

Paxton Academy Sports and Science

159 Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath, Croydon, Surrey CR7 7JP

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In the past, leaders and governors have not been rigorous in checking the security and safety of the site. They have taken recent action to address potential risks to pupils' safety.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's work is overgenerous.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is based on unreliable judgements of children's starting points when they join the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is uneven. Leaders have not secured lasting improvements. As a result, pupils' progress is variable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attendance has been below the national average since the school opened.
- Outcomes in the early years provision have declined. Leaders have not been successful in sustaining good-quality teaching, learning and assessment in the Reception Year.
- Children's social and physical development is sometimes hampered by adults' management of the limited early years' outdoor environment. Adults' interactions with children sometimes hinder children's progress.
- Pupils of different abilities are often given the same work. Tasks do not routinely meet pupils' needs and help them to make good progress. This is equally true for disadvantaged pupils across the ability range.

The school has the following strengths

- The curriculum is enriched by the school's science and sports specialisms and by the extended day activities and weekend provision.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming. Parents and carers told inspectors that their children are very happy at school.
- School records show that incidents of pupils' misbehaviour are decreasing over time. Low-level disruption during lessons is dealt with quickly by adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - assessment information provides a reliable measure of pupils' attainment and progress
 - the school's own self-evaluation gives an accurate and up-to-date view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - leaders and governors check the school site regularly and rigorously to maintain site safety and security
 - leaders of the early years provision have an accurate understanding of children's starting points when they join the school
 - actions taken to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence have swift and sustained impact so that attendance is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - sharing and building upon the good practice that can be found in the school, including in the early years
 - providing work for the most able pupils which challenges them and enables them to achieve as well as they should
 - providing work for the lower-ability pupils which enables them to make good progress, feel successful and complete tasks without constant supervision
 - ensuring that adults in the early years provision manage the limited outdoor space effectively and support children's learning and progress
 - ensuring that all adults who teach phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) receive appropriate training and guidance to address any weaknesses in subject knowledge about the early teaching of reading and writing.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In the past, leaders and governors have not been rigorous in the checks they have made to ensure that the school site is safe and secure. Following concerns about the security of the site that were raised by inspectors, leaders have taken swift action to ensure that pupils in the school are safe from any potential risks.
- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school's strengths. Assessment systems are thorough but the information gathered does not reflect pupils' outcomes accurately.
- Leaders' view that children start the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are typically well below those seen nationally for their age is inaccurate. This was shown by the evidence available to inspectors, including the work in children's books and children's 'learning journeys'. As a consequence, the school presents an inflated picture of the progress children make in the Reception classes.
- Actions taken by leaders have not secured significant improvement to pupils' attendance since the school opened. The rate of persistent absence for several groups of pupils in the school is well above the national average. Leaders are rightly keen to maintain positive relationships with parents. However, this means that they have not consistently taken a strong enough stance on tackling poor attendance.
- Leaders have thought carefully about how to spend the pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils, as for all pupils across the school, is variable because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The principal and the deputy principal were in agreement with inspectors about the quality of teaching observed. The performance management of staff is sharply focused on improving outcomes for pupils and on meeting the teachers' standards. However, these efforts have not yet secured consistently good teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted well. Opportunities for pupils' social development are sometimes limited by the way in which adults manage the cramped spaces in which pupils are required to play and learn.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been used effectively by leaders. As a result of well-targeted support, the progress of these pupils is more rapid from their starting points than that of other groups of pupils in the school.
- The sports premium is used well to further enhance the school's specialism in teaching sports. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports both within and beyond the school day. Given the constraints of the site, leaders are creative in ensuring that pupils have a range of sporting opportunities, such as 'the running club'.
- The broad and interesting curriculum is also enhanced by the school's science specialism; pupils benefit from interesting science and specialist teaching. Pupils learn about many topics in a wide range of subject areas. They sing beautifully in music assemblies. Opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and mathematics skills are

being developed across the school.

