

Red Gates School

Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 8HD

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Teaching is typically good, with no noticeable differences in the quality of lessons taught to different age groups.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from their starting points as they move through the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive a good quality education and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. They make excellent progress in their personal and social development.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing their communication skills, enabling them to interact more confidently with classmates and adults.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders have an excellent track record of developing staff and raising standards.
- The school has exceptionally good links with parents and carers and it involves them very well in supporting their children's learning.
- The curriculum is carefully planned and modified creatively to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils very effectively.
- Very strong partnerships with local schools provide very many opportunities for pupils to work alongside their mainstream peers.
- Leaders' outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity ensures that all pupils are able to benefit from what the school has to offer.
- Pupils are very well looked after. Their many and varied needs are catered for very well.
- The governing body is highly effective in maintaining very high expectations of teaching and learning as well as pupils' safety and wellbeing. Safeguarding arrangements are very secure.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a small amount is less than good.
- Pupils do not make outstanding progress in enough lessons and therefore, too few are likely to achieve significantly better than similar pupils in other schools.
- Pupils' assessment data are collated and analysed, but the outcomes are not presented as clearly or effectively as they could be to demonstrate progress and achievement.

Information about this inspection

- All classes except one were visited. In excess of six and a half hours were spent observing 14 lessons, each taught by a different teacher, and monitoring pupils in sessions such as registration. Nine of the lessons were observed jointly with a member of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, an officer from the local authority and three parents.
- Ten parents and carers gave their opinion of the school through the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The views of staff were collected from the questionnaires that 46 completed.
- A wide variety of documentation was examined, such as pupil assessment data, attendance records, self-evaluation procedures and development planning.
- Pupils’ communication ability, including the development of early reading skills, was observed in dedicated literacy sessions and in different subjects. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were seen practising communication skills in many different situations, and pupils of all ages were routinely observed using a range of additional communication systems, such as signing.

Inspection team

Mike Kell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is on a different site to when it was inspected last. It moved into a refurbished and extended former infant school in September 2009. It is co-located alongside Woodlands Children's Centre and Gilbert Scott Primary School, which provides inclusion opportunities for all Red Gates pupils. All pupils who have school lunch eat alongside Gilbert Scott pupils in a shared dining room.
- The relocation has seen the school to increase its numbers by over 60%. It has increased in size each year as more classrooms have been added and so it is now a larger than average special school for primary-aged pupils. Of the 122 on roll, 23 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and other groups) for around a third of its pupils.
- Boys account for almost three quarters of pupils.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The majority have severe learning difficulties, while the remainder have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Approaching two thirds of pupils have additional autistic spectrum disorder.
- Pupils represent a very wide ethnic background. A third of them have English as an additional language.
- The school is a member of the Selsdon Education Partnership, which, in addition to Gilbert Scott and Woodlands, includes two more primary schools, a secondary school and a further education college.
- Red Gates provides an outreach service to primary schools in supporting them to work more effectively with pupils with a range of needs, including autism.
- As a result of staff turnover and school expansion, around a third of class-based staff were new to the school in September 2013, including almost half of all class teachers, and most of those are either newly qualified teachers or experienced but new to special education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is routinely good or better and more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan lessons in a way that provides a better balance between whole-class activities and individual or small group work so that pupils spend less time waiting.
 - activities are not repeated unnecessarily when pupils succeed, but are extended and modified in order to enthuse them and encourage independent learning
 - all teaching assistants make an effective contribution to promoting pupils' independent learning and assessing and recording their achievements.
- Further develop and refine the procedures for presenting the outcomes of statistical analyses of pupils' progress and achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Assessment information shows that over the past two years, pupils made outstanding progress from their starting points in Key Stage 1 and between Years 3 and 6. Their achievement in these years was outstanding compared with the national picture for pupils of the same age and starting points.
- A high proportion of new staff came to the school in September and this turbulence has adversely affected the overall quality of teaching, which in turn is impacting on pupils' learning. Overall, pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Different groups of pupils achieve similarly well. Those from different ethnic backgrounds are equally successful, as are boys and girls. Pupils who have English as an additional language do as well as others.
- There is no significant difference in the attainment of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and their classmates, and nor is there any noticeable variation in the proportions that make expected or better progress in English and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in acquiring language and communication skills. In addition, they develop a growing awareness of the world around them and adults and other children's presence as they explore their new environment.
- Pupils make good progress in developing a variety of communication skills. The more proficient communicators demonstrate good speaking and listening skills and emerging signs of reading and writing skills. In some cases, this includes the early stages of recognising letters and being able to make their sounds (phonics).
- The school takes very good steps to accelerate individuals' progress. On the one hand, pupils who show a particular talent in a subject are stretched through inclusion in classes in Gilbert Scott Primary School, the value of which is shown in accelerated learning and improved social skills. Pupils who do not learn as quickly as anticipated are identified and subsequently enabled to make improved progress through targeted additional support.
- Pupils' achievement is enhanced significantly through the extremely strong channels of communication between their parents and carers and school. Staff are very adept at giving parents and carers resources and guidance on how to use them so that they can contribute to reinforcing and extending their children's learning.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6. Teachers have high expectations and their teaching is lively, and so a good pace is maintained.
- A small proportion of teaching is outstanding. These lessons are characterised by an extremely good use of time and an expectation that all adults motivate and challenge pupils through questions and encouragement at all times.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour calmly and efficiently.
- Staff do much to help pupils to become more accustomed to change by skilfully managing their movements from one activity to another, developing well-established routines.
- Adults are generally skilled communicators and they know the pupils well. They use a good range of different approaches, including signs and symbols, to ensure all pupils' inclusion in all activities.
- On occasion, teachers keep pupils in whole-class sessions for too long, resulting in some pupils having to wait while others are encouraged to respond. While learning to turn-take and to listen to others has a value in some circumstances, pupils typically progress more quickly when working in small groups or one-to-one.
- Lesson planning is usually detailed and it identifies what it is anticipated pupils will learn, with a

