

Red Gates School

Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8HD

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- During a period of change in the leadership of the school, leaders and staff have remained focused on ensuring that pupils achieve well. As a result, the school continues to provide a good quality of education and is improving.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are safe, happy and well cared for. However, some parents and carers have lost confidence in the school's work to keep pupils safe. The interim headteachers and the deputy headteacher have brought much-needed stability to the school community. They are taking clear action to restore parents' faith in the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Senior and middle leaders form a strong team. They have an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. Together, they take swift action to address the areas that need improvement.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff know individual pupils well. They use this knowledge effectively to plan interesting activities, which are well matched to pupils' needs.
- Across the school, pupils typically make strong progress. All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve equally well.
- Leaders and teachers are quick to spot pupils who are not making good progress. Well-targeted extra help prevents these pupils from falling behind.
- Warm and nurturing relationships between pupils and staff underpin the good quality of teaching. Pupils are keen to learn and approach activities confidently.
- Staff are highly skilled at promoting pupils' well-being. They are alert to signs that a pupil might be feeling anxious. They act quickly and calmly and help pupils feel secure.
- Behaviour is good because staff personalise strategies to meet pupils' individual needs. Leaders and teachers continually review and adapt these strategies to ensure that they have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and welfare.
- Pupils attend regularly. Leaders identify any concerns about attendance promptly. They work constructively with families and external agencies to maintain good levels of attendance.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that children in the good early years provision settle in quickly and develop positive attitudes to school.
- Strategies to develop pupils' communication and language skills are variable. This prevents pupils from building on their existing skills and knowledge.
- Governors are supportive of leaders' work. However, they do not routinely challenge leaders to improve the school further.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen governance so that leaders are held to account fully for improving the quality of pupils' education.
- Ensure that all staff use strategies to promote pupils' communication skills effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior and middle leaders have steered the school successfully through a period of change. The school continues to provide pupils with a good quality of education because leaders have remained steadfast in their efforts to ensure that pupils achieve well and enjoy school. Crucially, leaders made sure that teachers concentrated on improving teaching and were not distracted by changes at senior leadership level.
- The two interim headteachers lead by example and ensure that staff share their high expectations. Respectful and positive relationships permeate the school.
- Leaders' approach to school improvement is rigorous. Senior leaders have wasted no time in implementing a coherent vision for the school's future direction. They are ambitious for pupils' achievement across the curriculum. Leaders prioritise their actions astutely to ensure that areas for development are addressed quickly.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and the curriculum thoroughly. They provide staff with helpful guidance and training to ensure that teaching and pastoral support have a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Staff morale is high because staff appreciate how leaders take their views into account when planning improvements to teaching and the curriculum.
- Middle leaders are skilled and knowledgeable. They contribute effectively to improvement planning and take effective action to strengthen teaching and pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility.
- Senior and middle leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress. Pupils at risk of underachievement are identified early. Leaders analyse potential reasons for any underachievement so that additional help is pinpointed to pupils' individual barriers to learning. This contributes effectively to pupils' good progress over time.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium funding wisely. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from well-chosen strategies that help them to learn and achieve as well as their peers. Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to support pupils' good achievement across the curriculum.
- Pupils access a broad and rich curriculum. Well-chosen themes and topics excite pupils about learning and help them to develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders continually review the curriculum to ensure that it is tailored to pupils' needs and interests. Due emphasis is placed on teaching pupils the skills they need to behave well, overcome challenges and enjoy their learning.
- Additional activities, such as horse riding and the school choir, enable pupils to explore and develop their skills and talents. Leaders use the sport premium funding effectively to improve the quality of physical education teaching. For example, leaders have invested in new equipment and employed specialist coaches so that pupils make good gains in their skills and are motivated to try new experiences.
- The school's work to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong. Pupils are curious about the world around them because staff provide experiences that stimulate their imagination. Regular celebrations of pupils' learning

and achievements instil pupils with a strong sense of accomplishment and belonging. For example, during the harvest festival assembly, pupils' singing demonstrated their pride in their school and their skills.

- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn to express their views respectfully and know that others may think differently from them. Members of the school council work with staff to make decisions about how the school could be improved.
- Parents' views of the school are mixed. Some parents are positive about the school's work, while others have concerns about the quality of education their children receive. Leaders are acutely aware that they need to restore parents' faith in the school and have made an effective start on this. For example, they are making changes to the school's website to ensure that parents have access to the most recent policies and curriculum information.

