

Aerodrome Primary Academy

Goodwin Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 4EJ

Inspection dates 14–15 June 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other senior leaders are ambitious and effective. Governors provide challenge and are clear about the school's priorities for improvement.
- Outcomes have improved in the past year. Pupils are making better progress as a result of a sharper focus on developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Behaviour is good and systems for keeping pupils safe are effective. Pupils feel safe and develop trusting relationships with staff. They get on well together and support each other.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers use a wide range of resources to motivate pupils and reinforce their learning.
- Good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they are integrated well into the school community.
- Clear lines of accountability and strong emphasis on developing teaching give staff a clear focus on school improvement.
- The curriculum is exciting and tailored to pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects taught. They particularly enjoy information and communication technology (ICT), art, music and the many enrichment activities on offer.
- The school works well with parents and other partners to raise pupils' aspirations.
- Early years children achieve well and have good access to a stimulating learning environment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work set in class does not always challenge pupils as much as it could. This is particularly the case for pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Attendance has improved overall, but it remains too low for some individual pupils.
- The academy trust and leaders have an overinflated view of the school's performance because assessment information is not analysed sharply enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders have a sharper understanding of the school's performance by more accurately analysing and interpreting assessment information about pupils.
- Ensure that inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar are always picked up and challenged, so that pupils' written work is of even better quality.
- Ensure that work set in class is always challenging, so that pupils consistently make the highest levels of progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school is led and managed effectively. The headteacher has good support from her deputies and other senior leaders, who understand the school's priorities and work. They are all ambitious for the pupils to achieve well, and are all committed to driving the school forward.
- The school has effective systems for holding staff to account for pupils' achievement. The senior leadership team meets regularly with phase leaders and teachers to check that pupils are making good progress. Targets set for individual teachers are linked to pupils' outcomes.
- Senior and middle leaders work well as a team to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning. This enables them to correctly identify where the strengths and weaknesses lie and to provide appropriate support where it is needed. Well-targeted training and development sustains good teaching in the school.
- Good coaching and mentoring is provided for new members of staff and this helps them to become established quickly.
- The school's new system for tracking and monitoring information about pupils' progress is extensive. This information shows that gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils are closing. However, senior leaders' overall analysis of assessment information does not identify the impact of different initiatives on pupils' achievement sharply enough. This contributes to leaders' overgenerous view of the school's performance.
- A broad and balanced curriculum is securely established across the school, including in early years. A wide range of subjects are taught effectively by specialist staff, including music, ICT, physical education (PE) and art. Fundamental British values are promoted regularly. For example, the topic 'Proud to be British' informs pupils about British cultural values and practices. Visits to Cambridge University seek to raise the aspirations of the most able pupils, while annual events on cultural diversity increase pupils' understanding and awareness of other faiths and lives. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength. Pupils' clear understanding of right and wrong contributes very well to them respecting other cultures and values. The range of enrichment activities is very good, including the annual trip to France. Participation in speaking competitions (including telling funny stories) has seen pupils winning regional and national accolades.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve attendance and reduce exclusions.
- Specialist coaches employed using the sports premium funding have had a positive effect on developing teachers' confidence to teach PE.
- A considerable amount of the pupil premium funding is used to employ staff to improve pupils' academic progress and provide a range of services to support their well-being. Information about current pupils suggests that this funding is having a better effect on improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged pupils than has been the case in recent years.
- Strong partnership work with parents, external agencies and various organisations in the city supports pupils' personal development very well.
- The REAch2 Academy Trust provides considerable support and training for the school. The trust carries out regular checks on the school. However, it has an overinflated view of the school's effectiveness, and this has influenced school leaders' overgenerous self-evaluation. Inspectors do not agree with their view that school is outstanding.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Members of the newly constituted local governing body work closely with senior and middle leaders. They visit the school regularly. Link governors who are attached to subject areas meet with subject leaders and the leadership team to gain insight into their work.
 - Governors are clear about the key priorities for the school's continuous improvement. Minutes from meetings show that governors provide challenge and ask pertinent questions about the performance and attendance of different groups of pupils. They scrutinise the use and impact of the premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, keep attendance and behaviour under review and monitor the school's work.
 - Governors play a key role in scrutinising and ratifying all decisions about teachers' pay rises.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are vigilant and ensure that pupils who need help and support can do so quickly. Regular audits ensure that all safeguarding processes and procedures are constantly updated. Checks on staff and training are up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Scrutiny of pupils' books and learning observed during the inspection confirm that teaching over time is good because it leads to good outcomes. Teachers have strong subject knowledge that supports learning well. Inspectors saw this, for example in the teaching of information and communication technology to Year 1 pupils who were shown how to write successful algorithm programs.
- Most classrooms are organised and managed well. This ensures that pupils work in orderly classroom environments that support their learning. Teachers use a range of carefully selected resources to engage and stimulate pupils' thinking. Purposeful planning ensures that suitable work and targeted support are provided for all groups of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants have very positive relationships with pupils; they know their needs and are responsive to them.
- Effective use of teaching assistants in most lessons supports pupils' learning well. Their proactive approach helps pupils to stay on task and they are skilled in explaining, questioning and developing pupils' understanding. However, there are a few occasions when additional adult help is not available for pupils learning English as an additional language and this slows their progress.
- Topic work is used effectively to make links between subjects such as history and geography. Topics also give pupils a range of opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, and make learning fun and practical. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy these lessons because they are 'interactive' and they learn more.
- Strategies to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy include setting homework regularly on spellings and times tables as well as focused and targeted group teaching. Teachers use their knowledge of how pupils learn visually and through using various non-verbal signals to increase their reading and interpretation of texts, their writing and their mathematical skills.
- Self-editing skills are taught to help pupils' improve their written work. However, errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not always corrected and these mar the quality of pupils' writing.
- While classroom management is good, on a few occasions pupils' attention wanders and they do not stay on task because the work set is not challenging enough.

