

Inspection of Ashley Academy

Temple Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 0QA

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Tony Irvine. This school is part of WISE multi-academy 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), Zoe Carr, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Elise Wright-Stephenson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Ashley Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Ashley Primary School to be inadequate for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Ashley Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations for all pupils. It is unwavering in its commitment to provide every pupil with the best educational experiences possible. As a result, pupils love to learn and achieve well. There is a culture of community, belonging and friendship, where pupils feel safe and happy. Exceptional pastoral support and care mean that pupils thrive.

Pupils are proud to have a 'Wise Passport'. This provides them with many opportunities to broaden their understanding of different cultures. It also helps them to develop their character and learn new skills. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage of their educational journey.

Behaviour is exemplary. Right from the beginning of the early years, the school sets high expectations for how pupils should behave. Staff lead by example and teach clear rules and routines. The school builds very positive relationships with families and the wider community.

Pupils have access to roles and additional responsibilities that help them to develop their wider leadership skills. Pupils know their input is valued. They make a positive contribution to the school and can see the impact of their work. The Pupil Parliament has influenced improvements in the outdoor provision with suggestions, such as outdoor introduction of quiet areas.

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

The ambitious and thoughtfully planned curriculum builds from the early years. This allows pupils to make connections between subjects and build on prior learning. For example, in computing, prior knowledge about coding has equipped the pupils to successfully programme a set of working traffic lights. Leaders regularly review and refine the curriculum offer to ensure the needs and interests of pupils are met. The school uses trips and experiences to bring learning to life, such as visits to the coast, local landmarks and historical buildings. Across the curriculum, the school has identified the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and remember. Pupils are able to talk about their learning to some level. However, some pupils' oracy skills are not as developed as they could be. This limits how well they are able to articulate their understanding. This also makes it more difficult for the school to check how well pupils have learned aspects of the curriculum.

Phonics is expertly delivered by highly skilled staff. Teaching is precise and consistent. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know. The carefully constructed early writing curriculum enables pupils to apply these sounds in their independent written work. Pupils are given daily opportunities to read, which helps them to quickly become confident and fluent readers. Pupils who find reading more difficult are swiftly supported to catch up. The wider reading offer is meticulously planned. Pupils are exposed to high-quality texts from a wide range of authors, cultures and genres.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive at this school. Need is quickly identified and support put in place. Curriculum adaptations are made to meet the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress through the curriculum and achieve well.

Children in the early years make an exceptional start to their school life. The well-planned curriculum is delivered successfully. Children benefit from a range of language-rich, purposeful learning activities, which encourage independence, imagination and curiosity. Highly effective questioning from staff extends children's thinking further. As a result of the high-quality early years provision, children are fully prepared for the transition to Year 1 and beyond.

The school uses a range of initiatives and incentives to promote and reward attendance. As a result, pupils attend well and arrive to school on time.

Work to develop pupils' character is exemplary. The high-quality curriculum for personal development is carefully woven through all areas of learning. Pupils learn about different religions, faiths and cultures. This promotes respect and tolerance. They gain a secure knowledge of protected characteristics and fundamental British values. Pupils are confident about keeping themselves safe and about the possible risks that they might face outside of school. Pupils attend a range of extra-curricular clubs, including gardening, cookery, art and sports. Participation is tracked to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to attend. Pupils are taught about different careers and life skills, such as money and budgeting for the future.

In recent years, the school has taken effective action to improve significant aspects of the school's work. This has been expertly and sensitively managed by leaders from the school and trust. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at the school and feel their workload and well-being are prioritised. Trustees and governors know the school exceptionally well and share the same high aspirations for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- On occasions, pupils' oracy skills are not as fully developed as much as they could be. Where this is the case, pupils cannot articulate their understanding with enough clarity and the school finds it more difficult to check whether pupils have learned the intended curriculum. The school should further build pupils' oracy skills to enable them to articulate their understanding and to better check that intended knowledge has been learned.

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	149321
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10379435
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Elise Wright-Stephenson
CEO of the trust	Zoe Carr
Headteacher	Tony Irvine
Website	www.ashley.wiseacademies.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school joined the WISE multi-academy trust in September 2022. When its predecessor school, Ashley Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum for reading, writing, science, religious education and geography.
- Inspectors met with the trust CEO, the trust Regional Director and with members of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses. Inspectors considered the views of pupils through meetings and at social times.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Emma Watson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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