

David Livingstone Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137195
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	397448
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2012
Lead inspector	Kath Beck

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline McDonald
Headteacher	Mark Ducker
Date of previous school inspection	December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kath Beck

Additional inspector

Roger Parry

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors attended two assemblies and visited 11 lessons taught by seven teachers. In addition, inspectors saw seven shorter parts of lessons accompanied by the partnership headteacher and head of school, as well as brief reading sessions in Years 1 to 5. Some pupils read to the inspectors. Meetings were held with a small number of parents and carers, members of staff, a representative of the local authority, representatives of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and observed the school's work. They looked at the Academy Improvement Plan, the governing body minutes, records and reports about pupils' progress, and the monitoring of the quality of teaching. In addition, they looked at records of attendance, arrangements to safeguard pupils, and the school's website and a range of other information. Inspectors analysed the responses of parents and carers to 70 questionnaires. They also analysed the response to questionnaires issued to staff and pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The school serves a diverse community. The largest groups are from Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Black African and White British backgrounds. One fifth speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high in comparison to schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus is in line with the national average. The school meets the current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school is a 'rights-respecting school' as it follows the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. It has won the Silver Artsmark. There is a privately run breakfast and after-school club.

Since April 2010, senior managers and teaching staff from a local school have worked in partnership with staff at David Livingstone. The Academy is currently led by an executive headteacher and head of school. Staff turnover has been high in the past two years. In August 2011, the school became an academy and is part of the STEP (Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership) Academy Trust founded by its partner school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Inspirational leadership by the executive headteacher and head of school are driving improvements to the school’s ethos and pupils’ achievements at a rapid rate. It is not yet outstanding because of remaining weaknesses in teaching, curriculum planning and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Achievement is good. In Year 6, attainment in English is above average and in mathematics, it is well above average. The strong focus on developing pupils’ essential skills in reading and mathematics enables them to make good progress overall. However, pupils do not consistently develop a fluent joined script or skills in writing at length across the curriculum.
- Teaching is good overall and is well led, enabling pupils to overcome a legacy of underachievement at a good and sometimes outstanding rate. Excellent assessments mean pupils are well informed about their learning. The slow start and ineffective deployment of teaching assistants in a very small number of lessons means time to learn is not always maximised. On occasions, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities for language development, including subject-specific language.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils thrive in an atmosphere of respect and dignity, and take pride in their achievements. Some younger pupils find it hard to listen carefully to their teacher. Attendance has improved rapidly and is above average.
- Senior leaders have made clear the values to which all staff are expected to adhere. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly by the ‘Rights-Respecting School’ initiative. This, together with rigorous performance management and staff development, is having a very positive impact on pupil outcomes. The new curriculum motivates pupils well, but there is not a sufficient emphasis on writing development and too narrow a range of

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opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By March 2013, raise the quality of teaching so that it is always good or outstanding by ensuring all staff, especially those in Reception and Year 2:
 - accelerate pupils' language development across all subjects by providing more opportunities for speaking, including using and discussing subject-specific vocabulary
 - commence lessons at a faster pace with tasks matched to individual needs
 - deploy teaching assistants effectively to enhance learning throughout lessons.
- Raise attainment in writing further by:
 - providing more opportunities to enable pupils to write imaginatively and at length across the curriculum
 - devoting more time to the development of pupils' handwriting so that they write fluently with a joined script by the time they leave the school.
- Provide a wider range of resources in the outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and ensure that planning offers them the best possible opportunities to extend their learning through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Overall, pupils make good progress. National data show that in the past two years attainment has improved rapidly from a low point. This rise stems from good teaching and teachers' very effective use of assessment to ensure that pupils receive challenging work that builds effectively on their previous learning. Essential literacy and numeracy skills are mostly taught well, although there are some remaining weaknesses in pupils' writing. The curriculum motivates pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, but especially boys, to do as well as they can. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the demands placed on them. A more-able group was observed drawing graphs to provide an aide memoire to convert litres to gallons quickly. Pupils showed confidence in their abilities and worked accurately. Their high levels of application and positive attitudes towards their achievement are also demonstrated in the exceptional outcomes in art, music and sport.

When children join the Reception class, their skills and knowledge are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in learning to read and write through their enthusiasm for playing games to learn the sounds letters make, and adding and subtracting simple numbers. In role play and in child-initiated activities, staff do not

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always interact sufficiently to extend early spoken communication skills. Progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development, is no better than satisfactory because of the limited opportunities to learn outside. At the age of five, their skills and development are broadly in line with those expected for their age.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in increasing their knowledge of the sounds different letters make, and how to read and understand short stories. Attainment in reading in Year 2 is average and, by the time pupils leave in Year 6, is above average. Throughout the school, pupils enhance their skills by reading at home and carrying out research for their topic work. They acquire strategies to comprehend stories easily. They enjoy reading novels and non-fiction books that suit their interest. In some cases, pupils have a limited vocabulary across curriculum subjects. The recent initiative to address this is proving successful, but is not yet fully implemented in all classes.

Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously and provision adapted mostly to meet each pupil's precise needs. Well-trained teaching assistants provide one-to-one tuition and specific programmes in literacy and numeracy. These enable pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or gaps in their learning, to make at least good progress. Detailed analysis shows that there is no significant difference in progress between the different groups in the school.

Parents and carers typically are of the view that their children make good progress.

Quality of teaching

The majority of the teaching is good. Occasionally, it is outstanding in music, art and in the promotion of pupils' personal and social development. Reading is taught well across the school as pupils acquire effective strategies to read new words and understand texts. Teachers use a wide range of strategies, such as questioning, talk partners and group work, to enable pupils to contribute their ideas to lessons and enhance their learning. They draw on ideas from the new curriculum and involve pupils in planning activities that capture their interests well. Information and communication technology is used effectively to extend learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 used internet reports to understand the impact of a flood in the town on the lives of local people. They acted out a similar imaginary event. It allowed them to empathise with the feelings and emotions of those caught up in the flood and learn how to stay safe in a crisis.