- Most parents are positive about the work of the school. They speak highly of leaders and teachers. They appreciate the extended day and the opportunities that pupils have to extend their learning on Saturday mornings.
- Leaders maintain a positive relationship with the local authority and are reflective about the advice and support that they receive. Leaders are proactive in working beyond the school to share, develop and improve their practice and that of the staff.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed to the school and its community. Governors are ambitious for the school's future. The new chair of governors has shown strength and resilience with regard to the challenges of securing a new site for the school. Recent recruits to the governing body have added to the collective skill-set and have recently enhanced the governors' effectiveness in holding leaders to account for pupils' progress.
- Governors took swift action to address the issues regarding the security and safety of the playing field that were identified during the inspection. However, prior to the inspection they had not identified issues with the safety of the site effectively.
- Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent but have little understanding of its impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. A new governor has taken on this aspect of governance and has begun to challenge leaders about the progress that different groups of pupils make in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make all appropriate checks on staff that they recruit in order to ensure that they are safe to work with children.
- Teachers and leaders are up to date with current guidance and training on keeping children safe.
- Staff are vigilant in referring any concerns they have to leaders. They are aware of how to look for warning signs that a pupil may be at risk from radicalisation, extremism or female genital mutilation. Record-keeping systems for safeguarding contain the required information but are disorganised.
- Leaders and governors have taken recent action ensure that the school site is safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. As a result, pupils' progress is variable. Pupils' progress is slow when teachers set tasks that are not suitably demanding for pupils' abilities, particularly the most able pupils.
- When work is not appropriately demanding for pupils' abilities, they lose interest and their attention wanders, resulting in some low-level disruption. Teachers deal with this

quickly but it slows pupils' learning and progress.

- The lower-ability pupils often fail to complete tasks because they are too difficult. Some pupils depend on constant adult support to be successful and do not always have the resources they need to help them with their task. This diminishes their enjoyment of learning and their self-confidence, as well as limiting the progress that they make. In some classes, pupils wait for support from adults for several minutes and when it is not forthcoming, they give up on the task.
- The quality of teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Some adults are insecure in their subject knowledge, as seen in their inaccurate articulation of letter sounds and failure to tackle pupils' misconceptions. In some phonics groups, pupils lose focus quickly and low-level disruption is common. Nevertheless, the small sample of pupils who read to inspectors were able to use their phonics skills well to sound out words.
- The reading areas in classrooms are of varied quality. In some classrooms, the reading areas are enticing and encourage pupils to read. Others do not. Teachers and adults do not routinely ensure that pupils understand what they are reading. When pupils are instructed to read in pairs, staff do not regularly check whether pupils read to each other or not.
- Pupils are generally encouraged to write purposefully on interesting themes. Sometimes, pupils are not given the guidance they need to apply their phonics skills to their writing.
- Teachers are at the early stages of implementing a new mathematics programme. Leaders recognise that staff are not yet confident in ensuring that pupils of different abilities are given tasks which meet their needs. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils do not have frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Leaders have plans in place to develop this aspect of the school's work further, to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from teaching and additional support which helps them make good progress. Adults who support this group of pupils across the school maintain positive relationships with pupils and this helps them to apply themselves to their learning.
- When teaching inspires them, pupils are focused and animated in their learning. For example, in science, pupils were captivated by specialist teaching. Engaging activities helped pupils to think deeply about their learning. Opportunities to talk to each other about their learning deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils making strong progress in science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' ability to learn together and from each other is often limited because of the extent and nature of adults' interventions. This, in turn, effects the development of

pupils' self-awareness and self-confidence in learning.

