

The Cedars

Coombe Road, Lloyd Park, London, CR0 5RD

Inspection dates

25–27 March 2014

Overall effectiveness

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- All pupils are making good progress as a result of well-planned and effective teaching, regular assessment and helpful feedback. They do very well in English, mathematics and science.
- The excellent tutorial programme contributes strongly to pupils' personal and academic progress. It enables tutors to devote individual attention to each pupil's development and help them to improve.
- The curriculum is good and makes strong links between subjects to reinforce skills and knowledge. It is enriched by a good range of trips, visiting speakers and extra-curricular activities.
- The school's Catholic ethos is evident in the strong spiritual life of the school and the commitment to service. Pupils are well cared for, develop good moral principles and behave well. The school operates in close partnership with parents.
- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and a clear vision for its further development. There is strong capacity for improvement.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The school is still in its infancy. Timetabling and curriculum planning which have been trialled in the first year of the school's operation need adjustment in the light of experience and development for the future.
- While the school teaches aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship, these are not drawn together into a coherent programme to guarantee a common experience for all pupils.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given one day's notice of inspection.
- The inspector observed seven lessons, most of these jointly with the headteacher. She looked at pupils' written and other work, attended an assembly and examined the school's policy documents and records. She also looked at the school's measures to safeguard pupils and observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The inspector held meetings with the pupils, staff and headteacher.
- The inspector considered the responses from parents on Ofsted's 'Parent View' website and spoke to three parents in person or on the telephone. Twelve staff questionnaire responses were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Jane Cooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Cedars School is an independent day school for boys. It is located in a detached Grade II listed 18th century building in its own grounds bordering Lloyd Park in Croydon.
- The school was registered in 2013 to provide full-time secondary education for boys aged 11–18 years. There are currently 24 pupils on roll, all of whom are aged 11 or 12 years, and are taught in two classes. None of them has a statement of special educational needs.
- It is one of four schools in London which are founded and owned by the PACT Educational Trust. It aims to 'develop the whole child, in close partnership with parents, through a deeply embedded character programme grounded in Catholic principles, which will enable each boy to fulfil his potential through acquiring virtues in a climate that balances freedom with responsibility'.
- The school's ethos is founded on Catholic principles and takes its inspiration from the educational ideas of St Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei. It welcomes pupils of all faiths.
- The school opened in September 2013. This is its first inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of education provided by the school in the light of experience gained from the first year of operation, by
 - reviewing the current curriculum plans and ensuring that the schemes of work are up to date and suitable for all learners
 - reviewing timetabling arrangements to ensure that optimum use is made of the school day and teaching time is appropriate for each subject.
- Improve pupils' personal development by
 - drawing into a coherent programme all aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultural diversity of modern British society.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good. This is the result of well-planned and effective teaching and the individual attention pupils receive through the tutoring programme. They achieve particularly well in English, mathematics and science. All pupils, irrespective of ability or cultural heritage, have made good progress since starting at the school in September. The boys develop good reading habits. They speak with confidence and justify their opinions well in discussion. Word lists of key vocabulary in most subjects are helpful to all pupils, particularly those for whom English is an additional language, who make rapid gains in English. Pupils make good progress in writing. They learn to analyse what they have read and present a logical and coherent argument through their essay writing. Standards in mathematics are high, particularly so among the most able pupils, who are fully challenged by the work they are set, and who can apply their knowledge to solving more complex problems. The pupils have good knowledge and understanding of scientific topics and use graphs well to illustrate their work. Pupils achieve high standards in design and technology where they had designed and built stringed instruments. They respond thoughtfully to music and most of them learn to play an instrument. Sports teams win matches against prestigious opposition. All pupils had speaking parts in the recent school production, with some outstanding comedy performances. The school's close analysis of pupils' performance revealed that the pupils of Year 8 age were not making as much progress as others in the mixed age classes. The school responded quickly by regrouping pupils and providing more challenge for these boys.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils respond well in class, engage readily in the tasks set for them and show enthusiasm for their studies. They are expected to work hard and they do. They are courteous and polite to visitors. At break times they all play together competitively and with good humour. Pupils report that bullying is rare and that the school has dealt effectively with any incidents. Records show that behaviour has improved since the school opened. Parents agree. Through the excellent tutorial programme, which is a distinctive feature of the school, tutors devote individual attention to each pupil's personal and academic development, monitor their progress closely, set targets and put in place improvement strategies. Parents appreciate highly this aspect of the school's work and report that their sons are developing confidence and a strong sense of self-worth. The headmaster commented that 'there are no small fish here' because every pupil gets the chance to release his potential.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is outstanding but cultural development requires improvement. The school has a strong spiritual life, rooted in Catholic principles and an ethos that encourages intellectual curiosity and personal freedom based on the virtues of responsibility and service. The chaplain provides clear spiritual guidance for the school. The pupils acquire a strong moral compass. They serve the school very well through the many leadership roles and responsibilities they take on, such as prefects, monitors and school councillors. Work in drama and sport teaches them to be a reliable member of the team. They develop compassion for others, such as the victims of the typhoon in the Philippines, for whom they raised funds. They respond enthusiastically to music, drama and the arts, and have good opportunities to visit museums, plays and concerts. The school has ensured that pupils are not exposed to political bias. However, while pupils are tolerant and welcoming, they do not have a broad enough knowledge of the multi-faith and multicultural nature of modern British society.

