

Cypress Primary School

Cypress Road, London, Croydon SE25 4AU

Inspection dates

3–4 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not secured good outcomes for all pupils. School improvement since the previous inspection has been slow. The school demonstrates only adequate capacity to improve.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. This is because leaders and governors have not secured consistently good teaching.
- Self-evaluation by leaders is not sufficiently rigorous. It is not linked sufficiently closely to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Leaders are too ready to make allowances for pupils' outcomes that are not good.
- Leaders do not always work closely enough with parents. A small minority of parents feel that their concerns are not acted on quickly or fully enough.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the school and does not result in pupils making strong enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough, and pupils are not always challenged to do their best work.
- Feedback to pupils varies in quality, and does not always help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils' outcomes vary across the school. Progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is typically not strong. It is not consistent. Some groups, such as those who speak English as an additional language, make less progress than others.
- The early years requires improvement in relation to the Reception classes. The quality of teaching varies too much. Resources and play activities vary in quality. Pupils are not always taught their sounds and letters (phonics) well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly and confident, and get on very well with one another. They enjoy learning.
- Pupils are cared for well. They are safe.
- The provision for two- and three-year-olds is strong. Play activities are challenging and well planned to suit the children's needs. Their learning is checked carefully.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of leadership, so that the school is good, by ensuring that leaders and governors:
 - improve the rigour of their self-evaluation, so that it is linked more closely to how pupils achieve
 - secure higher standards of teaching, so that teaching is consistently good or better
 - work more closely with the small minority of parents who have concerns, so that they feel confident that their concerns are addressed
 - ensure that governors get good value for money by expecting good teaching to result in the good progress of pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

- Make sure that the teaching leads to pupils making rapid progress in all subjects throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations of their pupils and challenge them to do their best work
 - offering feedback, both written and oral, that effectively helps pupils to improve their work.
- Make sure that children's learning experiences in the Reception classes match the quality of those in the provision for two- and three-year-olds by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the three Reception classes
 - providing the right level of challenge for the children when they learn their phonics
 - improving the equipment and resources used by Reception children, so that they have more opportunities, particularly in the indoor play areas, to explore new activities and learn a wider range of skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have had too little impact on improving the school. Pupils' outcomes have not significantly improved. The quality of teaching, as at the time of the previous inspection, requires improvement. The pace of improvement is slow.
 - Leaders' self-evaluation is not rigorous enough. It does not sufficiently reflect that pupils' achievement is not good, and that the quality of teaching is not consistently strong enough to make enough difference to pupils' outcomes.
 - Support from the local authority to monitor the quality of the school is not strong. Its evaluation of the school's performance does not take sufficient account of pupils' outcomes to help the school's self-evaluation to be rigorous enough.
 - Leaders have a tendency to make too many allowances for pupils' and teachers' performance that is not strong. As a result, leaders' ambition for the school is not sufficiently conveyed to staff. A small minority of staff expressed some dissatisfaction with the school in their responses to the staff questionnaire.
 - The management of teaching and learning has not as yet made a significant improvement in pupils' outcomes. New systems for checking and supporting class teachers are in place, but are at an early stage. Leaders and governors do not consistently secure the highest quality of teaching from staff.
 - Subject leaders provide adequate support to senior leaders. Some recent initiatives, such as a new mathematics programme, have not had enough time to lead to improvement in pupils' outcomes.
 - The school's engagement with parents requires improvement. The school supports pupils well and keeps them safe. However, a small minority of parents expressed concerns with the way the school responds to issues they may bring up. Inspectors found that leaders did not always respond quickly or effectively enough to parents' concerns.
 - The curriculum for pupils is broad and balanced. Its main focus is rightly on reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils generally make expected progress in these subjects. Pupils have access to the full range of subjects required by the new National Curriculum, including French, science, history, geography, art, drama and music. Pupils are taken on a worthwhile variety of trips and visits to places of interest, and have the opportunity to write about their experiences.
 - The additional government funding to promote sports and physical education in primary schools is used successfully. New participants are attracted by the rich variety of activities on offer, including tennis, gymnastics and country dancing. The school is providing appropriate training to its staff in delivering sporting activities to ensure that activities can continue even if the funding comes to an end.
 - The additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is currently beginning to make a difference to these pupils' outcomes. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are beginning to close.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, and this is one of the factors leading to pupils' behaviour being judged as good. Inspectors enjoyed seeing assemblies on the topic of perseverance, in which pupils were encouraged to think about how they could apply this quality to their own learning. Both assemblies attended by inspectors ended with a moment of reflection, which promoted pupils' spiritual development well.
 - Pupils are prepared well for growing up in modern Britain, and this again promotes their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils from all backgrounds and heritages learn and play together peaceably. The school encourages them to participate in democratic processes, such as voting in the school council.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governors do not secure good value for money. They do not ensure that teachers' movement along the pay scales is sufficiently linked to the progress made by pupils.
 - The governance of the school has many strengths. Governors are ready to hold the school to account. They analyse figures on pupils' outcomes for themselves, asking the school why progress is not more rapid or consistent.
 - Governors check the work of the school for themselves, visiting regularly to gain an impression of how well pupils are learning.

