

# Smitham Primary School

Portnalls Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3DE

## Inspection dates

22–23 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Smitham is a warm and welcoming school in which pupils learn well and get on very well together. It is popular with parents, staff and pupils.
- Leaders have created a culture where learning is celebrated. Pupils' work is prominently displayed. Older pupils are often given the opportunity to help younger ones with their learning, and this is appreciated by all.
- Leaders know their school. Leaders at every level understand the school's strengths and what remains to be done before it can be judged to be outstanding.
- Leaders and governors have tackled the recommendations of the previous inspection with vigour. Improvements in pupils' progress show that the school is on an upward path.
- Governors provide effective challenge to leaders. This ensures that the school continues to move forward and grow in strength.
- Pupils behave well. This is a kind school, where adults and pupils respect one another. The school looks after the pupils well. It teaches them how to stay safe.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. The topic-based curriculum engages the pupils well. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers' feedback, both written and oral, creates worthwhile dialogue with pupils, enabling them to reflect on their learning.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn well. Activities are stimulating and creative, promoting good language, number and social skills.
- Pupils' outcomes are good overall. Pupils in each year group make strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Pupils who receive support for a range of additional needs make particularly strong progress.
- Progress of the most able pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils, is more variable than that of pupils as a whole. Adults' expectations are not always high enough to secure the best outcomes for these pupils.
- Overall attendance is average. A few pupils miss more school than they should. The school employs various strategies, but these are not always effective in raising the attendance of these pupils.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make the strongest progress possible, and that all adults expect the most from them and provide tasks with a high level of challenge.
- Ensure that leaders focus more sharply on improving the attendance of the small minority of pupils who miss more school than they should.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have successfully created a school that is popular with parents, staff and pupils. All those who spoke to inspectors or who responded to the three Ofsted online surveys were very positive about the work of the school. Inspectors endorse the comment from one parent that 'Smitham is very much a community school which is focused on children succeeding and enjoying their learning.'
- Leaders put pupils' learning at the heart of their planning. Leaders have created a culture where pupils' learning is celebrated. Classrooms are packed with displays of pupils' work, and the best work is put up in the school's 'golden zone', to encourage others to do as well.
- Pupils share in the culture of learning. Those who spoke to inspectors said how much they enjoy being 'learning ambassadors' and helping younger pupils learn their sounds and letters.
- Leaders and governors have made all the improvements identified in the previous inspection report. Pupils now have stronger skills in mathematics. They learn cursive handwriting from a younger age, and this enables them to present their written work neatly.
- Leaders at all levels ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. They observe pupils' learning regularly and provide helpful advice to adults. They check that their advice is followed. As a result, pupils learn well in all year groups.
- Leaders are effective in identifying and removing barriers that prevent individual pupils learning as well as they might. They provide additional support for these pupils, so that they do not fall behind. Such intervention has a particularly beneficial impact on the learning of pupils who receive support for a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make strong progress in their learning.
- The curriculum is creative and stimulating. Pupils learn good literacy and numeracy skills through a rich variety of topics that engage them and make them want to learn. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities, including after-school clubs that give pupils new skills and raise their awareness of the world around them.
- The school promotes British values very well. Pupils have many opportunities to have their say and to listen to the views of others. The school gives them the chance to follow democratic principles by voting for the school council and for their team captains. Pupils learn to be tolerant and to get on well with others.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. For example, in one enjoyable assembly attended by parents, Year 3 pupils gave fellow pupils a good insight into ancient Egyptian funerary rituals in a vivid and often amusing way.
- Leaders and governors make effective use of the additional government funding for primary sports and physical education. They have introduced new sports such as dance and triathlon, and these have attracted more pupils to participate in sport. Leaders ensure the sustainability of the funding by encouraging sports coaches to

work alongside class teachers, so that they too can deliver good-quality sports teaching.