Governance of the school

- Governors care about the school and are committed to their roles. Although governors have been supportive of leaders' work, they have not routinely challenged leaders about what the school could do better. In part, this is because they have not had sufficient information to question leaders incisively on how well pupils learn and achieve.
- To address this, the local authority has wisely appointed new members of the governing body with a track record of strengthening governance. Recent changes mean that the governing body has a clear vision for how to improve. They have suitable plans in place to address the areas that need development. However, many actions are too recent to have had a clear and sustained impact on strengthening governance. Consequently, the governing body continues to lack the necessary information to hold leaders rigorously to account for the quality of education the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff have the right level of training and support to fulfil their duties well. Staff are aware of different factors that may represent a risk to pupils' welfare. When reporting concerns, they take account of how pupils' individual needs may increase their vulnerability to abuse.
- Staff are confident in raising concerns. They know that leaders listen carefully and discuss any concerns thoroughly. Staff understand that their duty to safeguard pupils does not end after they have reported a concern.
- Leaders ensure that staff keep high-quality records, which capture small but potentially significant changes in pupils' circumstances or behaviour. This enables leaders to build a complete picture of possible risks to a pupil's well-being.
- Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding follow up on issues tenaciously. They work constructively with external agencies to ensure that any action taken is in the best

interests of vulnerable pupils. Where necessary, they are ready to challenge decisions so that pupils and families receive the right level of help or protection.

- Leaders' typically positive relationships with families mean that parents are confident to approach the school for extra support should they need it. Leaders and staff are knowledgeable about the range of help available from external agencies. They work sensitively with parents to ensure that they are able to access the support they need.
- The site is safe and secure. Arrangements for pupils' arrival at school are managed smoothly. Leaders ensure that staffing arrangements are effective in creating a safe culture where pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. Throughout the day, staff supervise pupils closely. Leaders are highly visible around the school site and address any issues quickly if they arise.
- Leaders ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work in the school. The single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about the conduct of any adults on site. School records show that leaders take concerns seriously and follow up issues in accordance with school policies. Where necessary, leaders seek advice from external agencies, including the designated officer at the local authority to inform their decision-making.
- Some parents disagree that their children are safe and well looked after in the school. Recent changes in the senior leadership team have undermined some parents' confidence that leaders respond effectively to concerns they raise. In order to address this, leaders have evaluated school policies and strengthened procedures where appropriate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is typically well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers use their comprehensive knowledge of pupils' starting points to plan activities that build progressively on pupils' existing skills and understanding.
- Teachers and adults tailor teaching to the needs of individual pupils. When planning activities, staff give careful consideration to which approaches and resources will be most effective in helping pupils to learn well.
- Pupils learn well because teachers' explanations are clear. Teachers and additional adults adapt tasks if pupils find them too hard. Adults ensure that pupils stay focused on their learning so that they challenge themselves to complete the tasks set.
- Well-chosen resources excite pupils about their learning. Staff are skilled at encouraging pupils to try new activities and participate well in the learning. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils developed their vocabulary by joining in with a familiar story.
- Teachers organise learning so that time is used effectively. Pupils benefit from clear routines and know what is expected of them at different times during the school day. For example, pupils enjoy singing songs as they move around the school or when they change from one activity to another in the classroom. This helps pupils to regulate their emotions so that they are ready to learn.

- Effective communication between teachers and additional adults ensures that staff have a good understanding of what they need to do to help pupils learn well. Staff who are new to the school benefit from a well-planned induction programme to ensure that they are clear about the school's expectations.
- Many parents appreciate the advice teachers provide on how they might support their children's learning at home. For example, they value the opportunities that they have to visit their children's classroom and see for themselves which strategies make a positive difference to their child's progress.
- Teachers' and adults' use of strategies to support pupils' communication is uneven. This limits the development of pupils' communication and language skills, and prevents pupils from achieving to the best of their abilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Kind and caring relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils feel safe and happy because staff are highly attuned to their needs and interests. Staff are respectful of pupils' interests and choices.
- Pupils are keen to learn and take pride in their achievements. Regular celebrations enable pupils to view themselves as successful learners who make a valued contribution to their community.
- Staff are continually alert to signs that a pupil may be feeling upset or anxious. They act decisively and calmly to reassure pupils and refocus them on their learning.
- Leaders and teachers monitor pupils' well-being meticulously. They work closely with families and external agencies to understand what action is needed to promote pupils' welfare and ensure that pupils overcome any barriers to their learning.
- School records show that incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour are rare. Visits to classrooms and the playground show that pupils play and learn together well. Pupils are keen to support their friends and celebrate their successes. For example, pupils enjoyed watching their peers dancing and singing during a whole-school assembly.
- Staff work patiently with pupils to help them take part in activities. Occasionally, adults place too much emphasis on supervising pupils rather than supporting pupils to deepen their knowledge and skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They try hard to follow instructions and conduct themselves sensibly during lessons and around the school site.

