing their concerns because they know that they will be listened to. They feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they are worried about anything. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- The work of the family support worker is pivotal in improving communication between home and school. She has worked well with the administrative team to improve pupils' attendance as well as helping parents resolve any difficulties which could adversely affect their child's performance at school.
- Attendance is above average.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The very capable and uncompromising leadership of the headteacher is key to the school's continued success. She provides the school with extremely strong and highly effective leadership. Her high expectations are shared by all staff, ensuring a strong sense of teamwork. The staff questionnaires reflect this strong team spirit.
- Leaders at all levels are very effective. Their sharply focused and rigorous checks on teaching and learning give staff clear guidance on how to improve, driving improvement forward by tackling weaknesses quickly and successfully through well-planned training for teachers and teaching assistants. This is often provided through the Middlesbrough Schools' Teaching Alliance. As a result the best practice is spread effectively across the school in a continuous pursuit of improvement and excellence.

- Pupils' progress is checked extremely carefully. Any underachievement is identified quickly and effective actions are taken to provide additional support.
- The exciting curriculum captures pupils' interests. It is enriched by visits and visitors and an enormous and varied range of cultural, musical and sporting activities in which the school has won many national awards. These make a significant contribution to pupils' high levels of confidence and self-esteem and their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is clearly apparent in their spectacular and spine-tingling performances of dance, music and drama.
- Links with parents are exceptionally strong. Parents say that the school is very welcoming. One parent commented that, 'It's brilliant. It's got a heart, a great big heart. The children come first in everything.'
- The school enjoys a strong and effective relationship with the local authority, each sharing their expertise to improve provision and outcomes at Pallister and other schools in the Teaching Alliance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Through frequent formal and informal visits, they have become increasingly aware of the quality of teaching and how it relates to pupils' progress. They attend training to ensure that they have the knowledge to understand data and the skills to hold the headteacher and leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors keep a close eye on the allocation and impact of any spending, including the pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that reviews of teachers' work are linked closely to the progress and attainment of their pupils, to the standards expected of teachers and to the pay scales that teachers are on. They ensure that statutory requirements are met and safeguarding has a high priority.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111631
<b>Local authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	412117

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	498
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ray Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Wain
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 242174
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 242175
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