

Forestdale Primary School

Pixton Way, Croydon, CR0 9JE

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has already begun to make improvements.
- She has very effective support from the three assistant headteachers and they work together as a strong team.
- Pupils do well in reading, writing and mathematics regardless of their academic ability or starting points.
- Teaching is generally good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers plan activities in lessons that meet pupils' needs and that they enjoy.
- Teaching assistants provide high-quality support to those pupils who need additional help.
- The school provides well for the training needs of staff and this is helping to improve teaching.
- The governing body is very involved in the work of the school and holds school leaders to account effectively.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils move around the school sensibly.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that any form of bullying is dealt with promptly.
- Pupils come to school regularly and on time.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of teaching that is outstanding is small.
- There is some variability in the quality of teaching in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by eight teachers. Six lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also visited two small-group support sessions. An inspector made short visits to a number of lessons with the manager responsible for pupils who are vulnerable to underachievement to observe provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks in lessons and spoke to pupils about their work. They talked to pupils informally at break times and met with three groups of pupils. They attended a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors considered the 42 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and talked informally to parents as they arrived to pick up and drop off their children. They also considered the 25 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with four members of the governing body. They also met with individual teachers and senior staff.
- The school's records of attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour were looked at. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's improvement planning, a summary of its self-evaluation, records of monitoring, key policies and the minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Melanie Knowles, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Forestdale is an average-sized primary school.
- The school serves a very diverse community. Almost half the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra government funding (the pupil premium) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is slightly below the national average, but the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school regularly receives visits from headteachers who want to see Forestdale's staff coaching programme (STAR) in action.
- The headteacher took up her post at the start of the autumn term 2012. She was previously the deputy headteacher of the school.
- A new Reception class has been established to respond to the local need for additional school places for four year olds. The children started school after the autumn half term.
- There is a private nursery on the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and was not visited as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists more widely within the school
 - using the school's coaching programme to support less-experienced staff so that they quickly build their skills
 - developing teachers' knowledge and skills so that they can confidently use a variety of approaches in lessons and teach high-quality lessons in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school in the Reception class with skills that are slightly below those expected for their age. Well-planned activities and consistently good teaching enable them to make good progress and many join Year 1 having made up the lost ground.
- Children make particularly good progress in learning about letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) during their time in Reception and Year 1. This strong foundation enables most pupils to read with confidence by the time they leave Year 2. Reading has a high priority throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home.
- Pupils leave Year 6 having reached standards that are just above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards improved in 2012, especially in reading and writing.
- Most pupils make the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points, including those who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils make very good progress. For example, the school is particularly successful in helping pupils who had low attainment at the end of Year 2 to catch up with their classmates.
- The school's records show that the rate of progress for all pupils has accelerated this term. This is because the headteacher has introduced a more rigorous procedure to track pupils' progress. Teachers spot any underachievement and deal with it quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that work in lessons is pitched at the right level for them. Small-group support is also provided by specialist teachers or teaching assistants outside the classroom.
- Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium also make good progress. This is closing the gap between this group and their classmates. The use of this additional funding is carefully planned and tailored to pupils' needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's coaching programme for teachers (STAR) is very effective in helping teachers to improve their practice and led to an improvement in the overall quality of teaching in the school last year.
- There is a balance of experience among the teaching staff and the school has a good track record of supporting and developing newly qualified teachers. This year, two newly qualified teachers joined the school. The headteacher is confident that these teachers will develop their skills securely and quickly.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and some is occasionally outstanding. Work in pupils' books shows that high-quality teaching is enabling pupils to make good progress over time. Typically, the strongest teaching is characterised by good questioning that involves all pupils and activities that precisely meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. There are not enough opportunities for teachers to observe each other and learn from this excellent practice.
- Some teachers have excellent specialist subject knowledge in English or mathematics, but are not as confident or expert in teaching other subjects. This means that there is some variation in the quality of their teaching.
- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons. They also lead effective small-group sessions for targeted pupils. Exceptionally strong support was observed in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when a teaching assistant worked with a group of higher-attaining pupils to extend their learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons and that their teachers make learning fun for them. They talk enthusiastically about topics they have studied such as the Second World War and the ancient Egyptians.
- High-quality marking and feedback to pupils about the quality of their written work is the norm.

Pupils say they find this very useful because it helps them to understand how they can improve in the next piece of work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in all classrooms. When teaching is good or outstanding, pupils are engrossed in their work and concentrate well. Occasionally, when the quality of teaching slips below good, a few pupils start to lose focus and chatter. This is dealt with firmly by the teacher so that little time is lost.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The youngest children in the school are taught early on about sharing resources and moving sensibly and safely around the classroom.
- Teachers apply school rules consistently and fairly. A very large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey agree that the school manages behaviour well.
- Pupils say they are confident to resolve minor disputes themselves, but will approach their teachers if they have a serious problem. Pupils report that bullying, in any form, is not tolerated and that it is dealt with quickly. The school's written records confirm this.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in lessons and they show a good level of understanding of possible risks, for example when going up and down the many stairs in the school building.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is above average. The school makes good use of the parent worker to support any family that has difficulty in ensuring that its children come to school regularly and on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has a clear vision for the school and she communicates this well. She has quickly gained the confidence of staff. The very positive responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire show that teachers know what the headteacher is trying to achieve and they are keen to help move the school forward.
- The new leadership team of the headteacher and three assistant headteachers has a range of complementary skills and its members work together extremely well. They review all aspects of the school's work regularly and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has drawn up a comprehensive plan to drive further improvement.
- School leaders ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to thrive. Every teacher now checks to see that all pupils in their classes, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement, are making enough progress in their learning.
- The leadership team visits classrooms regularly to check the quality of teachers' marking and the quality of classroom displays. As a result, marking is uniformly good and classrooms are well organised and attractive.
- Procedures to appraise teachers' performance are robust. The headteacher sets appropriate targets for improvement and reviews progress regularly. Teachers have good opportunities for professional development and the strongest teachers are given additional responsibilities.
- The school has a highly effective partnership with a group of local schools. This partnership provides a wide range of support, such as a special programme for newly qualified teachers in the area.
- Relationships with parents are positive. The website has a wealth of information about the school's work and regular newsletters keep parents well informed. The recent consultation on the local authority's proposal to double the size of the school has caused some concerns for parents.
- The local authority provides effective support that is tailored to the school's priorities. For example, a recent review commissioned by the headteacher provided the school with an external, independent view of the quality of teaching. The headteacher used this information to draw up her improvement plan.
- Pupils study a good balance of different subjects and enjoy the regular outings that enhance their learning. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that are well attended

by pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is knowledgeable and well informed. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how well the school's actions have improved it. The governing body ensures that the safeguarding of pupils has a high priority and regularly reviews policies and procedures. A group of governors works with the local authority to set challenging targets for the headteacher's performance and checks that these are being met. The school's finances are well managed to ensure that the school provides good value for money. The governing body receives reports about the achievement of all pupils, including those who are supported by the pupil premium, but it has not completed a review of the impact of this funding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101773
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	402861

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Margaret Mead
Headteacher	Vivienne Esparon
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2008
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