

# Inspection of a good school: Robert Fitzroy Academy

80 Brampton Road, Croydon CR0 6JN

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2023

## Outcome

Robert Fitzroy Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Hayley French. This school is part of REAch2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert. There is also a deputy director of education, Justin Burt, who is responsible for this school and six others.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. Pupils treat one another, and the adults, with kindness and respect. Staff encourage pupils to be aware of their behaviour and the impact it has on others. They provide opportunities for pupils to do 'good deeds', such as making and sending cards of appreciation to members of the emergency services who work over the Christmas period. Pupils are considerate of others. One pupil, reflecting the sentiments of many, said that at school, 'friends are like your family; they support you'.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement through the curriculum and more widely. In recent years, staff and leaders have worked closely together to make sure that the school's curriculum builds pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders provide pupils with a breadth of experiences beyond the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 3 hiked in a rural setting so that they could experience the countryside away from buildings and busy places. Pupils in Year 4 visited horse stables to learn about caring for large animals. Pupils in Year 6 went to see a play in a West End theatre before performing in their own theatre production. Pupils, parents and carers value these memorable experiences.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum includes thoughtfully selected knowledge across all subjects. Recently, leaders have made considered changes to further improve the order in which knowledge is taught in the curriculum, so that what pupils know builds precisely on what came before it. For instance, pupils in Year 2 science learn about what proportion of

different food groups a typically balanced diet might include before going on to think about how the body uses each of the food groups for nutrition in Year 3. In physical education (PE), pupils first learn to pass a ball while stationary, then while travelling, before learning to defend against an opponent when in possession of the ball. Leaders have consulted closely with staff on changes to the curriculum, and provided quality training to help develop their expertise where subject content is less familiar.

Teachers typically use their subject knowledge effectively to help pupils recall prior learning. Pupils with lower starting points in speech and language are well supported, through individual sessions and adjustments to teaching and resources which benefit all pupils. For example, teachers focus carefully on helping pupils to pronounce and define important vocabulary accurately. Pupils routinely rehearse their ideas in discussion in class. These practices help pupils to develop confident and accurate spoken language.

In some areas of the curriculum where there have been recent changes, teaching sometimes focuses on the short-term knowledge pupils have studied, but does not help them to connect that knowledge to deepen pupils' understanding of more complex concepts. Pupils confidently recall facts and key words about specific topics across the curriculum, but sometimes are not as confident in discussing more complex ideas.

Reading is an important priority for leaders, who have recently introduced a new phonics scheme. Leaders check phonics teaching closely to ensure that the new approach becomes well established. They check that, from the start of the Reception Year, children learn the sounds and strategies they need to decode unfamiliar words. Leaders quickly identify any pupils who need extra help with reading, and they provide structured support that addresses any specific gaps in their knowledge. Pupils are read a range of stories and they are encouraged to think about the themes, characters and wider meanings within them.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. Carefully chosen support is provided to each pupil and leaders check regularly how well pupils' needs are met.

Established classroom routines support pupils to be attentive and focused on their learning. Pupils are quick to attempt new challenges and they do not give up easily. In the early years, children are supported to share, take turns and include others in their play, qualities which pupils demonstrate throughout the school. Typically, pupils attend school regularly. Leaders seek to understand the reasons why a pupil might miss school and provide support where necessary.

Pupils are regularly taught about health, relationships and staying safe, including online. They are taught about different religions and cultures. By raising awareness of differences, the school encourages pupils' insight into different people's experiences and reminds them of the importance of tolerance and respect for all people. Pupils receive strong support for their mental health. The school provides a range of strategies to maintain a healthy mind, recognise when someone needs help and know where to get it.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, what pupils learn in the short term is not strongly connected with the longer-term aims of the subject curriculum. While pupils complete activities accurately in lessons and recall facts and vocabulary set out in the curriculum, sometimes they do not necessarily know how this content links to more complex ideas. As a result, they find it more difficult to discuss and apply sophisticated concepts over time, particularly where curriculum thinking has been recently refreshed. The school should ensure that teaching focuses on helping pupils to connect facts and key subject language with more complex concepts to help pupils to deepen their understanding across all subjects over time.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we the school to be good in July 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 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138502
<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10293276
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	584
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gavin Robert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hayley French
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.robertfitzroyacademy.com">www.robertfitzroyacademy.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust.
- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the school's leadership, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE and history.

- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including leaders who work within the trust. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, behaviour and attendance, early years and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and the trust board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Lloyd

Ofsted Inspector

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