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 enjoy school. They proudly identify with Aerodrome Primary Academy and say that there is nothing major that they would wish to change. Pupils feel confident to express their views and are able to influence change through the school and learning councils. For example, members of the learning council have used surveys to bring about change in relation to marking, and on the development of the reading corners. Equally, the school council has influenced the development of a café-style dining culture at lunchtime. The council has also contributed to making decisions about reducing the dinner queue and designing the key stage 1 playground.
- Pupils understand and accept the school's values. The prominent display of these values around the school promotes the school's ethos and helps to shape pupils' positive attitude to learning.
- Most pupils concentrate well. They show respect for each other's points of view and display a high level of tolerance. This is very well demonstrated in the way that pupils from the speech and language unit are welcomed by the peers in main class lessons. This shows how effectively the school acts as a family unit.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. The school's monitoring of attendance is thorough, and its work to improve the rates of attendance and safeguard pupils' welfare is extensive. For example, leaders do not hesitate to take legal action when appropriate, and undertake wide-ranging work with external partners. In spite of the actions taken, the attendance of a few pupils remains too low.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils demonstrate good manners as they move around the school and socialise. They are able to maintain good discipline without reminders from adults.
- Pupils and children in the early years play very well together at playtime. They are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they have problems. They also know that the 'sunshine room' is available if they need a place to collect their thoughts and soothe their minds.

- Pupils say they feel safe in their school and parents share this view. Pupils also find the high visibility of staff reassuring. Inspectors agree with their views.
- Instances of inappropriate behaviour are uncommon, and exclusions have fallen significantly. When there is any form of bullying or disrespectful behaviour, pupils and parents say that this is dealt with quickly. Incidents are carefully recorded and parents are kept informed. Pupils know about issues relating to discriminatory and prejudice-based bullying. They are aware of how to keep safe because topics on e-safety, bullying, gangs, drugs and racist behaviour are dealt with in assemblies and the curriculum.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Senior leaders' drive for improvement in the national tests led to the best key stage 2 results for three years in 2015. From below-average starting points, outcomes were broadly average and the rates of pupils' progress improved. Current pupils are doing well. Progress in both English and mathematics is expected to improve in the national tests this year, and the school assessment information and moderated outcomes in the phonics screening checks indicate better achievement. More pupils are beginning to exceed the rates of progress expected.
- In 2013 and 2014, outcomes for pupils in the national tests were variable and required improvement. Key stage 1 results declined in 2015, as they did in the early years and in the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening checks. However, leaders and managers' increased focus on developing pupils' literacy and mathematical skills are now leading to pupils making better progress.
- In 2015, the most able pupils achieved good outcomes in English, grammar, punctuation and spelling, although they were below the national averages in the national tests overall. Predicted outcomes for this group are expected to be higher this year. However, pupils' progress is not outstanding, partly because the work they are set in class is not always as challenging as it could be.
- Disadvantaged pupils were below the national average of other pupils in the school in the 2015 national tests, particularly in English, grammar, punctuation and spellings. Their rates of progress were also lower and they were at least 16 months or more behind the average expected nationally in all subjects. Increased emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills during the current academic year has led to gaps in attainment closing between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan reached well-above-average standards in the 2015 national tests. As with other groups of pupils, the current progress assessment information indicates that they are making good progress, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieved outcomes that were well above the national average in 2015. However, other groups of pupils, including White British pupils, some groups of mixed backgrounds and pupils of African and Caribbean heritage, did not perform as well as other pupils in the school.