- Accident logs show that a considerable number of accidents have occurred that were associated with the management of the small playground spaces. There has been a reduction in the number of incidents this year because leaders have put effective actions in place to make the playground safer. For example, leaders have reviewed timetables to ensure that fewer pupils are using the space at the same time.
- Pupils have a good understanding of online safety and know whom they can go to in school if they need help or support.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The limited space in the temporary site is a cause of frustration for some pupils. The need to share resources or take turns with equipment leads to minor conflicts between pupils in classrooms and in the outdoor spaces, but adults manage this situation well.
- Pupils lose focus in lessons when teaching does not meet their needs. As a result, low-level disruption in lessons is not uncommon.
- Attendance is well below the national average. The rate of persistent absence in the current academic year is almost double the national average for 2016. Despite actions taken by leaders to improve attendance, there is little sign of any significant improvement. Pupils' poor attendance affects all aspects of life at school. Too much learning time is lost for too many pupils and this has a negative impact on pupils' confidence in becoming successful learners.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is variable across year groups and between classes, reflecting the uneven quality of teaching.
- When pupils read, they generally attempt to use their phonics skills to read the words, but some pupils show a lack of understanding about what the words or the text mean.
- Where there are examples of strong teaching practice, pupils write in a sustained, confident style and complete a range of writing tasks successfully. Some of the most able pupils in Year 1 and in Year 2 have made rapid progress in their writing, but this is not routinely the case in all classes.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 achieved well. The most able pupils who are currently in the school do not make steady progress in each year group because teaching is variable. Teaching does not routinely stretch pupils or help them to make the progress that they should. Leaders are targeting additional funding well to improve this picture. Despite this, the inconsistent quality of teaching across the school results in variable progress for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The progress of lower-ability pupils requires improvement because work is often too difficult for them and they cannot access it without the constant supervision of an adult.

- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, make similar variable progress to their peers. The school's use of the pupil premium and the quality of teaching have not secured good outcomes for these pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in science but their progress in other subjects is variable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall.
- In 2015 and in 2016, the proportion of children who left the Reception classes with a good overall level of development was well above the national average. Leaders' understanding of the progress children made across the early years is not accurate because it is based on unreliable assessments of the knowledge and skills that children had when they entered the provision. Leaders are not accurate in their evaluation of whether children arrive at school with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age range or not.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average overall. However, there are differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others in the check. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reached the expected standard was below the national average.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Current children's books and their 'learning journeys' show that the progress children have made this year in Reception from a range of starting points is variable.
- Adults talk with children frequently, but sometimes this inhibits children's interactions with each other because adults expect too little of them. For example, children playing in the water tray negotiated the use of resources, discussed, reasoned and questioned each other on the range of interesting facts that they knew. This high-quality collaborative learning, which was developing their thinking and speaking skills, stopped immediately when an adult intervened with an undemanding question.
- Adults work hard to engage children in a wide range of activities that they offer in the Reception classrooms and in the outside learning environment. However, their interactions with children are often more about managing behaviour than enhancing children's learning and progress.
- Leaders have high expectations of the quality of the learning environment and communicate this well to teachers. However, leaders have not given sufficient emphasis to raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Children from the Reception receive variable quality of teaching in phonics.
- Adults are vigilant in keeping children safe in the small outside learning area. Children's physical and social development is reduced because the range of activities they can undertake outside is restricted. Sometimes, staff do not ensure that children have an equal opportunity to use the resources available.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Staff are highly vigilant and they explain to children that the rules that are in place are there to keep them safe.

- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for children with special educational needs is targeted effectively to support children's learning. However, teaching sometimes fails to meet children's needs because the quality of teaching is variable.
- Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have been above the national average for the past two years and this means that children are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	140967
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10031672

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Gooden
Principal	Johnette Barrett
Telephone number	0208 683 2308
Website	www.paxtonacademy.org.uk
Email address	sbm@paxtonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Paxton Academy opened in September 2014 and is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Children in the early years are taught in three full-time Reception classes. There are currently two Year 1 classes and three Year 2 classes in the school. The school will expand each year as new pupils join the school.
- The school had planned to move to a new site in September 2017, but has recently been refused planning permission. Governors and trustees now have plans to open a second site to accommodate next year's intake of children. This means that the Reception classes will be based at another site.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The majority of pupils speak English as their first language.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups come from Black African, Black Caribbean or any other White backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all classes at least twice. Observations were undertaken with the principal, the deputy principal and the assistant principal.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, who are also representatives of the academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to a local authority adviser and to the adviser from the Department of Education who is linked to the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views about the school.
- Leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Books from all year groups were scrutinised by inspectors.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils during lessons, in the playground and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documents, including information on current pupils' progress, improvement plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the school's records relating to safety, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. They also looked at a survey of parents' views gathered by leaders prior to the inspection.
- Inspectors undertook a tour of the site with a group of governors.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Wright

Her Majesty's 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.

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