- Teachers' and adults' excellent knowledge of pupils mean that they notice subtle differences in pupils' behaviour or attitudes. They provide pupils with extra support at the earliest possible stage in order to prevent a situation from escalating.
- Leaders and teachers use their expertise to implement personalised support programmes for pupils with challenging behaviour. For example, they ensure that pupils can access safe, calm spaces if they are feeling overwhelmed or anxious.
- The leadership team evaluates the impact of individual support programmes frequently to ensure that they are making a positive difference to pupils' well-being and behaviour. Leaders ensure that incidents of poor behaviour are recorded in detail and followed up rigorously by the school's behaviour team. Leaders and teachers reflect carefully on the reasons why a pupil's behaviour may have changed. They adapt pupils' individual plans in light of the evidence they find.
- Leaders ensure that teachers and adults have the confidence and expertise to manage challenging behaviour if it does occur. They provide a suitable combination of formal training and ongoing support, which enable staff to implement agreed strategies consistently and calmly.
- The vast majority of staff feel well supported by leaders in managing pupils' behaviour. They particularly value how the leadership team is always 'on call' to provide further guidance or help when they need it.
- Pupils attend school well. Leaders and staff monitor pupils' attendance carefully and follow up any concerns promptly. Where appropriate, they ensure that pupils and their families access additional support from external agencies so that they are not disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- The atmosphere in the school is orderly and purposeful. Staff use praise and rewards frequently to help pupils understand how to behave sensibly and safely in different situations. Sometimes, pupils require reminders and reassurance in order to meet the school's expectations for behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement is strong because teaching is closely matched to their needs.
- All groups of pupils achieve equally well. Disadvantaged pupils typically make the same strong progress as their peers because the pupil premium funding is used effectively. Boys generally achieve as well as girls.
- Leaders and teachers monitor the progress of different groups carefully and take effective action to ensure that any differences diminish quickly if they do occur.
- Close partnerships with other schools ensure that teachers assess pupils' knowledge and skills accurately. Leaders and teachers use this information effectively to set pupils challenging goals, drawing appropriately on guidance from external agencies. They review pupils' progress toward these targets frequently, and are quick to provide additional support so that pupils do not fall behind.

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because they make good progress in their social and emotional development. They learn to face new experiences confidently and persevere if they find something difficult.
- Over time, pupils make good progress in their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Well-planned activities reinforce pupils' understanding of number and their phonics skills. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and singing songs. This successfully broadens their vocabulary and understanding of language. However, variability in the use of communication strategies prevents some pupils from achieving their full potential.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have successfully maintained the good quality of education in the early years. Many of the leaders and staff are new to their posts. They have quickly established a clear vision for how they plan to strengthen the provision. They are ambitious for children's outcomes, as their plans for improvement show. For example, leaders and staff are prioritising the development of communication strategies so that children can explain what they are thinking or feeling at the earliest possible stage.
- Leaders provide adults with suitable training to help them understand and meet children's needs. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points. This includes disadvantaged children. Children who are not learning as well as they could receive additional support so that they do not fall behind.
- Children get off to a strong start because leaders and teachers invest time getting to know children and their families before they join the school. Staff build an in-depth picture of individual children and plan effectively to meet their needs. Close partnerships with external agencies contribute well to this work.
- Clear routines and expectations mean that children settle in quickly and feel secure. Staff are attentive to children's non-verbal communication, including small changes in their behaviour. They respond quickly to support children's pastoral needs and, as a result, children learn to play and learn alongside each other.
- Staff are skilled at motivating children to explore the activities and resources on offer in the classrooms. They provide well-targeted guidance to help children approach unfamiliar tasks confidently.
- Children become absorbed in their learning because teachers plan activities that reflect children's needs and interests. Staff are quick to spot when tasks or resources capture children's imagination. They adapt their teaching accordingly to allow children to follow their interests. This successfully deepens children's understanding and increases their attention span.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors were complimentary about the school's welcoming atmosphere.
- Leaders ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are effective and that the provision meets the statutory requirements of the early years.
- In response to the needs of local families, the school has increased the number of children on roll in the early years. Leaders quickly secured suitable classrooms and staff

to ensure that children did not lose valuable learning time and started school as planned in September 2017. Following the expansion, leaders have clear plans in place to improve the outdoor learning areas to accommodate the needs and interests of all the children who attend.

School details

Unique reference number	101855
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10019257

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Powell
Interim headteachers	Viv Hinchcliffe/Helen Norris
Telephone number	020 8651 6540
Website	www.redgates.croydon.sch.uk
Email address	head@redgates.croydon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its pupil premium strategy for the current academic year. The school has also not published an up-to-date report on how it meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The school provides education for pupils who have severe learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. All the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Across the school, there are more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from pupil premium funding is above average.
- Following a period of change at senior leadership level, the governing body appointed two interim headteachers from September 2017.

- The school has recently increased the number of children it admits into its Reception Year. In order to accommodate the expansion, two new classrooms have been built.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes across the school. Many of these visits were carried out together with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed pupils at different points in the school day, including as they arrived at school, moved around the site and in the lunch hall and playground. An inspector also visited a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also reviewed a range of school documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and their checks on the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils' progress by reviewing the school's assessment information, pupils' workbooks and other records of pupils' achievement over time.
- A range of documentation related to safeguarding was scrutinised by inspectors. This included child protection records, the single central record of pre-employment checks, and school policies and procedures. Inspectors also reviewed documentation related to school systems for managing and responding to parents' concerns.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's logs of poor behaviour. They looked at documentation showing how incidents of challenging behaviour are recorded, managed and analysed by leaders and staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of staff to ascertain their views of the school. Inspectors also spoke to staff informally during the inspection and took account of 82 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through informal discussions before school and during school events. Inspectors also took into account the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including text comments.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Penny Barratt	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Millward	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Matthews	Ofsted Inspector

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