

Inspection of Brambles Primary Academy

Kedward Avenue, Brambles, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS3 9DB

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Stuart Mayle. This school is part of Tees Valley Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Katrina Morley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Suzanne Hague.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision of 'learning together; growing together; making a difference' is lived out through every aspect of Brambles Primary Academy. The school sits at the heart of the community. It provides an excellent standard of education and support to the pupils and families it serves. Relationships are very strong and supportive. Pupils are nurtured with great care and, as a result, are happy to come to school.

There are very high expectations of all pupils in the school, regardless of their background. Pupils are supported very well to meet these high expectations. Many pupils achieve highly and make excellent progress, thriving academically and personally.

In lessons and around school, a culture of excellence ensures that behaviour is exemplary. The school is an exceptionally calm and purposeful place to learn. Through their commitment to high-quality character education, pupils are also inspired to uphold these same high standards of behaviour in the community.

The school is proud to serve a diverse community. Exceptional pastoral support means families receive a very high level of care that goes beyond the typical role of a school. Staff are incredibly passionate about making a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of pupils and their families.

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

The school has established an exciting and engaging curriculum for all pupils. This curriculum builds on prior knowledge and allows pupils to gain new skills over time. Pupils enjoy and take great pride in their work. For example, they relish designing t-shirts in art and design and applying mathematics skills to design a car. The curriculum also places a sharp focus on acquiring a rich range of new vocabulary. Leaders continue to refine and adapt the curriculum. Staff receive ongoing, high-quality training to ensure the curriculum is implemented effectively. This is having a strong impact on what pupils achieve.

Reading is a high priority for the school. Pupils benefit from daily teaching through the school's well-embedded phonics programme. Staff use consistent strategies to help pupils learn new sounds quickly. Pupils apply these new sounds when reading books that are well matched to their abilities. Pupils also enjoy the wide range of books on offer in the newly developed library. This diverse selection of texts has been very carefully chosen by leaders.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified and supported exceptionally well. Through a range of specialist support and high-quality training, staff build strong expertise to provide excellent support for these pupils. This means pupils benefit from bespoke interventions and carefully tailored adaptations to allow them to access the full curriculum.

Children in the early years foundation stage get off to a flying start. They are happy and enjoy a wide range of activities. Very strong curriculum design and delivery means that

the provision children receive is of a very high standard. In their play, children enthusiastically engage in writing lists, building structures, counting games and creating tracks for cars to travel on. Play is lively and exciting. Children are deeply engaged in these opportunities, which capture children's imagination and interest. Staff know the children really well. This means that individual needs are known and met effectively, ensuring no time is wasted.

The school has taken effective action to improve the attendance of pupils. A wide range of targeted support is in place to improve low attendance and persistent absence. Most groups of pupils now attend school regularly. However, a small number of pupils continue to miss school and the exceptional education on offer.

The school's work to promote personal development is exemplary. This work goes beyond what is expected and is highly inclusive. A very carefully structured curriculum is in place to ensure pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities and experiences. These include a strong careers programme, engaging debate opportunities and very well-attended holiday clubs. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the trips they attend and the important roles they have in school. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's programme for personal, social and health education equips pupils well with the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe, including online. The school is also very effective in ensuring this work responds to the challenges faced in the local community.

Leaders, at all levels, are tenacious in their ambitions for pupils in the school. They are unwavering in their commitment to improving the outcomes of pupils at Brambles. Staff value the strong support they receive to manage their workload effectively. They speak with high praise for leaders. The school is also held in exceptionally high regard by families. They recognise the wide-ranging support the school provides. One parent summarised the impact of this support by saying, 'I would be lost without this school.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138559
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10346453
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Suzanne Hague
CEO of the trust	Katrina Morley
Headteacher	Stuart Mayle
Website	brambles.teesvalleyeducation.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 June 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up the substantive post in January 2025. He was previously the acting headteacher. The acting deputy headteacher is also new to role.
- The school is part of the Tees Valley Education Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club. This is overseen by the board of trustees.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is well above national averages.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic

began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including the CEO, the deputy CEO, representatives from the board of trustees, the chair of the local academy committee, the independent chair of the standards committee and other trust leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects by talking to leaders, looking at work and talking to pupils about their lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, looked at behaviour and attendance logs and safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke to pupils, staff and leaders about safeguarding and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND and reviewed the plans in place to support these pupils. They visited lessons to see how well pupils with SEND are supported.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision to discuss the learning with children and leaders. Inspectors also checked safeguarding arrangements in the early years.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during the school day and in lessons.
- To gather the views of parents and carers, inspectors took account of the views from Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including free-text comments. The lead inspector also talked to families at the start of the school day.
- To gather the views of staff and pupils, inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils during the course of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Scott Grason-Taylor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Roger Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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