

Inspection of Ribbon Academy

Barnes Road, Murton, Seaham SR7 9QR

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Ribbon Academy. It is an inclusive, nurturing school. Staff have high ambitions for every pupil in their school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their achievements. Pupils' accomplishments are celebrated throughout the school. Celebratory displays showcase the rich opportunities that pupils are exposed to. Pupils are happy in this school. Parents agree.

The high expectations of what children can achieve are evident from the start of their school journey. Early years staff provide children with a magical learning journey. Children are encouraged to develop curious attitudes and independence. This is echoed across most areas of the curriculum.

The school's positive learning environment inspires pupils to want to know more. Pupils are eager to recite poetry on the 'Poets' Podium'. They want to read more books to receive tokens for their book vending machine. 'Ribbon Radio', the school's weekly broadcasting station, enables pupils to develop confidence and showcase their individual talents.

Pupils say they feel safe in this school. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are able to articulate a strong understanding of the school's values of resilience, empathy, self-awareness, positivity, excellence, communication and teamwork. These attributes underpin the school's virtues of 'RESPECT'. These virtues are evident in the actions and behaviours of pupils both in and out of lessons. Bullying is rare in this school. Staff deal with any concerns as they arise.

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

Leaders have developed expertise among all staff. Staff have benefited from ongoing high-quality professional development. Staff have created a broad and inspiring curriculum in most subjects. The curriculum plans for these subjects are well thought out to ensure learning is built on progressively from Nursery to Year 6. The curriculum helps teachers to plan lessons which enable pupils to revisit and build on their knowledge as they learn. In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment consistently to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This can occasionally hinder how well gaps in pupils' learning are identified.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders steadfastly prioritise teaching pupils to read. Staff are trained to teach phonics using an effective systematic phonics programme. This begins in the early years. Staff match pupils' reading books to the sounds children know. This helps pupils to practise their reading and grow in confidence. Teachers identify pupils who fall behind or need extra support quickly. These pupils receive prompt help from highly skilled staff. Staff encourage all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to read regularly and develop a love of reading. Reading competitions, and other reading

opportunities, develop pupils' love of reading. The library is well stocked and attractive. Pupils at Ribbon Academy love to read.

Children begin their education with an exciting learning adventure as they start in the early years. The extremely knowledgeable early years staff take the time to find out what makes each child unique. Children's interests and curiosity are developed as they build on what they know. Teachers provide children with an exceptional range of exciting and carefully planned learning activities. All staff understand the importance of developing children's spoken language. This is done well. Children's independence is encouraged from day one. Children thrive in response to the wealth of learning opportunities available to them indoors and outdoors. The activities that staff provide help children to develop enquiring minds and practise their learning.

The wider personal development (PD) curriculum is exceptional. Leaders prepare pupils thoroughly for success in the wide and diverse world outside of the school gates. They understand that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, may have limited life experiences. To address this, leaders ensure that their PD offer provides pupils with a wide and rich range of experiences. Half-termly educational visits bring subjects to life. For example, pupils visit London and the House of Commons when learning about democracy and the rule of law. Active citizenship opportunities include the school's pupil parliament. Fundraising opportunities are organised by pupils and they also serve in the 'community café'. Some pupils have the opportunity to train as dementia advocates with the Alzheimer's Society. Pupils contribute to the local, national and international community extremely well.

The vast majority of pupils behave well in class and around the school. They live up to the leaders' high expectations. Leaders have created a strong sense of belonging and growing together in this school community. This is demonstrated in the genuine care that pupils demonstrate throughout school. Pupils feel safe in the school. One child explained this, describing school as their 'safe spot'.

There is a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork among the staff. They are overwhelmingly positive about the support and consideration they receive from school leaders. The local governing body and trustees are knowledgeable about the school. They are committed to the success of every pupil and challenge leaders effectively to support them in attaining this goal.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that the welfare and safety of all pupils are prioritised. Effective systems are in place to help staff report concerns quickly. These concerns are followed up robustly. Leaders work with outside agencies to ensure that families receive any support that is needed. The school's pastoral team works tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are well cared for.

Staff receive regular training and they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They follow safer recruitment procedures, and the single central record is compliant. Thorough safeguarding records are maintained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge well enough in some subjects. This sometimes limits how well pupils are able to build on what they already know and remember. Leaders must ensure that purposeful assessment is used to identify gaps in pupils' learning equally well in all subjects.

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	138633
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10242118
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	478
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Garrod
Headteacher	Ashleigh Sheridan
Website	www.ribbonacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Nursery for children aged three and four years of age. Children may attend this provision either full time or part time.
- An external day-care provider operates on site to provide care for children under three years of age.
- The school site is also a base for the provider 'Place2Be'. Leaders access this provision to provide support and counselling for pupils and staff.
- The school runs breakfast clubs and after-school activities for the pupils.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the senior leadership team, the pastoral team, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and the local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, design technology, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and policies, speaking to staff and the chair of trustees, and by discussing safeguarding with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including school improvement documentation and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Debra Murphy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Warner	Ofsted Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector

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