- Leaders and governors use the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to ensure that overall they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is honest and realistic. They grade the school as good, recognising that it is not yet outstanding. They have an accurate understanding of the school's many strengths, but are not sharply enough focused on securing the best outcomes for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of these pupils is not as consistently strong as that of pupils as a whole.
- Leaders adopt a range of strategies to encourage attendance. Their strategies successfully ensure that, overall, attendance is average. However, leaders are not always successful in ensuring that the small minority of pupils who make less rapid progress in their learning attend regularly.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are committed to the school and contribute well to driving it forwards.
- Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and what needs to be done before the school can be judged outstanding.
- Governors provide effective challenge to leaders. For example, governors request full information on pupils who fall behind in their learning, to ensure that they quickly catch up.
- Governors secure good value for money from the teaching force, making sure that there is a close link between the money spent and its impact on pupils' progress.
- Governors effectively carry out their duty to keep children safe. They are well trained in safeguarding procedures. They make sure that all adults are also well trained.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of safety in the school. All staff know whom to turn to if they have a safeguarding concern. Checks on adults working in the school are stringent. Staff and governors are trained in safer recruitment procedures and use them correctly.
- Leaders work closely with the local authority to ensure that any children referred to it get the support they need. Adults are alert to spot early signs of situations when pupils might need help. Adults are trained to recognise potential dangers of extremism.
- Before taking pupils out on trips, adults plan carefully for any risk that might arise. Similarly, risks involved in activities around the school, such as pond dipping, are well planned for.
- The school keeps its pupils safe. Parents who spoke to inspectors or who responded to the online Ofsted survey said that their children are safe and happy at the school.

Inspectors endorse their views.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching is consistently good. Teaching enables pupils overall to make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers plan clearly and this enables pupils to learn well. Teachers explain to pupils what they are expected to learn. Through effective questioning teachers check that pupils are keeping up.
- Topics taught are stimulating. The cross-curricular approach ensures that pupils are interested and actively engaged in their learning. For example, in one Year 3 lesson, continuing the year group's research into ancient Egypt, pupils wrote the story of Rhodopis, an early version of Cinderella. This topic produced some sophisticated writing, with one pupil visualising 'the tall lovely green rushes by the crystal clear, blue, shimmering Nile.'
- Adults encourage pupils to be curious about the world around them. 'Wonder walls' display pupils' questions, so that the whole class can discuss them. One Reception child wrote the intriguing query, 'Are gorillas the strongest in the jungle?' In such ways, the school encourages pupils to consider the world around them. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take charge of their own learning. Adults regularly engage pupils in lively discussions. Adults' written comments in pupils' workbooks provide many opportunities for pupils to respond thoughtfully, and improve their next piece. Even the youngest children contribute to the 'proud walls' with such comments as 'I did good writing', showing how they reflect on their own learning. Such engagement in their learning results in pupils making good progress overall.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good but not outstanding progress. Adults do not routinely expect enough from these pupils and tasks set sometimes lack challenge. As a result, these pupils make expected progress, in line with others, but do not always make the most rapid progress they could.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident, articulate and friendly to visitors.
- The school is a harmonious environment, where pupils from a wide range of heritages and backgrounds get on together very well.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the responsibility of looking after younger ones, either in lessons or at playtimes, when some act as 'playground pals'. Inspectors enjoyed seeing one such 'pal' in the lunch hall, encouraging children in the Reception class to finish what was on their plate. Such systems develop pupils' sense of responsibility towards others, and promote their well-being very effectively.

- Pupils feel safe at school. All those who spoke to inspectors understood what bullying means, and the different forms it can take, such as cyber bullying. All reported that, in the words of one pupil, 'No one bullies at this school.' Pupils feel confident that any worries they might have will be taken seriously. One pupil commented, 'We feel confident talking to all the grown-ups.'
- Parents agree that the school is a safe environment. All consider leaders to be highly approachable, and this they find reassuring. Parents said they like the headteacher and other senior leaders being out and about at the beginning and end of every day, so that any minor concerns can be quickly sorted out. Parents of pupils who have a range of additional needs praised the school for its 'very caring ethos'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy their learning in lessons and also in the after-school clubs and activities that they attend.
- Pupils keep their classrooms neat and orderly. Presentation in their workbooks is tidy. Pupils keep the displays of their work throughout the school pristine. Pupils are considerate towards others when moving through the school's narrow corridors.
- Playtimes are well supervised. Pupils come quickly to order at the end of play.
- Pupils behave well in the classroom. When writing in class, the soothing background music helps them to concentrate and keeps restlessness to a minimum.
- Behaviour and personal development are good, not outstanding, because a small minority of pupils miss more school than they should. This hinders these pupils from becoming resilient learners and making the fastest progress possible.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' workbooks and their learning in lessons confirm school information that progress is good.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good overall progress in line with other pupils nationally. School information for the current year shows that their progress since autumn has been particularly rapid. This is the result of focused and effective support provided for pupils at risk of falling behind. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide support for individuals and groups. This makes a good impact on the learning of these pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. The school carefully analyses any barriers they might have that hinder them from learning well. The school provides effective support targeted at their individual learning needs. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils are prepared well for moving to the next stage of schooling. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills match or exceed those of other pupils nationally, including in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks shows that they make good progress in the early years provision and in key stage 1. This good

foundation enables them to build on their skills and continue to learn well in key stage 2.

