

Applegarth Academy

Bygrove Fieldway, New Addington, Croydon, CR0 9DL

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Applegarth Academy is a good school which has improved because of the strong and focused leadership of the headteacher and deputy.
- The governing body, the STEP academy trust and the local authority have provided good levels of support for the leadership team. This has had a positive effect on improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Governors monitor all aspects of the school's work and rigorously hold staff to account. They know how effective teaching is and how well pupils are doing.
- The enhanced learning provision is a strength of the school. Pupils make excellent progress here because of the high-quality provision and excellent leadership.
- The achievement of current learners is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are now well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children in the early years make good progress because of consistently good teaching.
- The quality of teaching overall is good, with some examples of outstanding learning.
- Leaders track pupils' progress effectively and put in place interventions to ensure any underachievement is quickly reversed.
- Behaviour in lessons is nearly always good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their lessons. Strong relationships between all members of the school community provide the foundations for this.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and do not believe that there is an issue in the school with any form of bullying.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils in Key Stage 1 attain standards above those expected for their age.
- The curriculum is fairly narrow and does not broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of subjects other than English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes and saw all full time and most part time teachers teach. The headteacher and deputy headteacher observed some lessons alongside inspectors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work.
- They talked to a group of pupils and observed an assembly and playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, members of the senior leadership team and other staff with specific responsibilities, with a representative of the local authority and with a representative of the STEP academy trust.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation including: safeguarding procedures policies, the school's development plan, records used by the school to measure how well pupils are doing, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour and absence, and information about the allocation and effectiveness of pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors analysed 19 questionnaires completed by staff and 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Gavin Jones, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
James Waite	Additional inspector
Martin Roberts	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The separate junior and infant predecessor schools joined together and converted to become Applegarth Academy on 1 April 2013. When the junior part of the academy, Applegarth Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2012 it was judged to be good overall. Prior to this it had been in special measures. Applegarth Infant School was inspected in September 2009 and was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The current headteacher was appointed to lead the academy in September 2013, having been interim headteacher in the infant school for the summer term of 2012.
- The academy is a member of the Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership (STEP) Academy Trust, which was set up in May 2011. Prior to converting the junior and infant schools into its group, it had a memorandum of understanding with the governors of the junior school to support the school during its time in special measures.
- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The early years is made up of a Nursery, which most children attend part time, and two Reception classes, which pupils attend full time. There are two classes in each of the remaining year groups.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is spoken as an additional language is twice the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above the national average. The number of pupils with education or health care plans is high.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is over twice the national average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The school took over the Croydon Speech and Language Centre, now called the school's Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP), in 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Over 30% of pupils in Year 6 joined the school at times other than in Reception. This group of pupils have experienced six different leadership teams as they have moved through the school.
- The school runs a daily breakfast and after-school club managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a greater proportion of pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve standards above those expected for their age by:
 - teachers having a much clearer and more detailed understanding of what these standards look like
 - teachers checking more regularly during lessons to ensure pupils meet them
 - leaders of English and mathematics supporting this work by working alongside their colleagues.
- In order to broaden and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding beyond English and mathematics the school should:
 - help other subject leaders to be able to have a more positive impact on their subjects and to promote them enthusiastically
 - ensure that pupils have more opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has given a very strong steer to the school in order that it should improve. Her high ambitions for the school are supported ably by her deputy. There were very many things that needed improvement when the headteacher took over her post. She, and senior leaders, have made great strides in improving the school and have generated a culture in which good teaching and behaviour flourish.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is well founded on robust monitoring. They analyse pupils' achievement particularly carefully and have been clear where improvements have needed to be made. This information is shared with governors so that they can also rigorously check for improvements.
- Leadership of teaching is good, with excellent checks on its quality. Teachers feel that they have been supported in improving their practice and pupils' achievement.
- The performance of staff is managed effectively. They are set targets which are well matched to the class they teach and to where improvements are needed. Senior leaders use regular meetings to challenge teachers to make improvements for specific individuals or groups of pupils in their classes.
- The leaders of English, mathematics, the early years and the enhanced learning provision all show a very clear grasp of their areas of responsibility. They take an active part in whole-school development and in managing teachers' performance. These activities are helping the school to make more rapid and secure improvements, confirming that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Other subject leaders have not been developed to the same level and have not had the same measurable effect on their subjects or been given opportunities to work alongside colleagues.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium funding successfully to support disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that they are treated equally and can participate in all aspects of school life. The breakfast club ensures that, where necessary, disadvantaged pupils have a good start to the day. One-to-one support, additional staff for group work, specially trained assistants and additional teachers all help to make sure that these pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. This underlines the school's wish to see equal opportunity for all and a complete lack of discrimination.
- The sports premium is used effectively to support pupils to gain a wider range of skills, have more opportunities to take part in competitive sport and to sample new sports and activities. The additional money provided directly by the school has seen the engagement of two sports coaches, who not only teach their activities well, but have now branched out into formulating assessments in order to check pupils' progress.
- The leadership team is developing a range of subjects to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. Quite rightly they focused on improvements which were necessary in English and mathematics. They are now ready to focus on the much wider curriculum, but have not yet made detailed plans to do this, which means that pupils' knowledge and understanding of other subjects is narrow.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and some emphasis is placed on aspects of British values within this broad area. The school fosters good relationships and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school monitors the attendance of all groups of pupils and good systems are in place to take action when poor patterns of attendance are noted.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection effectively meet statutory requirements. The wide range of the school's activities is regularly checked and policies regularly updated.
- The academy trust has provided very effective support for the academy and works very well alongside colleagues in the local authority, who provide equally effective support. This joint approach is based on the fact that they both see that they are supporting 'children from Croydon'.
- The few parental responses to the online questionnaire were positive, although the school often finds it difficult to get parents to take part in activities designed to help them support their children. The school has tried and continues to try to involve them as much as possible.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body carries out its duties effectively and supports the senior leaders robustly. As a result of effective training and a clear understanding of test results and school information, they are able to challenge leadership and at the same time support their drive for improvement.
 - Governors can explain the process of spending the pupil premium funding and relate it to its success. At the same time they know and understand that the school's expenditure on sports-related activities is effective and successful.
 - They know about the quality of teaching and the purpose of performance targets and the importance of these being met for any possible salary increases for teachers and other staff. They know that staff

