

School report

Courtyard Alternative Provision Academy



Gilstead Road, London, SW6 2LG

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leaders, staff and pupils all buy into the culture of excellence promoted by school leaders and the Academy Trust.
- Leaders ensure that staff keep pupils focused on learning so that they have little time in which to become restless.
- Leaders and board members work in highly effective partnership to ensure that the quality of teaching is high. As a result, pupils make fast progress and achieve extremely well.
- In only two years, board members and leaders have secured improvements in key areas of the school's performance. For example, attendance is rising.
- Pupils all make strong progress. This is because they all receive individual support and learn at the pace that suits them best.
- Pupils learn a rich variety of subjects. These prepare pupils extremely well for moving back into mainstream schooling or transferring to a new school. Transition arrangements are very strong.
- Parents and carers support the school strongly. They report that the behaviour management skills their children learn at school are often transferred to the home environment.
- Behaviour is outstanding because pupils are extremely eager to learn. They take a great pride in their work.
- The school is a calm place where pupils from varied backgrounds and heritages get on extremely well together. Mealtimes are used successfully to help pupils to socialise with one another.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly. This helps pupils to be reflective and to understand other people's points of view.
- The school keeps pupils completely safe. It teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Adults give pupils a wide variety of stimulating and challenging tasks.
- Pupils make fast progress in learning essential reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Pupils' workbooks clearly show the fast progress they make.
- Pupils are given the right amount of challenge. Their flexible learning programmes enable each to make fast progress.
- Adults work together extremely efficiently to support the pupils' complex additional needs.
- Pupils learn extremely well because they are helped to understand how to improve. Marking is thorough and helpful. The school's reward systems enable pupils to understand the progress they are making.
- The school's strong focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics prepares pupils successfully for the next stage in their learning.
- Achievement is outstanding because pupils make excellent progress in their learning. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils. White British pupils, who form the largest group, make very fast progress in line with those from all other heritages.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at the learning of all the pupils, both in whole-class settings and in one-to-one and group sessions. She observed learning in a range of subjects. The inspector observed breakfast club and pupils' lunch arrangements. She observed indoor and outdoor play activities. Most observations were conducted jointly with the head of school.
- The inspector spoke to pupils to hear how they felt about the school. She listened to pupils read and looked at samples of their work.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and the head of school. A telephone meeting was held with the Chair of the Trust Board. The inspector met the vice chair of the Trust Board.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff in 15 questionnaires.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents and carers during the inspection and received a telephone message from a parent or carer. The inspector took the school's own parent questionnaire into account. There were no responses to the online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector 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 and its plans for the future. The inspector considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. She also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Courtyard AP Academy is smaller than the other schools in the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision Academy Trust. It is the only primary school in the Trust.
- Courtyard AP Academy is an alternative provision academy converter school. It has 20 pupils ranging from Year 1 to Year 6. Pupils remain at the school for varying lengths of time, depending on their individual needs.
- Currently 15 pupils attend full time. Five pupils attend for three days in the week and return to their mainstream primary schools for two days.
- The school became an academy in April 2013. It has not been previously inspected as an academy school. When its predecessor school, Primary Pupil Referral Unit, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2012, it was judged to be good.
- The school is one of five alternative provision academies within the Trust. The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education and has supported school improvement in a number of pupil referral units. The head of school has been in post since before the school converted to academy status. The Trust Board oversees all the trust schools. The recently established local advisory board provides further advisory support to Courtyard.
- Currently most pupils are described as disadvantaged, indicating that they are eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium.
