

Courtwood Primary School

Courtwood Lane, Croydon, CR0 9HX

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher provides clear and effective direction which has resulted in the quality of pupils' learning improving since the previous inspection. Governors give good support.
- The quality of teaching is now typically good through the school and enables pupils to achieve well and enjoy their learning. Results in national tests have risen since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have good basic skills, particularly in their speaking, listening and reading skills. Pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics is also starting to rise. They are effectively prepared for their next schools.
- Pupils relate positively to each other and to visitors. They behave well within lessons and at lunchtimes. They say they feel very safe, as the school provides outstanding levels of safety. They like activities in their new woodland area, and take their roles of responsibility very seriously.
- Parents and carers, with very few reservations, are very positive about the school's effectiveness.
- Children have a secure and happy start to their education in the Reception class.
- Pupils with special educational needs, who speak English as an additional language, or are entitled to pupil premium funding, achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Occasionally, there are not enough opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to apply their mathematical skills in everyday, real-life activities. Not all pupils are fully confident to write at length or for different purposes.
- The high quality of teaching in some classes is not used as a model for other staff to help boost the quality of teaching still further.
- Pupils are not always able to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) in day-to-day activities to improve their learning.
- In a few lessons, activities do not stretch the thinking of some pupils enough. Occasionally some children in the Early Years Foundation Stage spend too long on activities before moving on to others, so their pace of learning drops.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 16 lessons or part lessons. They observed two lessons with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Activities related to the teaching of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs were also observed.
- Meetings were held with the staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors looked at documents, including the school plans for improvement, safeguarding information, assessment records, attendance information and the school’s checks and information on pupils’ progress. Discussions were held with a number of staff responsible for different aspects of the school.
- Representative groups of pupils met with the inspectors. Inspectors also heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6 and observed playtimes, lunchtime arrangements and two assemblies. They looked at the past work of pupils in Years 2 and 6.
- Account was taken of the responses in 21 questionnaires completed by members of staff, 42 responses to the Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) and the outcomes of a parental questionnaire conducted recently by the school.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The majority of pupils are White British, but around a third are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is an above average proportion. A slightly lower-than-average proportion of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium (those known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or with a parent or carer in the armed services) is lower than normally found.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Building work is in progress to extend the school accommodation to house a special resource provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school is part of the Selsdon Education Partnership (SEP).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching to the highest levels through the school by:
 - giving pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, more opportunities to use their number and problem-solving skills in real-life investigative mathematical activities
 - developing pupils' confidence to write at length or for different purposes, particularly those capable of harder work
 - ensuring all pupils have enough opportunities to use ICT in day-to-day activities
 - ensuring adults spot when children in the Reception class need to move on to a new task or modify existing ones to help maintain their learning in activities in and outside the class
 - ensuring that staff have opportunities to observe others' teaching to help develop their expertise and to ensure that activities set are exciting and meaningful to pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils now achieve well in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave, given their starting points. Those who are more able generally achieve well. Results in national tests have risen to broadly average levels since the previous inspection.
- The school has focused on developing children's language, number and social skills to good effect. Children like sounding out letters and sounds and work well together in group activities, whether it is pretending to be a fireman, a police officer or working at the 'class vets' surgery. Occasionally, pupils' learning drops when they 'run out of steam' when engaged in their own choice of activities.
- A clear focus on teaching pupils about letter sounds through phonics is effective, confirmed in the higher than average outcomes in the national phonics screening check in Year 1. Pupils say they enjoy reading and older pupils readily recall a range of popular authors and are confident readers.
- Pupils now enjoy writing and a recent initiative to use an in-depth study of a class reading book to motivate their writing is beginning to work. Older pupils are generally accurate in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' confidence to write at length or for different purposes is not yet fully developed however, particularly for those pupils capable of harder work.
- Numeracy skills are taught well, as are pupils' calculation skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 excitedly devised a number of different investigations about how to use coloured sweets, with some focusing in on probability, decimals or fractions. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not readily apply these skills often enough in investigative activities or 'real-life' situations, which hinders aspects of their progress.
- Pupils enjoy competing against other schools and taking part in physical education activities to boost their levels of fitness. Pupils say they enjoy having more activities to choose and like their new sports coach.
- The pupils eligible for pupil premium funding now achieve well. Gaps between the levels they and others achieve in English and mathematics have been reduced considerably. Pupils have more one-to-one and small-group activities, so that they are often no more than a term behind others. Current work indicates that these gaps are continuing to reduce further. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well. Extra adult support, combined with well-planned activities, enables them to keep pace with others in the class. This is also true for those pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, reflecting the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is now typically good through the school. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning and have noted how activities increasingly combine different subjects to good effect.
- Pupils like active learning and the teacher provides a range of activities to motivate them. Extra adults in classes help to provide individual support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Occasionally pupils are not stretched in their thinking to solve problems, as activities are too predictable. For example, in an art lesson designs for a Stuart house were too limited and constrained pupils' creative ideas. In a mathematics lesson about factors, pupils could work them out accurately but were not clear about how the skill could help them in everyday life.
- Children in the Reception class are mostly enthusiastic to take part in self-directed activities. Occasionally their learning dips as they remain too long doing the same thing. The teaching of number, language and physical skills prepares them well for their next class.
- In some lessons, pupils' learning is excellent. For example, pupils' use of different words to describe how they felt was enhanced through dressing up and becoming a '1940s' based class