- Governors are proactive, for example ordering a school-wide survey of the views of parents, staff and pupils.
 - Governors fulfil their statutory duty to keep pupils safe. They are vigilant about pupils' safety. They are well trained in such procedures as safer recruitment. They ensure that the school's two sites are regularly and carefully checked to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Those who work in the school are carefully vetted. Both the infant and the junior sites are safe and secure. The great majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to the online survey agreed that their children are safe. This view was also reflected in the pupils' conversations with inspectors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. As a result, pupils' overall progress is not strong.
- Pupils do not always make the strong progress they need to in order to attain as well as they could. Teachers do not always expect pupils to learn to a high enough standard. As a result, pupils are not always challenged to do their best work.
- Feedback, both written and oral, does not always help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their next piece of work.
- Pupils are sometimes left unclear about what they are learning and how to reach the next step. However, when teaching is strongest, pupils know what they are going to learn and concepts are taught at the correct pace to enable them to learn quickly.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, overall. Pupils are ready to learn and there is rarely any low-level disruption.
- Pupils make good use of the effective displays on the walls of classrooms to remind themselves of key vocabulary and of ways of making calculations in mathematics. Wall displays also make good use of pupils' own work, and this encourages pupils to take pride in their learning.
- Learning support assistants are clear about what they need to do to help the pupils they support. The school has recently restructured their role. However, the change is too recent to have made a full impact on pupils' achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and friendly towards others. They understand and respond positively to the school's values. For example, in art, pupils enjoyed painting what the current theme of assembly, 'perseverance', meant to them.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school and that the adults look after them well. They said that there is no actual bullying at the school, but that sometimes other children do not want to play with them. However, if they have any concerns, they know which adults to turn to.
- Pupils behave well in the dining halls, even though the space is cramped and the hard floors and surfaces make the halls very noisy.
- Pupils who attend the early morning breakfast club and the after-school provision on both sites receive a wealth of activities, designed to enable them to socialise with those of different ages. As a result, pupils who attend the provision have an enjoyable and settled experience.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils were eager to learn, and told inspectors they like their teachers. Inspectors found little evidence of low-level disruption. One pupil told an inspector, 'If children get bored, they behave badly, but the majority are good'.