- Pupils come from a variety of different ethnic heritages. Currently the largest group is from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- All pupils are disabled or have special educational needs, and generally have a background of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some pupils have been permanently excluded, or are at risk of permanent exclusion, from their mainstream primary school because of these difficulties. Some pupils have a statement of special educational needs, mainly for behavioural difficulties.
- Around half of pupils attend breakfast club before starting lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the play equipment in the outdoor playground to give pupils a wider range of activities when they are outside.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- All leaders, including the executive headteacher, head of school and middle leaders, work in highly effective partnership. Together they aim for excellence and achieve it. The culture of the school is one of success through learning. All members of the school community, pupils, parents, carers and staff, buy into this culture. As a result, pupils' learning is extremely strong. Pupils are so keen to learn that they take responsibility for managing their own behaviour.
- Leaders make it possible for pupils to learn strongly and for behaviour to be excellent, because they are extremely vigilant. Each adult is highly trained in managing behaviour that in other circumstances could be challenging.
- Leaders ensure that the quality of teaching is high. Adults are observed frequently. They are given excellent advice on improving aspects of their performance. They are checked to make sure the advice is followed up. As a result, pupils learn extremely well.
- There are small numbers in each class and pupils' ages can vary by two or three years within one class. The school provides learning adapted to meet the needs of each child. Consequently each pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Pupils get on extremely well with one another because the culture of the school is one of fostering good relations. There is no discrimination against anyone. Racial incidents are extremely rare, and the very few that occur involve thoughtless remarks rather than deliberate insults.
- Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils do as well as other pupils.
- Middle leaders provide outstanding support to senior leaders. They contribute to the highly efficient ways of checking pupils' progress. They help senior leaders to check the quality of teaching. As a result, these areas of the school's work are extremely strong.
- The subjects pupils learn are chosen well to promote their literacy and numeracy skills, and also to cover the full range of subjects typical of primary schools.
- Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for moving back to their mainstream primary schools or moving to a new school. The school maintains strong links with pupils' former schools and the schools they will move to next. These links ensure that when the time comes, pupils move confidently to their next phase of learning and have the basic skills needed to cope with the move.
- Leaders choose the wide range of trips and visits carefully to raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils are regularly taken to the theatre and to museums. Such experiences broaden their understanding, showing them, for example, how the events of the past shape our current lives.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the rich experiences the school gives them. A popular recent trip was to London's Chinatown. Such experiences support the school's successful work in teaching pupils British values and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- The additional funding for sports is used successfully to give pupils the chance to learn swimming. This helps pupils gain confidence in physical activities and improves their general well-being.
- The school keeps pupils safe through its effective and rigorous safeguarding arrangements.
- The Academy Trust provides extremely valuable support to the school. It shares expertise across all the member schools. This helps Courtyard to gather figures on pupils' achievement, and to use the information to secure high-quality teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement and their learning are exceptional.
- The school works in extremely strong partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector, or sent a message by telephone, could not speak highly enough of the school. They praised it for its 'two-way communication', in the words of one parent or carer; another commented, 'It's given me my son back.' Parents and carers confirmed that their children's behaviour at home had been transformed by the work of the school. They said the school keeps their children completely safe. Children who had managed on occasion to escape from their previous schools were now kept secure and protected.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school is governed by the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision Trust Board. A local advisory board has recently been set up to advise the school on areas of its work. It reports to the Trust Board.
 - Board members have a thorough understanding of how much progress pupils make. They receive full information from the school on how well pupils learn and how they do in the national tests. Though the school has been in existence for only two years, with only one set of published figures, board members report that they observe a clear improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

