

Cypress Primary School

Cypress Road, London, SE25 4AU

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The quality of teaching varies between year groups and classes and pupils' progress is uneven across the school. As a result, some pupils make good progress but others make slower progress where teaching is less effective.
- Pupils' writing skills are weaker than their reading and mathematical skills.
- Too few more-able pupils reach the higher levels in national tests, particularly in reading and writing, because teachers' expectations are not uniformly high enough.
- Recent improvements in teaching are not yet consistently in place across the school.
- Questioning is not always used well enough during lessons to explore and extend pupils' understanding.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to work independently on stimulating and thought-provoking tasks.
- There are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas for writing, to practise their writing skills in other subjects and to write at length.
- Use of pupil premium funding to provide extra help for eligible pupils is not checked closely enough to gauge how well it is improving pupils' achievement and to make adjustments where needed.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher has been instrumental in rapidly securing a cohesive ethos since the school's opening. There is a clear sense of purpose in the school and a shared commitment to further improvement.
- The school has accurately identified the need to improve pupils' progress in writing and appropriate plans are in place.
- Governors have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and of the priorities for improvements.
- Pupils achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- In this strongly inclusive community school, all pupils are valued, regardless of background or ability.
- Pupils are impeccably polite and warmly welcome visitors. They behave well and say that they feel safe and parents and carers agree that the school looks after their children well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons and part-lessons. Lessons observed included seven accompanied by the headteacher, assistant headteacher and heads of school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, a group of governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders, staff, parents and carers and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 97 responses to the online Parent View survey and 25 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records, safeguarding documents and a sample of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Raminder Arora	Additional Inspector
Sonja Joseph	Additional Inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and other groups).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides nursery provision on the infant site and a breakfast club and an after-school club on the infant and the junior sites, all of which are managed by the school and were included in this inspection.
- The school was created in September 2012 when the predecessor infant and junior schools amalgamated. The school operates on two sites, an infant site and a junior site, on opposite sides of the road. The headteacher of the predecessor infant school is the headteacher of Cypress Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, particularly in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that teachers:
 - routinely use information about pupils' progress to set work which provides enough challenge, particularly for the most able
 - make better use of questioning to check and develop pupils' understanding
 - provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to work independently on stimulating and thought-provoking tasks.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to:
 - practise and improve their writing skills in a wide range of subjects
 - talk about their ideas and apply these to their written work
 - complete longer pieces of written work.
- Ensure that information about the progress of those pupils eligible to benefit from the pupil premium is used regularly to check how well funding is being used to raise achievement and to make changes to the nature of support where necessary.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' rates of progress vary between year groups, classes and subjects because the quality of teaching is not good enough. Pupils' progress is too slow in some year groups and classes, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. This is because there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas for writing, to practise their writing skills in different subjects and to write at length.
- Recent improvements in teaching, for example in matching work to different pupils' needs and aspirations, are reflected in the rapid gains made by pupils, including the more-able, when teaching is good. However, improvements are not fully embedded and there is not yet enough consistently good teaching to maximise all pupils' achievement.
- In 2012, children's knowledge and skills when they started Nursery were below the expectations for their age. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to reach broadly average levels of attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress slows during Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, school information indicates that pupils' attainment was average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was below average in reading and writing but closer to the national average in mathematics.
- In 2013, school information indicates that the attainment of those pupils eligible to receive support from pupil premium funding was 10 months behind that of their classmates in reading, eight months behind in mathematics and six months behind in writing.
- The school has recognised this gap and, in the past year, has changed the way it uses pupil premium funding so that there is a sharper focus on raising pupils' achievement and on engaging parents and carers. For example, the family support worker regularly contacts parents and carers to make sure that they are aware of the opportunities available. As a result, the number of eligible pupils participating in events such as 'holiday schools' (optional activities and lessons provided by the school for all pupils during school holidays) has doubled. It is too early, however, to gauge how effective these changes have been in raising pupils' achievement.
- The progress made by groups, including pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, varies according to the quality of the teaching in each year group and class and this means their achievement is in line with that of their classmates.
- The school has successfully established a range of good quality programmes to support the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Effective training means that staff members are more knowledgeable and confident about meeting these pupils' needs but it is too soon for these improvements to be fully evident in pupils' progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure all pupils make good progress. Where teaching is less effective, expectations of what pupils can do are too low and the work set is not challenging enough to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Questioning during lessons is not always used fully to check that pupils understand what they are doing and to deepen their understanding.
- Information about pupils' progress is not used consistently well by all teachers to ensure that the work set for pupils is the right level of difficulty. In some cases, the work set for pupils is too low level to capture their interest and opportunities are missed for more-able pupils, in particular, to complete more challenging work independently. As a result, some pupils lose interest and their progress slows.
- Phonics lessons (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make) are regular, well paced and

effective because teachers' subject knowledge is good. As a result, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage rapidly develop a confident attitude to reading and writing and are willing to record their ideas. In 2013, results of the Year 1 phonics screening check were above the national average.

