

Inspection of Applegarth Academy

Bygrove, Fieldway, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 9DL

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy coming to school. They like their learning in a wide range of subjects, from mathematics to music.

Adults set high expectations for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' ambition and well-designed activities enable pupils across the school to achieve well. Children in early years get a strong start in all the areas of learning, including reading and mathematics. Reading is a top priority across the school.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. There is very little bullying. If it does occur, it is managed effectively. Pupils of all ages learn to be respectful of people's differences. Adults teach pupils how to work well together and how to listen to each other. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and help each other. If there is unkindness, pupils are confident adults will sort it out. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe and valued.

Pupils celebrate their achievements, both large and small. They have a variety of different 'cheer' routines, such as 'the firework show'. This might be for learning, attendance, or a contribution to the class. Pupils and staff delight in these celebrations. Everyone participates enthusiastically with the sounds and actions.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum which is ambitious in scope and depth. Subject plans are detailed. Leaders sequence work so that it builds carefully on what pupils have learned before. This starts in the early years.

Leaders make sure pupils learn to read with confidence. This means that pupils can access the full curriculum as they move up the school. Leaders use assessment information to make sure that weaker readers get the targeted support to help them improve. Leaders and teachers select class reading books carefully. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and become fluent readers.

Children start to learn phonics in Nursery. Staff in all year groups have received training in phonics. They know how to model sounds for children. Staff always insist that children blend and segment words correctly. They make sure that children do not guess words or rely on pictures to help them. Adults check children's progression in phonics regularly. Children get exactly the help they need so that they do not fall behind. Parents and carers said how pleased they were that their children had learned to read quickly.

In addition to reading and mathematics, leaders make sure that children in the early years make progress through the curriculum in all the areas of learning. Teachers choose activities which provide a strong foundation for the wide range of subjects in later years. Children are exceptionally well prepared for Year 1.

Mathematics is strong across the school. Leaders have assessed pupils following the national lockdowns. They have adapted their plans to cover any areas of weakness. Pupils revisit work and deepen their understanding in the class 'maths meetings'. Staff are enthusiastic and have expert knowledge in the subject. Almost all pupils that inspectors spoke with said that mathematics was their favourite subject.

Leaders ensure that pupils revisit subject knowledge. For example, in a history unit, pupils used their knowledge of art to study the First World War artist Paul Nash. Teachers plan activities which help pupils retrieve and recall knowledge from previous learning. Pupils enjoy these activities and said that they help them learn. In science, pupils can recall the characteristics of different animal groups. Year 6 pupils can explain concepts such as the meaning of 'warm blooded'. However, sometimes, pupils struggle to remember and understand the knowledge they have been taught in some subjects.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. This is the case in both the enhanced learning provision (ELP) and in the wider school. Leaders use their knowledge and experience to set high expectations for these pupils. They ensure that staff have the resources and training they need so that pupils achieve well. Leaders work well with other professionals to support pupils' language development.

The school values, such as collaboration and communication, are a big part of school life. These values have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Learning in classes is not disrupted. Pupils are friendly and kind. Their positive attitudes contribute to a warm atmosphere throughout the school. Everywhere is orderly and calm. Pupils can speak confidently with visitors.

Leaders emphasise the importance of developing pupils' character. Pupils understand respect and tolerance. They have a wide range of opportunities to learn about these concepts in lessons. For example, leaders choose class reading texts which help pupils understand people's differences. However, pupils do not have sufficiently rich opportunities to develop their own particular talents and interests beyond the curriculum.

The trust and governors provide strong support to leaders and staff. Staff were positive when talking about the support from leaders and the trust. For example, they value high-quality subject training. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Members of the safeguarding team are knowledgeable and experienced. They have developed a 'tell an adult' culture. Pupils can talk to learning mentors in the playground and use 'worry boxes' in classrooms.

Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities to report any concerns. In this way, leaders identify pupils in need of help. They have set up a range of effective partnerships with the local authority and external agencies. This helps to ensure that pupils and their families get the right support. Leaders complete pre-employment checks on all staff and record these correctly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The effect of leaders' actions to develop the curriculum is uneven. Pupils do not consistently remember and understand key ideas in some subjects. Leaders should refine the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that pupils remember the intended knowledge securely in all subjects.
- Pupils do not have rich and varied opportunities which aim to promote their personal development outside the taught curriculum. This means that the range of provision is not as wide as it could be. Leaders should find ways to encourage pupils to further develop their talents and interests.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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| Unique reference number | 139393 |
| Local authority | Croydon |
| Inspection number | 10200598 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 459 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Rama Venchard |
| Headteacher | John Halliwell (Executive Headteacher) |
| Website | https://applegarthacademy.org/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 26 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. |

Information about this school

- Applegarth Academy is a member of the STEP (Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership) multi-academy trust.
- The school curriculum is planned on a biennial basis and organised as three two-year cycles from Year 1 to Year 6.
- English is taught by 'stage not age' from Year 1 to Year 6. This means that leaders use assessment to group pupils according to their knowledge of English.
- Croydon local authority has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND based at the school. This is the ELP for pupils with a developmental language disorder. There are 19 pupils on roll.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 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 leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held a remote meeting with the chair of governors and a trustee. Meetings were also held with trust officers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and music. Inspectors visited classes, including those in early years and the ELP. Inspectors looked at subject plans and pupils' work, met with pupils and held discussions with teachers and subject leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at a wide range of subject curriculum plans, held meetings with pupils to talk about their learning and review their work and visited lessons.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the single central record and records of safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors talked with staff about the impact of their safeguarding training and to pupils about how safe they feel in school. The lead inspector discussed safeguarding with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start of the day, visited an assembly, met with representatives of the pupil parliament and observed pupils around the school at breaktime and lunchtime. The responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, parents and staff were also considered.

Inspection team

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