for the day, where they enjoyed talking and writing about their imagined experiences.

- Pupils' work indicates that while many pupils now write more confidently, some still find it difficult to write at length or for different purposes as some initiatives to improve writing are quite new.
- Pupils say they like their daily time called 'assessment for learning', where they can look back over their work and can respond to teachers' marking and make corrections. This helps them to understand how to improve their work.
- Project work is now a regular feature of lessons, such as studies on the Second World War. Pupils enjoyed trying to find out how it might have felt to have been evacuated.
- Classrooms and corridors display pupils' work well, and provide prompts to aid pupils' learning. Computers are used to good effect for those having one-to-one support outside of classrooms, but generally pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT skills in normal day-to-day class activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that while there are sometimes pupils who find it hard to meet the expectations of the school, behaviour over time is generally good. A half termly focus on different values is helping to set expectations of how to value and treat others in the school. Staff and parents and carers generally believe that the school manages pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as the school council and the 'green keepers' who ensure that recycling and eco-friendly practices are promoted by both staff and pupils.
- In lessons, pupils generally behave well and are eager to learn and only when the pace of the lesson drops do some become fidgety or lose their attention. Not surprisingly, pupils enjoy attending and arrive promptly to school and lessons.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare, but they know how to deal with it should it occur.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they know what to do when using the internet and are very aware of how to deal with any difficulties should they arise. The 'Junior Road Safety Officers' are looking forward to a new zebra crossing being installed outside the school, which is something they had campaigned for.
- Site security during the current building work has been maintained to high levels. Pupils are keenly aware of how to keep safe in their new woodland area for example.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has succeeded in improving the school's overall effectiveness since its previous inspection.
- Staff have welcomed recent changes in the way the school is managed. Teaching is monitored regularly and effectively by senior leaders in order to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that salary progression is linked to improvement in outcomes. While teaching has improved over time, staff do not yet fully benefit from formal observation of other colleagues in order to identify aspects of excellent practice.
- Teachers with subject leadership roles or responsibilities for different age groups (often known as middle leaders) provide a good level of guidance for others. For example, recent initiatives in both the teaching of writing and in mathematics are now making a difference to the pace of improvement in their subject areas.
- The primary sports school funding is used and monitored effectively. A physical education (PE) coach is helping to develop pupils' participation and enjoyment and staff skills. Pupils are eager to talk about the greater success of sports teams in local competitions.
- Partnerships with other schools are well developed through the Selsdon Education Partnership and enable staff to cooperate, share resources or participate in joint staff training. Parents and

carers who responded to the school and Ofsted questionnaire said they would recommend the school to others.

- The curriculum provides an increasingly interesting and varied number of activities to widen pupils' understanding and to provide for their basic skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness threads through lessons, assemblies and regular reminders about the school's half-termly focus on values. There are still some subjects such as ICT and mathematics needing some 'fine tuning' so that they cater for pupils' learning even more effectively. The introduction of 'Forest school' is proving popular with older pupils.
- The school provides extremely well for ensuring pupils' sense of safety, particularly during the disruption caused by building work.
- The local authority has provided good levels of support following the school's previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide the right balance between support and challenge to senior leaders and have helped to raise the school's level of effectiveness as a result. They carry out all their statutory duties, including those for safeguarding. Governors understand and have discussed the link between the performance of teachers, how responsibilities are allocated and salary progression, and procedures for dealing with inadequate teaching over time. Regular training is effective. For example, it has enabled them to understand how results from national tests compare to those of other schools. Governors monitor the allocation of funding, including the pupil premium. One governor has recently been looking more closely at checking if this funding continues to be effective, with a view to modifying support if needed. Governors visit the school informally during the year, but recognise that these visits are not always recorded systematically. Governors do not tolerate discrimination of any sort and ensure that equal opportunities are provided for all pupils.

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	101774
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	430815

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Roseweir
Headteacher	Tricia Farrelly
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 June 2012
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