- Despite this good start, pupils' progress in writing across the school is slower than in other subjects because there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to write at greater length or to use their writing skills in different subjects.
- A successful focus on improving the quality of teaching through effective checks, well-targeted training and the sharing of best practice means that the proportion of good and better teaching is increasing. However, it is too soon for improvements to be securely established in all year groups.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers' confident subject knowledge is used to encourage pupils to explain their thinking and to challenge and extend pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, high expectations meant that all pupils, regardless of their ability, were required to explain their reasoning when ordering measurements in centimetres and millimetres. As a result, pupils had to think very hard about what they were doing and made excellent progress in deepening their mathematical understanding.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, strong and caring relationships, combined with clear routines, mean that children settle well and rapidly develop independence and confidence.
- Good quality, well-focused small-group teaching for more-able pupils has recently been introduced to complement classroom work and to accelerate their progress. Those pupils who attend these groups relish the opportunity to complete more challenging work and are beginning to make more rapid progress as a result.
- An increased focus on the achievement of pupils eligible to benefit from support through the pupil premium funding means that teachers have a more accurate view of pupils' needs.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is caring and positive, so that these pupils are well included in lessons and make at least similar progress to their classmates, and sometimes better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In the past year, leaders have successfully established a whole-school policy for behaviour management which is consistently applied across the school. This means that pupils are very clear about how they are expected to behave. As a result, there have been substantial improvements in pupils' behaviour, which is now good.
- Pupils are very well mannered and demonstrate respect for adults and for each other, from the youngest children in Nursery Year to the oldest pupils in Year 6. They are keen to do well and respond with particular interest and curiosity to work which challenges them to think more deeply about their ideas. Pupils who find it more difficult to behave well are effectively supported because teachers and teaching assistants have a confident understanding of their needs and pupils know that they are valued and respected.
- Pupils say that they like school and feel safe. They have a good awareness of how they can help to keep themselves safe when, for example, using the internet or while walking home from school.
- Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying are rare. This view is confirmed by school records which indicate that, in those few cases where such incidents arise, they are followed up appropriately by the school.
- Relationships are respectful between different groups of pupils. Discrimination of any sort is tackled promptly and robustly.
- The breakfast club provides a calm and welcoming start to the school day for those pupils who attend and makes a very positive contribution to overall attendance, which has improved and is currently in line with the national average.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because a few pupils lose concentration when the work set for

them is not sufficiently challenging and teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough. When this is the case, their progress slows.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because developments in the quality of teaching are not yet consistently in place across the school and variations in pupils' progress remain which limit their achievement.
- The role played by leaders at all levels in checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement is developing rapidly. For example, leaders routinely review information about pupils' progress, lesson observations and pupils' work to check how well they are achieving. However, information about the progress made by those pupils eligible to benefit from the pupil premium is not yet used rigorously enough to check how well they are achieving and to make adjustments to the way funding is spent where necessary.
- The headteacher has skilfully brought together staff from two schools and has established a highly inclusive, whole-school ethos. All staff who completed a questionnaire said that they are proud to work in the school.
- The school's plans accurately identify what needs to be done to secure further improvement. For example, there are appropriate plans in place to improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and to improve pupils' achievement in writing.
- Links with parents and carers and the local community are strong. Features of the school, such as the school website and regular newsletters to parents and carers, underline the importance given by the school to working in partnership with parents and carers and the community.
- The local authority has visited the school during its first year to discuss on-going developments, including arrangements for the admission of an extra class of children to Reception Year during this academic year. These discussions are ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to assist the school's future development.
- The new primary school sports funding is being used, in part, to train teachers so that they are more knowledgeable and confident about the teaching of sport. As a result, football training, for example, is now delivered by the school rather than by external agencies and the number of pupils participating has increased. A member of the governing body has responsibility for checking how successfully funding is improving pupils' involvement in sport.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes many opportunities for pupils to find out about different religions and cultures and to celebrate a range of beliefs. Events such as visits to places of worship and 'World History Week' help to make learning stimulating and meaningful and contribute positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs, including the quality of teaching, and provide good levels of challenge for school leaders. Governors' experiences and professional backgrounds make a valuable contribution to school development. They fully support school leaders in the whole-school drive to improve and are justifiably proud of the way in which two schools have been successfully brought together as Cypress Primary School. There is, however, no sense of complacency. Governors know that more needs to be done to secure further improvements in pupils' achievement and they are determined and committed to playing their part. They have an accurate picture of the achievement of those pupils eligible to benefit from pupil premium funding and have worked closely with other leaders to increase whole school awareness of the needs of this group. Governors have worked closely with the school in helping to shape the rigorous performance management procedures put in place and know how these are used to recognise good practice and to secure further improvements in the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust, up to date and meet statutory requirements.

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

Unique reference number	101715
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	413465

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	812
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Steele
Headteacher	Nicky Godetz
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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