

West Thornton Primary Academy

Rosecourt Road, Croydon, CR0 3BS

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils benefit greatly from the school's highly inclusive and happy ethos. Pupils feel valued and make exceptional progress, both academically and in the development of their personal and social skills.
- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding and is characterised by high expectations of all pupils and an enthusiasm for learning which is infectious. As a result, pupils make excellent progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently well above average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in English and mathematics is also well above the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel very safe. They carry out roles of responsibility with maturity and pride. The school accurately recognises the potential to increase the numbers of pupils involved even further.
- The headteacher's passion, commitment and energy have been central to the school's successful drive to secure and maintain high quality teaching and pupils' outstanding achievement. He is fully supported by a highly capable team of senior and middle leaders, including the governing body, who, in its own right, plays a key role in sustaining the school's success.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in 29 lessons and part lessons.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, parents and carers and pupils.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documentation including the school's improvement plan, safeguarding arrangements, policies and records of pupils' progress and attainment.
- The inspection team took account of 38 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, in addition to views expressed in person by parents and carers during the inspection.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Bryan Meyer	Additional inspector
Jan Edwards	Additional inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Thornton converted to academy status in June 2011.
- The school is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported under the pupil premium initiative, including those who receive free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- There is a breakfast club that is not managed by the school's governing body. It was not inspected as part of this inspection.
- The headteacher provides support for a local primary school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend opportunities for older pupils to support and inspire younger pupils by increasing the number of older pupils adopting roles of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Almost all parents and carers feel that their children make good progress across the school. Inspection evidence shows that all groups of pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach levels well above the national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Children join the school with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. They rapidly acquire knowledge and develop understanding during the Reception Year, particularly in the development of personal and social, reading and calculating skills.
- Activities in the Reception Year are planned with great care to ensure that teaching is closely matched to individual needs, including a sharp focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. As a result, children very much enjoy their time in school and quickly begin to develop independence and confidence, including those children for whom English is an additional language.
- The school has been successful in securing a year-on-year improvement in pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2012, the attainment of pupils when they left Year 2 was in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' excellent progress is reflected in standards which are well above average at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- More able pupils rise to the challenges provided by their teachers so that they also make outstanding progress. In 2012, there was an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in English at the end of Key Stage 2, whilst the previously high proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics was sustained.
- High-quality support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs means that these pupils make significant progress. The use of pupil premium funding is extremely effective so that those pupils for whom it provides support make excellent progress. Knowledgeable provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language means that they also achieve exceptionally well.
- Pupils across the school are consistently challenged to consider a wide range of personal, moral and social issues so that, by the time they leave Year 6, pupils have developed a mature and responsible view of a range of issues. For example, during the inspection a group of Year 6 pupils very successfully considered the ways in which individuals are labelled by society.
- The school's success in fulfilling its mission statement, Building Futures, is reflected in pupils' outstanding achievement and their well-developed social skills so that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Most parents and carers confirm inspectors' views that pupils are particularly well taught in the school. The key strengths of teaching include consistently high expectations, skilful questioning, well-paced lessons and the flexible use of a variety of teaching styles to meet and respond to the learning needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils are highly motivated to learn and achieve exceptionally well.
- The success of recent initiatives to promote reading is evident in pupils' enjoyment of reading across the school. For example, during the inspection a group of children in Reception Year relished the opportunity to join in the telling of *Going on a Bear Hunt*, whilst tackling a range of obstacles in the outdoor area. Similarly, a pupil in Year 5 told inspectors, 'When you are smart and can read you can do anything in the world!'
- Information and communication technology is used extensively to enliven and engage learners. For example, during a Year 1 lesson, a group of pupils very successfully used e-tablets and digital photograph frames to help them to write a recount of their trip to the

ZOO.

- Arrangements to support pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are highly effective so that these pupils make excellent progress. For example, in one lesson the teacher's positive and sensitive response to a pupil with behavioural difficulties ensured that he was promptly re-engaged and no learning time was lost. Teaching assistants demonstrate a thorough understanding of pupils' needs so that support is closely tailored to each individual.
- Across the school, pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning so that they are very actively involved and develop a strong sense of personal responsibility. Teachers successfully employ a wide range of techniques to help pupils to do this well. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 4 pupils described where they were on a 'confidence line' at the beginning of the lesson, what skills or 'learning powers' they had used during the lesson and where they were on the 'confidence line' at the end of the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Relationships in the school are excellent and pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school, from the youngest children to those in Year 6. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that this is typical over time. Pupils are impeccably well mannered and warmly welcome visitors.
- Specialist provision, such as Place2B, is extremely successful in offering pupils support for personal and social issues, a fact recognised and valued by pupils and parents alike. Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View consider pupils to be well behaved.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of the excellent contribution they make to the school, including those with specific roles, such as the Reading Champions and the Learning Leaders. Their views are greatly valued and they grow into confident and self-assured young people by the time they leave Year 6. The school has rightly identified the potential to increase the number of pupils who are involved in such roles of responsibility and the number of younger pupils who benefit.
- Pupils feel safe and secure and told inspectors that any concerns they might have are addressed promptly by their teachers. Commitment to equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. School records show that bullying is rare and dealt with robustly and successfully. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes different types of bullying.
- The school has a well-established behaviour management policy which is clear, positive and consistently applied across the school. This factor, combined with the development of an innovative and stimulating curriculum, means that behaviour has improved substantially over time. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in improved attendance rates which are above the national average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's commitment to school improvement has been instrumental in securing high-quality education. His vision for the school is shared by all staff, who work exceptionally well as a team. Staff morale is high and there is no sense of complacency.
- Senior leaders play a central role in the school's success and are especially key in school improvement and in sustaining success.
- The headteacher's ongoing partnership with the local authority since the school's conversion to academy status, including the successful support of another school, epitomises his dedication to sharing strong practice and improving pupils' life chances.
- A range of rigorous systems are well established to support school improvement, including accurate school self-evaluation and the robust analysis of assessment information to ensure that there is a sustained and successful focus on meeting pupils' needs.
- Performance management is used extremely well to nurture and develop staff in the school, including newly qualified teachers.

- The school's innovative curriculum has been developed over a number of years and makes a significant contribution to pupils' excellent achievement and their enjoyment of school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development represents a significant part of the school's curriculum. Initiatives such as the teaching of philosophy, art galleries created by the pupils to an extremely high quality and the school radio station are just a few examples of aspects of the curriculum which contribute so valuably to pupils' academic and personal development. High value is placed on developing pupils' ability to express feelings and this makes an outstanding contribution to their emotional maturity.
- The school environment is very well used to ensure that no resource is wasted. The school is a hive of activity from 8.00am, when pupils arrive for groups and clubs such as football club and Year 6 booster groups.
- The school takes great care of its pupils and safeguarding is given the highest priority. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - shares the same high expectations as the headteacher and his staff and monitors the effectiveness of the school rigorously
 - provides a high level of challenge to school leaders, has a very well-informed and accurate insight into pupils' performance and makes a substantial contribution to school improvement.

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 pupil's 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 pupil's 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	136769
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	403680

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Bennet
Headteacher	Stuart Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8684 3497
Fax number	020 8665 9609
Email address	office@westthornton.croydon.sch.uk

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