Early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years are now making good progress in acquiring a range of good skills across all areas of learning. They are making particularly strong progress in literacy, numeracy, knowledge of the world and social development. Analysis of moderated performance information indicates that a higher percentage of children are in line to achieve a good level of development this academic year. This will represent significant progress when compared with outcomes in the last three years, which were either below or well below the national average.
- The majority of children enter Reception from the Nursery. Although communication and language skills are assessed as low on entry, intensive support to develop children's communication and literacy skills leads to improvement in their language skills. The few children eligible for the early years pupil premium funding are making good progress in line with others in their group.
- The early years provision is well led. The early years leader monitors children's progress closely. This is enabling adults to provide support and to focus more sharply on children's interests and needs. This targeted support ensures that children do not fall behind. However, observation records are more focused on quantity of work completed rather than on quality.

- Pupils' assessment profiles include a range of rich evidence which adults collect and record to show what the children understand, know and can do. However, these do not always indicate what children need to do next.
- Teaching in the early years is good overall. Staff plan together and provide stimulating activities that arouse children's curiosity and lead to them finding things out for themselves. For instance, in Reception, children demonstrated a good level of deep concentration as they worked on designing boats or aeroplanes for pirates. Throughout the activity, they shared and debated ideas by weighing up the evidence of the size and weight which affected the movement of their finished design.
- Teachers model phonics skills to support children's early writing development from Nursery onwards. Timely interventions and good use of open questions help to develop children's understanding and vocabulary. Teachers encourage children to make good use of the indoor and outdoor environment which offers children a breadth of opportunities to explore their learning. Teachers ask children challenging questions to encourage them to think deeply, but do not always give them enough time to explain their ideas carefully.
- Early years staff work successfully to help children make good progress over time. Leaders are developing systems for assessing children on entry and identifying the impact of support on their learning. This is starting to ensure that activities are better matched to pupils' needs and are more consistently challenging.
- Children are well looked after. They behave well, take turns to help and support each other and show respect when listening to each other. Inclusivity is a strength and linked to the curriculum, which is based on topics and children's interests.
- Home-school links are strong in early years. Staff provide parents with information on developing children's communication and reading skills through, for example, the phonics workshops for parents.

School details

Unique reference number	139094
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection Number	10005680

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	515
Appropriate authority	The local governing body
Chair	Mother Patricia Vowels
Headteacher	Zoe Foulsham
Telephone number	020 8688 4975
Website	www.aerodromeprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@aerodrome.croydon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 July 2012

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized two-form-entry primary school, with a Nursery, two Reception classes and an additional class in Year 4. The Nursery provides part-time provision for 52 children. Most children transfer to Reception at the end of their time in the Nursery.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional government funding, is above average. The funding is used to provide additional support for pupils eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is above average, while the proportion with a statement or an education, health and care plan is high.
- A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school serves an ethnically diverse community and a high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The main groups of pupils are White British, pupils of African and Caribbean backgrounds and pupils from any other White background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about safeguarding and admissions on its website. The new policy is available, but governors will not be ratifying it until July 2016.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust, which is the main governing body with legal and strategic responsibilities for all REAch2 schools. The local governing body focuses on the day-to-day responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was converted from a section 8 short inspection to a full section 5 inspection over two days.
- Inspectors observed a range of learning activities, which included 27 visits to part lessons. Of these observations, 10 were with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other staff, the full governing body and two representatives from the Raising Educational Achievement for Children (REAch2) trust. Discussions were held with three groups of pupils and a meeting was held with a few parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and development plan; information on REAch2; assessment records of the performance and progress of children and pupils; records of performance management; information on evaluation of teaching and learning; information on systems used to protect and safeguard children and pupils at the school and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The inspectors took account of the Responses to the online Parent View questionnaires, including the free text responses. Consideration was also given to recent surveys conducted by the school with parents and pupils.

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