Most lessons start promptly, and proceed at a good pace, with pupils quickly engaged in applying new learning, sometimes with the help of skilled teaching assistants. Staff take full account of the specific targets set for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs when planning activities. Pupils receive very clear information about what they need to do to complete the task successfully and gain new knowledge and skills. This is not always the case in some younger classes when teachers offer unduly long explanations, limiting pupils' opportunities to

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develop their language skills; the task is sometimes the same for all pupils and additional staff are not always deployed effectively enough. Pupils then find it hard to maintain their concentration and do not always understand what they need to do.

Teachers mostly have high expectations of their pupils and communicate this through their consistent high-quality marking and the targets they set for them to achieve. This gives pupils a very clear idea of how to achieve more. They have time to respond to teachers' comments. They assess their own work and let their teacher know that they are confident or require additional help so that lessons can be adjusted. Pupils also check each other's work and show a sensitive awareness that errors found must not be shared with other members of the class.

Parents and carers have high levels of confidence in the teaching staff and appreciate the many changes that have brought about improvements in their children's achievements.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour makes an important contribution to the school's calm, businesslike atmosphere. Parents, carers, staff, members of the governing body and the pupils recognise the extremely positive changes in attitudes, behaviour and safety since the school became a rights-respecting school. Many pupils, some of whom have found it hard to behave well in the past, show high levels of engagement, courtesy and collaboration in and out of lessons. The school is a highly cohesive community where pupils understand fully their responsibilities to care for and respect one another. Behaviour observed in lessons was exemplary in Years 5 and 6. Pupils respond well to the high expectations their teachers have of them and take pride in presenting their work neatly. That said, younger pupils become restless and talkative when lessons do not get underway quickly or when kept sitting on the carpet for long periods of time. Records confirm that behaviour over time is good.

Pupil Advocates carry out their roles responsibly, acting as good role models to younger pupils. Staff mentors play a valuable part in enabling individual pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties to overcome barriers to their learning. Consequently, no pupil has been excluded in the past year.

There are robust policies and procedures to prevent bullying of any type and for it to be dealt with should it be reported. Pupils spoken to, and most parents and carers, consider that racist incidents or name-calling are rare. Records show when they do occur they are dealt with immediately and effectively. Issues are discussed with the pupils concerned, along with their parents and carers, and agreement reached about sanctions and how to prevent such incidents occurring again.

Clear advice to parents, carers and pupils helps them to stay safe when using the internet. Individual advice and provision within the curriculum informs pupils well about the hazards they may face and how to deal with them. The level of attendance has risen rapidly from a low point over the past two years. The amount of persistent

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absence has reduced considerably and is now minimal.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers, together with the governing body, are determinedly pursuing a vision of excellence. The partnership with another local school has been extremely successful in establishing this. Parents and carers have full confidence in the leadership and overwhelmingly supported the decision to join the STEP Academy Trust founded by the partner school. The exchange of expertise and teachers across the schools has raised attainment significantly over the past two years. Accurate self-evaluation, used to draw up and implement a robust improvement plan with clear long- and short-term priorities for improvement, and the gains made through membership of the STEP Academy Trust, confirm the school's strong capacity to bring about further improvement.

Staff are held fully responsible for their pupils' progress. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and a robust approach to performance management mean staff have a clear understanding of what they do well and their targets for improvement. Courses they attend are often based on their personal development and requirements to raise the achievements of their pupils. New staff join the school fully aware of its aims, values and expectations, and are inducted well.

The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development well. This, in turn with the rights-respecting school programme, promotes equality very effectively. Any form of discrimination is addressed robustly and pupils relate to each other considerately. The new curriculum, with its international focus, meets pupils' differing needs well. Music and activities in Black History Month reflect fully pupils' cultural interests. While skills and talents, especially in art, music and sports, are developed to the full, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write creatively or at length about matters that interest them or develop their handwriting skills. In the Early years Foundation Stage, resources and limited planning reduce children's opportunities to make purposeful choices and extend their learning outdoors.

The governing body has an accurate view of the school's performance from their knowledge of data about the progress of pupils and their monitoring visits. They ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements and their implementation by all staff is rigorous; training needs are addressed quickly.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of David Livingstone Academy, Thornton Heath CR7 8HX

Thank you for the warm, friendly welcome you gave us when we came to your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you, to listen to you read and to look at your work. You told us that you really like the way the school has changed in the past two years. You said that everyone gets on well together and behaves a lot better because you know how to respect each other's rights and responsibilities. This helps you to work in a calm and happy atmosphere, concentrate hard and take pride in your work. You enjoy your lessons and the way teachers help you to be successful. When teachers mark your work, they challenge you to do even better, and you can easily let them know if you need more help.

You go to a good school. Everyone wants you to do really well in English and mathematics by the time you leave the school. Some of you are already very skilled in art, music and sport. Teaching is good, and is helping you to gain the skills you need when you are grown-up. To make the school even better, we have asked the staff, especially those working with the younger pupils, to:

- enable you to widen your vocabulary to help you to write creatively with a joined script in different subjects across the curriculum
- make sure teachers start lessons promptly and involve pupils in activities, especially those supported by teaching assistants, quickly
- improve the outdoor area for those of you in the Reception class so that you have many different activities to work on with your teachers or to use to make up ideas for play with your friends.

We know all of you will help by doing your very best all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Kath Beck
Additional inspector

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