

Inspection of an outstanding school: Link Primary School

138 Croydon Road, Beddington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 4PG

Inspection dates:

27–28 November 2019

Outcome

Link Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Link Primary School. Staff are expert in communicating with pupils. They work tirelessly to develop pupils' confidence and their ability to interact positively. Pupils feel safe and happy. They play and learn together with minimum disruption despite their many varied needs.

Staff are extremely knowledgeable about their school community and are always seeking new, better ways to maximise learning for all. They ensure that pupils get the right help at the right time. Staff aim high for pupils.

Pupils gain valuable knowledge and experience of the wider world. They take part in an excellent range of activities. They learn through real-life experiences such as local visits or specialist sessions like horse-riding. These activities promote pupils' increasing confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils behave well at this school. Classrooms are calm. Staff ensure that day-to-day routines are clear and easy to understand, so pupils know exactly what they need to do. This clear communication helps pupils behave well and reduces any anxiety. Staff are on hand at breaktimes and at lunch to help pupils enjoy this time with each other.

Bullying is very rare. When it does happen, staff deal with it effectively. Staff help pupils to learn about how to show kindness as part of their work on respect and relationships.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have well-designed plans for how subjects are taught so that the needs of all pupils are met. As a result, pupils achieve well. Leaders show clear ambition and vision for the school. Staff are relentless in ensuring that pupils achieve their potential.

Leaders' planning in science and personal, social and health education (PSHE) highlights the strengths of the school's curriculum. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and

deliver lessons that build effectively on what pupils have already learned. Staff plan activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities and interests, particularly for those with more complex needs. They captivate pupils' imagination and feed their interests in multi-sensory and stimulating ways. The sensory-based curriculum begins in the early years and continues through the school. This helps children to explore the world around them.

Pupils show real enthusiasm and joy when learning science. Pupils are encouraged to use their scientific skills and apply them to real life. This deepens pupils' understanding and helps them make sense of the world, for example when they learn about the water cycle. Pupils' work shows that staff are ambitious for what pupils can achieve.

Leaders make sure that reading is prioritised across the school. They ensure that staff are effectively trained to teach and promote reading. As a result, staff are highly skilled in teaching pupils to communicate. Because they know the pupils so well they are able to use many different and successful strategies to help pupils learn to read. Children in the early years learn to recognise words through symbols and enjoy the storytelling lessons and learning outside. By the time pupils leave the school, they are prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

Staff promote all pupils' personal development exceptionally well through a variety of additional activities and opportunities. For example, pupils enjoy visiting parks and shops nearby. Leaders firmly believe in the importance of pupils' understanding and experiencing life in the wider community as this helps them educationally and to learn how to keep safe.

Leaders have built positive relationships with staff and are well aware of the workload pressures that exist. They continue to take positive steps to reduce unnecessary workload and staff really appreciate and feel valued by this.

Governors are knowledgeable and understand their role in the school. They challenge and support leaders appropriately. The close working of leaders and the governing body means that the school continues to go from strength to strength.

Parents and carers appreciate the approachable staff and the way in which the curriculum is planned to meet pupils' needs. Parents are real partners in their children's education at the school and leaders work very closely with them to ensure the best for all pupils. Parents are very happy with this relationship and with the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders make sure that all safeguarding checks are carried out efficiently and in a timely manner. Staff are trained well and kept up to date with the latest information about how to keep pupils safe. Staff demonstrate awareness and understanding of safeguarding around the school. All staff are vigilant about keeping pupils safe. Staff use all opportunities to teach pupils how to stay safe. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

Link Primary School has not been inspected since it opened as an academy in July 2017. The predecessor school, also known as Link Primary School, was judged to be outstanding on 5–6 June 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144851
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	10124653
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Julia James
Headteacher	Sandra Turner
Website	www.linkprim.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected.

Information about this school

- Link Primary School opened as an academy on 1 July 2017. When the predecessor school, also known as Link Primary School, was last inspected on 5–6 June 2014 it was judged to be outstanding.
- Link Primary School is a specialist school for pupils from 4 to 11 years old. It specialises in supporting pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school became part of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and support staff.
- We did deep dives in reading, science, PSHE and relationships education. We discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers about the curriculum.
- We also looked at learning in physical education (PE) and in art.
- We reviewed the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. I met with the leader responsible for safeguarding, and spoke to pupils, staff and governors about

safeguarding matters.

- I met with a group of governors and the chief executive officer of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust.
- We met with pupils to discuss their views of the school and what they have learned. I talked to pupils informally about the school.
- We took account of the 18 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 18 additional free-text responses.
- We considered the 42 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Karen Matthews, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paula Farrow

Ofsted Inspector

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