receive support to improve their practice if necessary.

- Governors oversee the breakfast and after-school clubs, which provide a wide selection of pupils with a good start to the day and a safe ending to it. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and so all safeguarding aspects meet current requirements well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All adults have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils rise to this expectation. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way and are polite and courteous to adults. Behaviour is good in the playground and during the lunch break.
- In classes, inspectors observed good and sometimes exemplary behaviour. In the enhanced learning provision, behaviour was nearly always excellent. In all lessons, across the school, pupils showed interest in the work and responded quickly and enthusiastically when asked questions.
- Teachers showed great consistency in maintaining the behaviour policy. They regularly praise good behaviour and, on the few occasions necessary, remind pupils that they have a choice of how they should behave.
- Pupils show respect for each other by listening to others' explanations in class. When working with a partner, they give each other good support.
- In a celebration assembly, pupils' applause for others who had gained rewards was generous and very natural.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, and from the Nursery upwards, good welfare and health routines ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and well.
- Virtually all parents agree that their children are safe in school and that the school cares for them well. This is confirmed by pupils themselves. All staff are well trained at keeping pupils safe. Pupils know that staff will always be there for them.
- Older pupils often read to younger ones and look after them at playtimes. They are also keen to help set out games equipment or get things ready for an assembly.
- The school helps pupils understand where they might meet risks and how to avoid them or manage them.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of internet safety and understand the different types of bullying which can be perpetrated on the internet. These topics are part of the curriculum as well as being regularly highlighted in assemblies.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in all years is good. There is an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching. Teaching in the enhanced learning provision is outstanding.
- Evidence seen in lessons and in pupils' workbooks since September shows that pupils are making good progress as a result of good teaching. Teachers try to plan exciting and interesting lessons which pupils will find interesting. The impact of this is seen in the improved achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics. In Key Stage 1, too few pupils achieve the higher levels because teachers do not give them more advanced work often enough.
- Pupils have regular opportunities in lessons to discuss their learning with others, share ideas and gain confidence to respond to teachers' questions.
- Teachers assess pupils' work constantly in order to check how well they are doing. Teachers' marking is of high quality. Not only do teachers make it clear how well pupils are progressing, they also make it very clear what pupils need to do to improve. They then give pupils time to respond to these suggestions, all of which can be seen in their books.
- The teaching of writing is good and improving. Teachers use high-quality texts effectively as an inspiration for writing; pupils enjoy this approach. When they are given writing tasks, they are clear about what they will be learning and are also given guidance and support. This helps them to understand precisely what must be included to make their writing of the highest quality. Apart from the development of writing and

mathematical skills, their knowledge and understanding in other subjects is somewhat limited.