- School information shows that a slightly smaller proportion of pupils than nationally are currently making the most rapid progress they can. This is why pupils' outcomes are judged to be good, rather than outstanding. In particular, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, sometimes make slower progress than they could. This is because adults do not always expect enough of them.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children learn good language, number and social skills in a warm and protected environment.
- The provision is well led. The early years leader keeps careful records of the children's progress, and shares the findings with parents through interactive computer programs. Through effective home-school links, children are able to continue learning at home as well as at school.
- Leaders' effective checks of how well children are learning help them to secure their good progress. Children receive focused teaching to help them develop good literacy and numeracy skills with the right level of challenge for them.
- Children who require particular support for language or other specific needs receive support, both within the school and through additional support from external agencies, such as speech and language therapists.
- Teaching is stimulating in the early years provision. Children learn well because tasks provided by the adults engage their interest and enthusiasm. For example, a group of children in the 'baby clinic' role-play area were excited by the challenge of the tasks provided and learned particularly well. The chance to provide 'treatment' for an adult provided many opportunities for the children to use language. One brought a toy stethoscope and said, 'I'll check your heartbeat.' Some made 'clinical notes' by making marks on paper, while others 'measured' the dolls using tape measures. In such ways, children successfully begin to learn to write and to use mathematical skills.
- The Nursery and Reception classes keep children safe, and provide well for their well-being. For example, children using the outdoor workbench experienced the pleasure of construction using real tools, under safe supervision.
- Children behave well. They are ready to take turns using the equipment, and to share the toys. Inspectors observed how well a slight dispute between two children was handled. An adult patiently listened to both sides and explained the importance of gentleness when playing.
- In this safe and secure environment children learn well, leaving the early years provision with language, number and social skills that are typical for children of their age, though not exceptional. The additional funding for disadvantaged children in the early years is deployed wisely. Groups of disadvantaged children in the early years are small, and their outcomes fluctuate from year to year. Currently there are no differences in the learning of these children and that of others in the early years provision.

- Children leave the Reception classes equipped with the skills they need, and ready to start Year 1 confidently.



## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 101759   |
| Local authority         | Croydon  |
| Inspection number       | 10003335 |

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                     | Community  |
| Age range of pupils                 | 3 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 456  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Simon Smith  |
| Headteacher                         | Sarah Garner   |
| Telephone number                    | 020 8660 4399  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.smitham.croydon.sch.uk">www.smitham.croydon.sch.uk</a>   |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:head@smitham.croydon.sch.uk">head@smitham.croydon.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 28–29 February 2012  |

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Smitham is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is a little lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average. Pupils come from a wide variety of heritages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little below average.
- Children's attendance in the Nursery class is flexible. They can attend morning or afternoon sessions, or stay all day for half the week. Reception children stay all day.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a one-day inspection, the purpose of which was to ascertain whether the school remained good and whether safeguarding was effective. It became clear during the day that more evidence was needed before final judgements could be made. The lead inspector was therefore joined on the second day by three team inspectors.
- Inspectors visited classes throughout the school and observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects. The headteacher joined inspectors on many 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 a group of key stage 2 pupils to hear how they felt about the school. Inspectors took into consideration 27 responses to the Ofsted online survey of pupils' views.
- Meetings were held with leaders, including those who hold responsibility for specific subjects.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- The lead inspector held an interview with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection. They considered the school's own survey of parents' views. There were 61 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 15 comments. Inspectors took all these responses and comments into consideration.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents. These included minutes of meetings of the governing body and external reviews of the school by the local authority. Inspectors looked at documents relating to the school's evaluation of its performance and discussed these with leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. They also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and welfare.

## Inspection team

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Natalia Power, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rajeshree Mehta               | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sam Nowak                     | Ofsted Inspector |
| Keith Tysoe                   | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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