- Board members visit the school regularly to test its work for themselves. They see for themselves how successfully pupils are learning. Pupils show them their books and speak enthusiastically of the quality of teaching they receive. In this way, board members assure themselves of the quality of teaching at the school.
- The board has clear systems, shared across all schools in the Trust, for rewarding good teaching. Staff are given targets for performance, linked to how well the pupils are learning. Staff agree their own targets and check with leaders and managers that they have met the targets. These systems ensure that staff share in improving the school. Board members are not afraid to take action to tackle underperformance, should it occur.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally eager to learn. They take pride in the neatness of their workbooks and are ready to show them to visitors. They are careful in handling materials. They keep their classrooms tidy. Pupils treat with care the displays of their work, such as the high-quality paintings in the art room.
- The school creates a calm, nurturing atmosphere. The timetable provides regular opportunities during the day for pupils to be quiet and reflective. For example, one such session focused on connections. Pupils and staff unrolled a skein of wool while they spoke of their interests; others who shared the same interests took a share of the wool. By the end of the session it was clear from the pattern of the wool, as well as from the spoken experiences, that all were connected and part of the same web of shared experiences. In such ways the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally strongly.
- The inspector saw a drama session where the focus was on dealing with moral dilemmas and making the right choices. One pupil said, 'Tell the truth, because it's the right thing to do!' Such activities help pupils to understand the consequences of their choices and to respect others.
- Those who attend breakfast club are given healthy food and have a settled start to the day. Lunch arrangements enable pupils to socialise and chat peaceably to one another as they sit together around tables seating two, three or four. Adults insist on good manners, and pupils are reminded to say 'please' and 'thank you' when being served.
- Pupils from all heritages and backgrounds get on extremely well with one another. They told the inspector that pupils are rarely unkind to one another. Occasionally, if a child's emotions become too strong to be self-managed, the well-trained adults restrain the child gently but firmly. Pupils are quickly calmed and return to their learning without fuss or delay.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which is on a rising trend.
- Pupils have the choice whether to play indoors or outside at playtime or after lunch. Those who play indoors have a stimulating range of activities. However, the outdoor play area, though well supervised, is too small for the numbers who use it. There are too few stimulating play opportunities outdoors.
- Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector, or who responded to the school's survey of their views, were unanimous in agreeing that their children are happy and safe.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The site is completely secure. Pupils cannot get out and strangers cannot get in without being thoroughly checked.
- Adults who work with the pupils are rigorously checked. Staff are well trained in child protection and safeguarding procedures. The school thinks carefully about any possible risks before taking pupils out on trips.
- Pupils told the inspector that there is no bullying. Exclusions are very rare.
- Safety is important to the pupils. One told the inspector that he learned well at school 'because it is secure'. The school keeps the pupils safe and teaches them how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are taught how to avoid risks from using the internet or from talking to strangers.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils learn exceptionally well because the quality of teaching is high. Adults go to enormous lengths to make learning stimulating. For example, a Spanish lesson built pupils' vocabulary extremely effectively by getting the class to repeat a word softly while a pupil searched for a picture of an object, or loudly if he drew near it.
- All the adults, whether teachers, or learning support professionals, cooperate extremely well to provide a varied menu of support for the pupils. Arrangements are flexible, while relentlessly focused on learning. Pupils receive individual support, or work in small groups, or come together as a whole class, depending on what method is most successful in meeting the needs of the individual pupil. As a result, those of all abilities and needs make outstanding progress during their stay at the school.
- One reason for the success of the teaching is the use of small rewards to mark each step in pupils' learning. Small gains in learning are marked with tokens, which the pupils themselves collect. If they collect 10 tokens, they receive stickers, and then certificates. These are presented in assembly, enabling all to celebrate the pupils' success.
- Pupils learn extremely well because they understand what they need to do to improve. Marking offers clear guidance on the next steps pupils should make to improve. The comments relate to the pupils' targets. Pupils regularly consult the comments while completing a piece of work to ensure that they have met the target. For example, a pupil who wrote, 'The snow was as white as a cloud', checked his target to assure himself that he had indeed 'included detail' in his description.
- Targets for improvement are not just for academic work but also to give pupils the motivation to improve their behaviour so that they are able to concentrate on learning. Pupils choose such targets as 'completing my work' for themselves. With the help of the adults and their classmates, they continually check that they are meeting their targets. Such techniques help pupils to learn extremely well by treating learning as a partnership with the teacher.
- Reading is a highly effective aspect of the school's work. The school encourages pupils of all abilities, including those who are not natural readers, to use the school library or buy worthwhile books.
- The school promotes writing successfully. Pupils are willing to write a great deal because tasks are imaginative and exciting. The inspector particularly enjoyed seeing pupils' excitement as they were enrolled into the 'Creepy Club' and given certificates for their excellent work. They loved writing about themselves as creepy monsters. One pupil wrote, 'My eyes are green as emerald and very soggy.'
- The teaching of mathematics promotes extremely effective learning because the level of challenge is strong for pupils of all abilities. For example, in one classroom some pupils were learning ways of measuring the perimeter of shapes. Others converted mathematical word problems into sums, calculating how much it would cost 27 children to swim for three sessions each, if each session cost 80 pence.
- The school prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage of their schooling by ensuring that they acquire the best skills in reading, writing and mathematics that they are able to achieve.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress during their time at the school. This reflects the high expectations all the adults have of the pupils. It also reflects the quality of care for each individual.
- Pupils describe themselves as learners. This reflects the school's ambition to provide the best learning, and not to focus on behaviour at the expense of learning.
- School figures show that pupils make fast progress in their time at the school. Work in pupils' books confirms that progress is strong throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as other pupils. Attainment varies with the age and capability of each pupil, and also with the length of stay in the school. Disadvantaged pupils do not fall behind other pupils, and both groups attain as well as they can.
- The largest group of White British pupils make fast progress in line with pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with others at the school because their needs are quickly identified. Highly effective support is provided to these pupils, as it is to others. They make the rapid progress that is typical of all pupils in the school.

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	139541
Local authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	449920

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

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Appropriate authority	Academy Trust Board
Chair	Paul Dix
Headteacher	Seamus Oates (Executive Headteacher), Janet Packer (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 3108 0345
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