

Inspection of Sunnyside Academy

Manor Farm Way, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough, TS8 0RJ

Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

At Sunnyside Academy, there are many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This makes it distinct and different from many other primary schools. The staff make sure that everyone feels welcome and included in the life of the school. Pupils are very accepting and supportive of one another. One pupil told us, 'This school is for everyone. It looks after everybody.' Every class has pupils who need extra help. Pupils who are deaf or have a hearing or visual impairment get excellent equipment and support from adults.

Although the staff are caring, they do not organise learning well enough. The curriculum in some subjects is not well planned. Therefore, pupils do not develop a deep understanding. Some teachers do not teach subjects in enough detail. Other teachers then have to try and fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The headteacher has improved pupils' behaviour. She does everything possible to keep pupils safe. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. Pupils are confident that the staff will quickly sort out any bullying.

The school provides many opportunities that help pupils cope with life beyond school. There are lots of imaginative events and trips to places of interest. Pupils with SEND are helped to become independent and be able to look after themselves.

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

The quality of education requires improvement. Despite the headteacher's efforts, standards at the end of key stage 2 have remained below average for the last three years. This is because the changes that leaders have made have not become the norm. Some changes have not been well received by the staff. The governors have not checked on the school's performance enough. Too many initiatives are unfinished.

The headteacher has prioritised reading. Leaders' chosen phonics programme is showing positive signs. Children learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Most teachers in the lower school have received phonics training. The school's current approach to teaching phonics means that some children are held back while waiting for others who need more time. In the Reception class, children are given books that closely match the sounds they have learned. This is not always the case in key stage 1. The headteacher knows that she needs to order new books for these classes.

Curriculum planning is variable. In mathematics, there are no plans that tell teachers the sequence in which knowledge should be taught. Instead, teachers rely on assessment sheets to work out what they should teach. This results in pupils missing some content or being taught it in the wrong order. Planning is more coherent in English. However, some teachers do not expect enough of pupils and too readily

accept errors in punctuation and spelling. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 then have to reteach some skills that pupils should already have secured.

Planning in other subjects is further behind. Leaders do not check what pupils are being taught often enough. Sometimes pupils go for weeks without any teaching of some subjects, such as geography. Subject leaders for the wider curriculum have only been appointed very recently. They have not had the time or training they need to make a difference.

Despite these weaknesses, pupils very much enjoy their lessons. They try hard. Many pupils have beautifully presented books. Older pupils redraft their work until it is the best they can do. Pupils really encourage one another. Pupils who are deaf and those with a hearing or visual impairment take a full and active part in lessons. The excellent work of specially trained staff and the pastoral team helps pupils with SEND stay on track in their learning. They support pupils with their mental health well. Some pupils who can become emotional are taught to manage their feelings and to improve their behaviour.

A strength of the school's work is how well it supports pupils' personal development. There are many enriching activities. Pupils go camping. Pupils with visual impairment are led through high ropes assault courses. They enjoy specialist 'sound' tennis coaching. There are many sporting events and musical performances. Careful thought has gone into providing a range of therapies. There is a good programme of lessons that supports pupils' personal, social and health development. Everyone learns British Sign Language. Specialist facilities help pupils with SEND to practise essential life skills.

The early years leader helps children to make a secure start. The curriculum is broad. Planning is more coherent than in the main school. But some content covered is not well considered. For example, children label maps of the world before they are taught about their own locality. Teachers focus on language and communication. In the Nursery, children learn rhymes and songs. This prepares them well to learn phonics. In the Reception, children's early reading skills are developing well. However, they make a slower start in writing and numbers. They do not practise these skills often enough in the autumn term.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Each year, the headteacher makes a systematic review of the school's safeguarding work. She has refined the school's approach well. Information about safeguarding is displayed prominently around the school. Staff receive up-to-date training. They all know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders act quickly if the staff report any concerns. They work closely with social care and other agencies. Leaders know they have many pupils who are potentially more vulnerable to abuse or neglect. They keep a close eye on these pupils to make sure that they are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not planned well enough. In mathematics, planning does not set out the sequence in which knowledge should be taught. In the wider curriculum, topics identified in plans are not always being taught. This means pupils are going for long periods without any teaching in some subjects. Leaders need to reflect on their curriculum model. They need to ensure first that planning in core subjects is coherent and that teachers implement it consistently. Second, they need to review how the wider curriculum is planned and implemented.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She understands its strengths and weaknesses in detail. However, the quality of leadership at other levels needs to be improved. The governors have not been active enough. Senior leaders do not systematically check the quality of education. Some subject leaders are new to the role and have not had the training they need. Consequently, despite lots of activity, standards in the school have not improved. Leaders at all levels need to ensure that they focus more on checking how well pupils learn the curriculum.
- The headteacher wants more staff to take on additional responsibilities that would benefit the pupils. This includes asking teachers to take on the leadership of subjects. Some staff feel they already have a challenging workload. This tension is slowing down efforts to improve the school. The governors need to ensure that more open discussions take place between leaders and the staff, so that roles and responsibilities can be agreed, are manageable and are in the best interest of pupils.
- Standards in reading are improving. The school's early reading programme is becoming well established. However, further investment is needed to ensure that pupils in key stage 1 have reading books that more closely match the sounds that they know or are currently learning.
- Children in the Reception do not do enough writing and number work in the autumn term. Although the pace of their development in these areas accelerates in the spring and summer, not enough children make the progress they need overall to be ready to start Year 1. Leaders must ensure that children get more frequent and more intensive adult-led teaching of reading, writing and numbers in the autumn term.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	140503
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10110677
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	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Madden
Headteacher	Julie Sutton
Website	www.sunnyside.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 September 2015

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in February 2017. Prior to her appointment, the school had an interim headteacher for a period of about six months.
- The school hosts three additionally resourced provisions for pupils with SEND. There is a base for up to 25 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. In addition, there are two bases for up to 58 pupils who are deaf, hearing impaired or have visual impairment.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is well above the national average. Around 10% of pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum team leaders. We also met the members of staff who lead and manage the additionally resourced provisions.
- We met two members of the governing body, one of whom is also a trustee.

- We met a representative of the local authority.
- We focused on the quality of the curriculum in reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. We met the curriculum leaders for each subject, visited lessons, talked to pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and talked to teachers. Some of the lesson visits we made included those in the additionally resourced bases.
- We looked at other information about behaviour, attendance, extra-curricular activities and wider enrichment events. We considered the responses to the staff survey and to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- We looked at pupils' punctuality, behaviour and conduct across the school day. The inspection team held discussions with groups of pupils and listened to some pupils read. We also spoke to different members of staff, including the site supervisor, office staff and a newly qualified teacher to gauge their views about how well pupils conduct themselves. We also met some pupils who have received sanctions in the past.
- We looked at the vetting checks leaders make on adults who work in the school. We also talked to the headteacher and other members of staff about safeguarding arrangements. We looked at records of the actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. The team spoke to pupils to check how safe they felt. We also checked whether members of staff understand and abide by the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

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