



# Link Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 133741  
**LEA** Sutton LEA  
**Inspection number** 282359  
**Inspection dates** 23 February 2006 to 23 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mark Evans AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	138 Croydon Road
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special		Beddington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 11		Croydon, Surrey CR0 4PG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8688 5239
<b>Number on roll</b>	40	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8667 0828
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs G Gray
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 February 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Beverley Dixon

<b>Age group</b> 6 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23 February 2006 - 23 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282359
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

The Link Primary School is a non-maintained special school, one of two that are run by Link Day School Limited, a registered charity. Since the last inspection, it has gained non-maintained status. The school provides education for pupils who have speech, language and social communication difficulties and other learning difficulties including, for some, emotional issues related to their educational needs. There are currently 40 pupils on the roll of the school, who are taught in 5 classes. All have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Classes are predominantly constituted of pupils in the same year group.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school believes itself to be good but the inspector judges it to be outstanding. The pupils are very happy to be at school; their parents very much appreciate the high quality of education and care provided. The exemplary teamwork between speech and language therapists, play and occupational therapists and the teaching and non-teaching staff is at the centre of the success of the school. Teachers know their pupils very well and provide work that is carefully tailored to meet their individual needs. Pupils achieve well in the context of their learning difficulties and disabilities, and behaviour is excellent. Teaching is always good, with exemplary relationships and a real sense of joy and fun in lessons. The curriculum provided by the school is excellent: it offers a range of education and therapy that extends the boundaries of their experience and meets the learning needs of the pupils. Policies underpinning the curriculum are not as up-to-date as they should be, and the use of information and communication technology is sometimes inconsistent. The pupils are very well cared for: this is another key strength of the school. Pupils learn how to live healthy lives, feel safe and enjoy school. Links with parents are very strong, but those with others schools could be stronger. Leadership and management are very successful, supporting pupils and staff alike. Governors know the school well and provide good support. The school's finances are very well managed and it provides good value for money. The last inspection judged that there were no major issues to be dealt with, and the school has successfully dealt with two minor issues, as well as making effective structural and procedural changes. The capacity for further improvement is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

\* Update curriculum policies to reflect better the excellent practice in the school\*  
Ensure that the use of information and communication technology is widespread and consistent throughout the school\* Explore means of making more links with local schools

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils with a wide range of attainment and capabilities are admitted to the school. All attain very well right across the curriculum, given their learning difficulties and disabilities. The staff work together closely to set challenging but appropriate targets for each pupil; in most instances, these targets are met as expected. There is particularly good progress made in the speaking and listening skills associated with English, but also taught through history, geography, physical education and in therapy sessions. For example, pupils throughout the school have made excellent progress in science, because of a recent focus by therapists on key vocabulary in the subject. Similarly, assessment information demonstrates that pupils have made good progress in mathematics, in their handwriting and in their receptive and expressive language skills. Of special note is the excellent progress pupils make in their ability to carry out tasks

with decreasing levels of help from adults. This growth towards independence is part of the educational focus of the staff in all aspects of the pupils' lives. Parents are very pleased indeed with the progress made by their children, citing communication and social skills as particular areas of strength.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is excellent. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Their moral and particularly their social development is outstanding. Parents report almost unanimously that their children are very happy at school. Even on a cold and wet day, their behaviour around the school is excellent. It is evident that they are enjoying being there and attendance is consistently very high. Pupils' attitude to learning is very positive. Pupils feel secure at school. They keep themselves healthy and safe, with the help of the adults. When pupils are anxious or upset, they quickly calm down again. As they mature, pupils are increasingly able to make their views known, to make choices and assert independence. Pupils take part in many whole school activities, for example the Christmas production and the November barbeque. Each child takes part in half-termly class assemblies where they perform to the rest of the school. The pupils develop a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities, especially the older pupils, through the personal social health and citizenship programmes. The pupils make a good contribution to the community. Pupils are active in their support of charities, for example raising funds for Russian Orphanages and the Tsunami Appeal.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers and other staff involved in teaching are very good at balancing the serious side of learning with the important business of having fun. Lessons can appear messy and loud, such as when the pupils are practising their writing whilst dancing, or being the Big Bad Wolf blowing straw all over the tables; but the underlying focus is always on learning and what the pupils need to do next to make progress. Teachers know their pupils very well indeed. Detailed assessment of what the pupils know results in activities that are very well matched to individual needs. Support staff make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning and care. There are very strong relationships, which support learning well. There is a real sense of joy in many lessons that adds to the excellent atmosphere in the school, for example in a dance lesson based on the song 'Automatic High' and in the physical education lesson on boccia. In the latter, the scorers wore their special sparkly top hats with pride and the players treated them with due deference. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. The planning of the English, mathematics and science lessons in coordination with the speech and language, occupational and play therapists is exemplary. Lessons address the full range of the learners' needs, despite their diverse nature, and learning