- Pupils apply themselves to their learning well. Not all pupils, however, take sufficient pride in their work books. The presentation is occasionally a little scruffy. This is because teachers' written and oral feedback on their work is not always as thorough as it could be.
- Attendance is average. The school works successfully to reduce persistent absences, for example by sending text messages to parents whose children have not arrived, and working closely with the education welfare officer.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because overall pupils do not make the strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics they need to in order to attain as highly as they can. This is the case with pupils from all heritages and backgrounds, including those who are most able.
- In-school figures show that progress is not consistent from year to year.
- Disadvantaged pupils are currently doing better than was the case in 2014 and 2015. Gaps are narrowing between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- The school checks the success of its programme of extra support for groups of pupils who are in danger of falling behind. This monitoring of the impact of the additional support is effective, particularly in the case of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Though the attainment of these pupils is below that of pupils who do not have special educational needs, the progress of these two groups is similar.
- The school has been less successful in checking the achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school does not routinely check the gap in progress between these pupils and those for whom English is their first language. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve a little less well than first-language English speakers.
- Pupils in both the infant and junior sites learn basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and attain broadly average competence in these subjects. They are adequately prepared for the next stage of their schooling.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Early years provision requires improvement because children in the Reception Year do not receive strong enough learning experiences. This is reflected in their outcomes at the end of Reception, which, though on a rising trend, are below those typical for their age.
- The quality of teaching across the three classes varies. This is reflected in the progress seen in pupils' writing books.
- Resources and play equipment vary from class to class. Some activities set out for the children are less imaginative and stimulating than others in the parallel classes. This is particularly true of the indoor play areas, as all three classes share the outdoor play areas.
- The teaching of sounds and letters in the Reception classes requires improvement. The teaching does not always ensure that all children are engaged and receive sufficiently challenging tasks. As a result, some children become restless and do not learn enough.
- Provision for two- and three-year-olds is delightful. Children integrate to use the indoor and outdoor play areas, and enjoy mixing with children slightly older or younger than themselves. In this way, the provision builds good personal development and welfare. Two-year-olds show that they acquire good behaviour skills by sitting quietly and singing with the adults at home time.
- In the provision for two- and three-year-olds, there is a wealth of inviting and well-planned activities, designed to expand children's horizons. For example, the topic of 'freezing weather' was stimulating. A display containing toy animals from the Arctic and Antarctic was enhanced by soft, clear beads that could be frozen to resemble ice. In such ways, the provision stimulates children's imagination.

- Leadership of the early years provision is adequate. Leaders acknowledge that they do not always check the progress of Reception children frequently enough to keep up with the varying development of each child. Checking is very good in the provision for two- and three-year-olds. Children are observed on a daily basis and clear judgements are made about the activities that will best promote good learning. As a result, these children make good progress in their learning.
- Engagement with parents is a strength of the early years, particularly in the provision for two- and three-year-olds. The 'contact books' provide a well-used and popular link between school and home. Parents of children in the early years told inspectors that they find teachers approachable and that their children are safe and happy.
- The additional government funding for children entitled to free school meals is used effectively. In 2014, there were gaps in the attainment of these children when measured against other children. However, leaders have identified the attainment of disadvantaged children as a priority, and school figures show that gaps are currently narrowing.
- Transition arrangements from the early years to Year 1 are effective. Children visit their new classes frequently, and adults from Year 1 visit them. The Year 1 classrooms have play activities, and these enable the children to settle quickly and confidently into the next phase of their schooling.

School details

Unique reference number	101715
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10002009

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	757
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Steele
Headteacher	Nicky Godetz
Telephone number	0208 6532618
Website	www.cypressprimary.co.uk
Email address	infants@cypressprimary.co.uk juniors@cypressprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 October 2013

Information about this school

- Cypress Primary is a great deal larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It was formed in September 2012 from the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. The headteacher is the former head of the infant school.
- An average proportion of pupils is eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium. The funding is used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic heritages is higher than average. A wide range of heritages is represented. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and provides after-school care.
- The great majority of children attend the Nursery provision and provision for two-year-olds in either the morning or afternoon sessions. Children in the Reception classes attend all day.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes throughout the school and observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects. The headteacher and heads of school joined inspectors on several of their classroom visits.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils, listened to them read and looked at samples of their work. An inspector met with a group of pupils to hear how they felt about the school.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including those who hold responsibility for specific subjects.
- A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. Two more governors attended the final feedback meeting.
- A telephone interview was held with the school's link adviser, who represented the local authority.
- Meetings were held with newly qualified teachers, and a group of teaching assistants.
- A brief meeting was held with the manager of the breakfast club and after-school provision.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection. Inspectors took account of 113 responses to the online survey, Parent View. They also took into account the school's own survey of parents' views.
- Inspectors took account of 65 responses to an online questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own views of how well it is doing, its plans for the future, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. They also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

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