- In mathematics, pupils are often asked to explain their thinking to each other, then sometimes to the whole class. In a Year 6 lesson, after discussing solutions to a problem in small groups, individual pupils were able to explain to the class how to tackle the problem using ratio.
- The teaching of reading suffered from previously weak teaching of phonics. This has now been improved and standards are rising. Although many pupils do not read enough at home, they enjoy reading and make use of a range of strategies to decode text and understand it.
- Teachers working with groups of the most able Key Stage 2 pupils meet their needs by giving them much more difficult work. As a result, these pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress. Teaching assistants are deployed well throughout the school to support individual pupils and small groups. They are particularly effective in the enhanced learning provision.
- Overall, teaching has improved considerably over the recent past, especially in Key Stage 2, as a direct result of monitoring by senior leaders, together with their advice and support. This is at an individual level and can best be seen in the way that senior leaders are successfully nurturing a small group of newly qualified teachers.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well. In all years, pupils are now working at higher levels than previously and making better progress. This is due not only to improvements in teaching, but to pupils having a much more positive approach to school.
- The 2014 national assessments for Year 6 showed pupils reaching standards which were average in mathematics and reading but below average in writing. This was due to poor teaching earlier in their school careers. With new leadership and better teaching, school information on standards and progress confirms the school is now recovering well from the past.
- The school predicts higher outcomes for Year 6 pupils this year. This was not only seen in lessons, but in a close examination of a wide range of Year 6 books. The school has implemented good strategies for supporting this group, especially the most able pupils who previously had not reached the highest levels possible. A group of the most able mathematicians were seen working steadily at the top-level problems, with all other pupils working at a level above that expected for their age.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Currently, in all years, almost every pupil with special educational needs is making at least expected progress. In Year 6, for example, all of these pupils are making expected progress in both mathematics and writing and two thirds are making that progress in reading. Pupils in the enhanced learning provision make outstanding progress. Here, high levels of expertise are exemplified by outstanding teaching. Excellent leadership and management ensures that teaching meets the needs of every pupil exceptionally well.
- In 2014 the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils, when compared with other pupils in the school, showed them to be less than half a term behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with other pupils nationally, the gaps were slightly greater: in reading the gap was one term, in writing one term and in mathematics around half a term. These gaps have closed since the previous year. The school's current data shows that pupils in Year 6 have closed the gaps even further.
- Because teaching and behaviour have improved, pupils' are making much better progress. Disadvantaged pupils are making very similar progress to other pupils nationally. Likewise, these pupils make similar progress to pupils in school from a range of different starting points, as noted in their workbooks.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same good progress as other groups. When necessary, they have additional support from classroom assistants. This helps them to learn at the same pace as other pupils.
- In all years in Key Stage 2, all groups of pupils are making much better progress than previously; much of this progress is good, especially in Years 4 and 5. The most able pupils across the school are now making much more progress towards higher levels than before. This is due to better teaching and well-considered strategies and interventions, especially in writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 1, improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) have ensured that reading is now improving at a faster rate than in the past. While improvements are also seen in pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, the most able pupils are not yet making fast enough progress. As a result they do not compare favourably enough with national averages for pupils reaching above the levels expected for their age.

The early years provision**is good**

- Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are well below those typical for their age. This is particularly the case in aspects of speaking, reading and writing.
- Staff guide the children very effectively and give them good support through constant discussions and side-by-side talking together in order to improve their vocabulary and ability to respond to questions. Teaching is consistently good.
- Children are ready to start work in Year 1. This is clearly seen in the good progress they make when in Year 1. This is shown in their work books, in lessons and in the records kept by teachers.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good following the appointment of the new leader in September 2014. Staff get on well together and their modelling of good relationships encourages children to share, play well with other children and freely take part in all activities.
- There is good transition between home and school which helps children to join the nursery calmly and free from upset. Most children transfer from the Nursery to Reception and find the move seamless. Little time is then spent on getting children used to the Reception way of learning so no time is lost. Those that join from other settings take a little longer to settle in but soon feel at home.
- Good relationships help children develop positive attitudes to their learning, setting them up well for future progress through the school. Children behave well, work and play together happily and develop good social skills.
- Children make good progress in their learning and achieve well over time. They make better progress working indoors rather than outdoors. The outdoor space is not yet of the same high quality as that indoors. The leader is aware of the need to reorganise the layout of the space and equipment in order to maximise its use and has ideas about what needs to be done to improve it.
- Staff carefully monitor children's learning and make good use of this information to plan what they need to learn in the future.
- Children are well cared for and procedures to keep them safe are good.
- By the end of Reception last year, too few children were reaching a good level of development, although they went on to do well in Year 1. There is now clear evidence in classes and in books that this situation has improved further.

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	139393
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	449890

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick McAleenan
Headteacher	Zoe Harris
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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