

Inspection of a good school: Aerodrome Primary Academy

Goodwin Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 4EJ

Inspection dates:

18 to 19 May 2021

Outcome

Aerodrome Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. Pupils and staff described the school as a 'community'. Leaders, staff, and pupils actively use the school values, 'aspire, persevere, achieve,' in their day-to-day work. Pupils are proud of their school and the additional learning opportunities that teachers provide. For example, pupils visited a university as part of leaders' aims to raise pupils' aspirations.

Leaders have high expectations for every pupil. The large clocks around the school site remind pupils how important it is to be on time to school. Pupils know that time spent in school makes a positive difference to their learning. Leaders continually work with parents and carers to include them in their children's learning. Parents value leaders' communication and support.

Leaders prioritise reading and make sure that pupils read every day. The school's values help pupils to keep going if they find learning difficult. Leaders give pupils strategies to support themselves if they become stuck. Pupils achieve and behave well.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They know that there are adults to listen to them if they are worried about anything. Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly. Pupils help each other in lessons. They enjoy having responsibilities and caring for the school dog.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They plan a range of rich cultural opportunities aimed at raising pupils' aspirations. COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions have recently limited what is on offer. However, leaders have thought creatively about providing opportunities in a different way. For example, an author visited the school remotely to promote reading. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about reading the author's book after the visit.

Pupils achieve well in most subjects. Leaders plan pupils' learning carefully so that new knowledge is introduced in stages. Pupils use their prior learning to help them understand

new knowledge. In computing, for example, pupils described how they had used code and animation in previous lessons. This knowledge then helped them to understand programming. Pupils confidently use subject-specific language in all subjects.

Teachers make sure that pupils recall previous learning. In mathematics, for instance, pupils practise their times tables regularly. Teaching incorporates well-chosen strategies to help pupils to remember key information. Teachers act quickly if pupils need extra help to remember or understand the learning.

Leaders prioritise phonics when children start school. They check which sounds children know before they move on to new phonics knowledge. Teachers help pupils to remember sounds. They also make sure that if pupils fall behind, then they catch up quickly. Teachers encourage pupils to read every day. Pupils enjoy reading. They described their favourite books and characters with enthusiasm. However, sometimes pupils choose books to read that do not match the sounds taught in class. This affects pupils' ability to read fluently.

Leaders provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary. This focus on language and communication begins in the Nursery and continues throughout the school. In the Nursery, for example, teachers encouraged pupils to use words like 'long' and 'short' to describe length accurately. Language development is also prioritised for pupils who attend the specialist resourced provision. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to use vocabulary to explain their feelings. This helps pupils to understand and manage their emotions.

Pupils with SEND, including those who attend the specialist resourced provision, have opportunities to practise and remember the knowledge they have been taught. These pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. Leaders make sure that their voices are listened to.

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Because of this, their learning is rarely disrupted. Teachers use positive language to motivate pupils. Pupils want to learn, and they help each other. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent. For example, pupils like having choices over where to play at lunchtime. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about people from different cultural backgrounds. For instance, pupils recently enjoyed finding out about African drumming in an assembly.

Leaders support teachers in their subject planning. Teachers said that they valued this help. However, teachers need more training to deliver the planned curriculum for French and music. For example, some teachers' knowledge of how to pronounce French words accurately is not secure. Some staff lack the subject knowledge needed to help pupils learn how to play musical instruments. Subject leaders have plans to equip teachers with the knowledge needed to teach these subjects.

Staff described the school as having a 'team' environment. Leaders and governors prioritise the well-being of staff. As a result, staff feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff's safeguarding training is up to date. Staff know the steps they need to take to record and identify any concerns about pupils. Pupils know who to talk to if they are worried about themselves or their friends. Leaders work well with external agencies to keep pupils safe.

Leaders understand the particular risks pupils may face and educate pupils about these risks. For example, pupils are taught about the risks of gang membership and substance misuse. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils said that they understood that mental health was important. They could describe ways to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the school makes sure that the lowest 20% of readers have access to books that match sounds that they have learned, this is not the case for everyone. This means that some pupils take home books which they cannot read fluently. Leaders should make sure that all pupils who are learning to read have access to books that match the phonics knowledge learned in class.
- In French and music, some staff have gaps in their subject knowledge. This stands in the way of them delivering the curriculum effectively in these subjects. As a result, pupils do not develop and deepen their knowledge as well as they might. Leaders should continue to train all staff and ensure that they have the confidence and subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum in French and music.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or 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.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 14 and 15 June 2016.

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 the school and 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	139094
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10192550
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	489
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Bennett Biddle King
Headteacher	Zoe Foulsham
Website	www.aerodromeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 to 15 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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 overseeing the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school has a part-time Nursery provision with 52 places. The majority of pupils transfer to Reception at the end of their time in the Nursery.
- The school has a specialist resourced provision for pupils with SEND, which is funded by the local authority. This provision offers 19 places and caters for pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils receiving SEND support is above average as is the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the school, four members of the local governing body and one representative from the Raising Education Achievement for Children (REAch2) Trust.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. As part of this, inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and reviewed their work. Inspectors also met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and spoke with leaders in other subjects. Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils about reading.
- Through discussion with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks for staff and checks on relevant qualifications.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils in lessons to consider their views on the school.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktime. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about behaviour, their workload and well-being. Inspectors considered the 60 responses from staff and 245 responses from pupils to Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, including written comments. Consideration was also given to recent surveys for parents that the school conducted.

Inspection team

Lucy Bruce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sam Ingram

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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