strong reference to the descriptors of different P levels. Consequently, activities are well matched to individuals' prior learning and their current attainment.

- Planning is much less effective in the few lessons where teaching is less than good, as activities tend to be completed quickly and are then repeated unnecessarily rather than being extended or changed. There is a tendency, therefore, for pupils to lose interest and this hampers their progress.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively as a teaching aid and as a resource for encouraging pupils' participation. For instance, pupils used switches to turn on lights and hooters when learning about the job of a police officer and others used mechanical snails in a race to learn the terms first, second and third.
- Experienced teaching assistants contribute much to pupils' learning. They are skilled at realising when to provide prompts or physical support and when to hold back and encourage pupils to do things for themselves, assessing what has been achieved. However, a minority intervene too quickly and it is not always evident that they have the experience to assess very small gains in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress in all aspects of their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' arrival at school shows that they thoroughly enjoy being there. They are keen to get into class and very happy to remain there. Attendance is high.
- Some pupils have very challenging behaviour associated with their learning difficulties, but overall behaviour is excellent, both in classes and around school. Pupils' behaviour is monitored closely and those with the most challenging behaviour benefit from carefully constructed behaviour support plans. There have been no exclusions from the school.
- Staff, parents and carers confirm that there are no instances of intimidation or bullying, and they are similarly unanimous in their view that pupils are safe. Pupils are taught about the potential risks associated with internet use.
- Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils benefit from very high quality interactions with adults, which go a long way in helping them to develop their self-image, confidence, communication skills and ability to cope with change.
- Pupils are looked after extremely well and this level of care is supplemented very effectively through very close working with occupational and speech and language therapists. Furthermore, the input of music therapy does much to aid pupils' emotional health and wellbeing.
- The school takes great care to ensure that every pupil has the chance to flourish. Pupils who do not achieve as expected are included in a small group that is identified as vulnerable pupils. This group also includes, for instance, pupils whose attendance is a concern and those from families that do not engage readily with the school. All aspects of their academic and personal development are monitored particularly closely.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders have an excellent track record of securing very high quality teaching and of raising standards. They responded decisively to the key issues in the last inspection report.
- The high number of new class-based staff in September 2013 has reduced the overall quality of teaching, but leaders have recognised where the shortcomings lie and are implementing a focused professional development programme to address them. There has not yet been time for this to have had any significant impact, but leaders have the capacity to raise standards to their previous level.
- The curriculum is planned in great detail and is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Much

community-based learning supports that which takes place in the classroom, and pupils participate in many enrichment activities, such as street dance workshops with pupils from partner schools.

- Links with parents and carers are outstanding. They confirm that the way in which the school assisted them when their child was admitted and its subsequent initiatives in helping them to support their children at home are excellent.
- Following Red Gates relocation, leaders were the driving force behind the establishment of the Selsdon Education Partnership, which is a collaboration that benefits staff and pupils. A link with a special school in an adjoining borough provides effective moderation of teachers' assessments of pupils' levels.
- Leaders' influence within the local authority also includes a growing, and very well-received, outreach service that supports mainstream primary schools in meeting the needs of pupils with complex needs.
- All safeguarding arrangements were very secure at the time of the inspection. All staff are vetted to make sure they are suitable for working with children prior to taking up appointment and they are appropriately trained in child protection.
- Leaders collect pupils' assessment information and analyse it thoroughly and accurately, but they do not interpret and present their findings clearly and unambiguously.
- The local authority had no involvement with the school since the last inspection until September of this year. All external monitoring has been by commissioned consultants.
- Physical education and sport funding is used to pay for coaches to go into school and to lead varied sporting activities as well as to train staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The very well informed governing body benefits from regular training sessions and it maintains very close oversight of the school's finances and provision, which it gathers through first-hand experience. Governors are paired with subject leaders, which helps them to gain understanding of the subject and which provides a focus for the lessons that they observe. Therefore, the governing body has a working knowledge of pupils' learning and of how pupil premium payments were spent when it scrutinises and questions assessment data. Frequent school visits also give the governing body a good awareness of teaching and of how effectively different teachers perform, which improves their appreciation of the outcomes of teachers' appraisal and their awareness of how teachers' pay is linked to their performance.

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	101855
Local authority	London Borough of Croydon
Inspection number	425588

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ted Andrews
Headteacher	Sue Beaman
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 October 2008
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