is promoted very well. The quality of the support provided by the therapists is very high. For example, the work that the speech and language therapists have done recently in science has significantly enhanced the progress made by the pupils. Tracking of progress in speaking and listening skills is very advanced, with a strong focus on the development of these skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum provided is excellent. It offers a framework for all the key areas of learning, with a range of creative and unusual additions, such as write-dance and boccia. The lines between traditional subjects areas are purposely blurred, so that pupils are provided with a smorgasbord of knowledge that might include social aspects of mathematics, as when pupils learned about Venn diagrams through the consideration of family constitution. There is an extensive programme of visitors to the school and an equally varied series of visits out, for example involving drama groups, musicians and art galleries. The curriculum is very well planned and, although some written policies are out of date, statutory requirements are met. The school ensures that pupils can gain access to the curriculum, no matter what their needs are. Pupils are very well prepared for life in their next school, because of the careful planning for independence skills and communication skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are excellent. Staff provide a warm, friendly and caring environment that ensures the pupils are safe and feel secure. Parents commented that the school looks after the children '...and the parents, too...'. The routes along which pupils' learning progresses are clearly defined, through the school's schemes of work, which are well established. Academic progress is monitored carefully and parents are invited to be involved in the planning for their children's progress. Child protection procedures are well managed and staff training appropriately updated. Pupils receive excellent support to help them gain access to the curriculum and also to the social opportunities that the school provides. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are excellent. Health and safety requirements are carefully monitored and risk assessments carried out regularly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are good and in many respects, excellent. The head teacher has developed a creative and committed team of staff, who are loyal to the school and ardent supporters of the pupils. Parents are very positive about the leadership of the school. The governors discharge their responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment. The governors' involvement has become even more effective since the last inspection. The quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation is very good. The

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head teacher and governors know the school well and are clear about the direction in which it needs to develop, and how this will improve the achievement of the pupils. The capacity for further improvement is good. Teachers and other staff with management responsibilities direct improvements and monitor the performance of pupils and staff carefully and sensitively. The emphasis is always on positive ways to improve. Equality of opportunity is promoted well so that all learners achieve as well as they can. All members of staff are very well supported in their own personal and professional development. Significant financial investment is made in staff training, and the pupils benefit from this, both directly (from the new ideas that staff learn) and indirectly (from the loyalty and warmth that the staff have towards the school). Despite the outstanding manner in which the accommodation has been adapted and is used, the size of some rooms is still a hindrance to learning. The partnerships formed with outside agencies are excellent. However, links to other schools in the locality are not as strong as they could be.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Hello everyone - you might have noticed me when I visited your school. I talked to some of you and saw you in lessons, too. Thank you for making me feel welcome.

At the end of the day, I prepared a list of things that I think the school does very well, and another list of things that it could do even better. Some of the things on my first list, like the outstanding teaching and the kind grown-ups at the school, are things which your parents told me about, as well. Other very good things I saw were the great lessons you have, like dancing and boccia, and the way that everyone works together to look after you.

I have talked to Beverley about ways of making the school an even better place. The main ones to look at are more ways of using the computers you have at school, to write down more of their good ideas about different lessons, and to make even more links to other nearby schools. I'm sure you'll want to help her and all the staff at school, by continuing to work hard and behave well in your lessons. I hope that explains what I was doing at your school: I really enjoyed my day there. Thank you again for making me feel so welcome.