

Inspection of West Thornton Primary School

Rosecourt Road, Croydon CR0 3BS and Canterbury Road, Croydon CR0 3HH

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteachers of this school are Donna Callaghan and Jonathan Owen. This school is part of Inspire Partnership 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, Rob Carpenter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Lawrence.

What is it like to attend this school?

The leadership of the school, under the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust, is committed to enabling everyone to succeed. Leaders ensure that pupils 'see themselves through their community, school and curriculum, building the confidence and the skills to meet the world'. This is the 'golden thread' that runs through the school's offer for all. Consequently, pupils thrive.

Through the school values of kindness, respect, resilience, responsibility, collaboration and excellence, pupils are taught the importance of positive behaviour. Even from the youngest age they are supported effectively to learn to self-regulate. Excellent behaviour means all lessons are focused on learning.

There are high expectations; the curriculum is broad and ambitious. Learning in all subjects is meticulously sequenced. This helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Work produced is of high quality across different subjects and pupils are typically very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

A wide variety of clubs are available. Examples include football, crochet, dance, drawing, cooking and photography. Leadership responsibilities also include being library monitors and playground monitors and being part of the junior leadership team. Pupils appreciate these roles, which encourage them to become active citizens in their school.

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

Leaders, including the trust, and those responsible for governance were quick to identify the improvements required when the school joined the trust. They have been committed to the journey of improvement and have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas they want to improve further. Leaders have created an ambitious culture that puts pupils' learning, and their readiness for the next stage, at the centre of everything they do.

Children get off to a great start in Reception. There is a relentless focus on developing language and vocabulary. All staff understand this is vital to enable access to the rest of the curriculum and all future learning. Precise vocabulary is identified and delivered sequentially. Children are also taught how to respond when answering questions and talking with each other. Consequently, they learn to communicate effectively. This, alongside the well-thought-out and well-delivered curriculum, means children have the foundations they need to be very well prepared for future learning.

Reading is given high priority. All staff are well trained and deliver the phonics scheme with precision. This is monitored closely by leaders to make sure their high expectations are maintained. Children start learning letter sounds as soon as they start school, with books carefully matched to the sounds known. As a result, pupils have the practice they need to become fluent readers as quickly as possible. Those at risk of falling behind are identified and supported through carefully planned interventions to catch up. A love of reading is evident

across the school. It is promoted across the curriculum and a book swap is available, so all pupils have access to books at home.

Careful thought has been given to how the curriculum is sequenced, and presented, to help pupils learn and remember more over time. For example, in early years, children have their learning journeys as 'road maps'; they also recall stories using 'story maps'. This prepares them for more complex mapwork, in geography, later on. Similarly, in mathematics, children in Reception learn to recognise numbers, count and make different amounts. This supports children's early understanding of numbers to 10, assisting automatic recall and more complex calculations later on.

Teachers have detailed subject knowledge because of regular, high-quality subject-specific training. Lessons include recall of previous learning to help pupils understand new information. Teachers check this is understood. They adapt their lessons to help all pupils, including those with SEND, to overcome any misunderstandings or gaps in their knowledge. Adults know pupils incredibly well and are committed to giving them all that they need to succeed. The practice of core skills and additional adaptations to the learning enable all pupils to make progress and deepen their understanding over time. In a few subjects, however, the journey of refining the curriculum is more recent. Here, while recall is still strong, connections, and deeper understanding, have not yet had enough time to develop.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm, caring and harmonious. Pupils know the rules and are committed to following them. They are independent, resilient and highly enthusiastic about their learning. Most pupils have good attendance. There is effective support in place for those whose attendance needs to improve.

Provision for personal development is exceptional. Pupils enjoy their personal, social, health and economic lessons. They recognise that they help everyone to live in a community and develop tolerance and understanding. Through the 'global curriculum', pupils develop their understanding of social justice and the right of everyone to be included. They learn about identity, diversity, human rights, and power and governance. This work is woven seamlessly throughout the curriculum to bring it to life, helping to support readiness for life in modern Britain.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders' consideration of their workload. This includes time for planning and preparation. They feel listened to, and valued, and are extremely proud of the school's progress since it joined the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have successfully introduced an ambitious curriculum across all subjects. In a few subjects, however, the work to refine learning has been more recent, and it has not yet had time to fully embed across all wider curriculum subjects. This means that the impact of these subjects is not as strong. In these instances, pupils have not always secured as deep an understanding as in those more developed subjects. The school should continue its work to ensure that the ambitious and well-designed curriculum is fully embedded.

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

Unique reference number	147971
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10346070
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	918
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Lawrence
CEO of the trust	Rob Carpenter
Co-headteachers	Donna Callaghan and Jonathan Owen
Website	www.westthornton.croydon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust in April 2020.
- The school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school operates across two sites. Reception to Year 6 operate on each site.
- The school has co-headteachers. Each one leads one school site.
- The current co-headteachers were appointed as substantive headteachers in September 2023, but were in post before this time.
- The school runs a breakfast- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteachers, the deputy headteachers and members of staff. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and met with six governors, including the chair of the local governing board, the chair of the trust and the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, geography and modern foreign languages (Spanish). For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in 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.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including leaders’ priorities for improvement.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through discussions, and responses to Ofsted’s surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Samantha Ingram, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Ogugua Okolo-Angus	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Farrow	Ofsted Inspector
Sacha Husnu-Beresford	His Majesty’s Inspector

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