Quality of teaching**Good**

The quality of the teaching is good; some of the lessons observed were outstanding. Confident teachers with very good specialist subject knowledge and expertise are deployed to best advantage. This fires pupils' enthusiasm, sets high expectations and challenges them to think and learn for themselves. Excellent relations between staff and pupils ensure that lessons proceed in a purposeful atmosphere of mutual respect and good humour. There are some common features of the teaching which makes it effective overall. Lesson planning is generally detailed and focuses on what teachers want pupils to learn as well as the body of knowledge to be covered. The aims and objectives are made clear at the start so that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Most lessons begin with a helpful recap. Teachers are well aware of the individual needs of every pupil, so that different tasks or questioning techniques may be used to stretch or provide additional support. Explanations are clear. Pupils receive very good guidance on study skills, including revision techniques. The best lessons have a high level of challenge, move at a brisk pace and keep all pupils on their toes. The less successful lessons try to cover too much ground and move pupils on before they have fully understood.

Assessment helps pupils make good progress. Their work is marked regularly and contains good feedback and advice for improvement. Testing occurs at regular intervals and parents are given half-termly updates on their son's achievement, effort and conduct. The school keeps comprehensive assessment records which staff use well to plan lessons or intervene with support where needed. Each pupil has an individual plan and challenging targets for progress and personal development which are reviewed regularly in tutorials.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The curriculum is good. It covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, includes drama, and enables all pupils to learn both Latin and Spanish. The curriculum policy articulates its clear aim of educating the whole person. This is accomplished through the strong links between subjects, which reinforce knowledge and skills and help pupils see the relevance of what they are learning. Work on velocity and forces in science was related to speeding and death on the roads. Work in English, where they are reading 'Julius Caesar', is reinforced in history, drama and Latin through the topic of the Ancient World. This mode of curriculum planning prefigures the Eudaimonia programme, which is part of the school's development plan, and aims to educate the whole person in the widest sense through integrating the study of the liberal arts. The curriculum is enriched by a lively programme of trips, visiting speakers and extra-curricular studies.

Pupils are taught in two classes. The school has already reviewed and adjusted these groupings to ensure that all pupils have access to the right level of challenge and support. It has also adjusted the curriculum to ensure that pupils of Year 8 age are challenged by more adventurous work which will prepare them for joining Year 9 next year. The school is reviewing and adapting the schemes of work in the light of experience this year and planning for the expansion of the school from September. Over the coming weeks, senior leaders need to give thought to the structure of the school day and the length of lessons for each subject. The afternoon sessions are too long for some subjects and give rise to restlessness. The school covers aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship through assemblies, tutorials, visiting speakers and lessons, but it has yet to coordinate this work to ensure that all pupils have access to a uniform programme that prepares them fully for life beyond school as a responsible and knowledgeable citizen.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

The provision for pupils' welfare health and safety is good and meets all regulations. The school has comprehensive written policies for all aspects of its work, including safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour, eliminating bullying and first aid. These are well known to staff and implemented consistently. Appropriate checks are made on staff and volunteers to ensure their

suitability to have contact with young people. These are recorded meticulously in a single central register. All staff are suitably trained in child protection and the school has effective links with outside agencies. Pupils are properly supervised. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, including those for activities on the school premises and for off-site visits. The school has paid close attention to helping pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online, and was proactive in organising an event for parents on internet safety. A detailed fire risk assessment has been carried out on the school premises. Fire drills and testing of alarms and equipment take place at regular intervals. A number of staff have received training in first aid, and medical facilities are good. The school keeps an appropriate record of all accidents and incidents that occur. The behaviour policy is implemented fairly and an appropriate record is kept of sanctions. The admissions and attendance registers are completed as required. Pupils' attendance is high and the school follows up absence carefully. Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of the school's leadership and management is good. The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school. They are ambitious, realistic and systematic in planning for the realisation of this vision and in driving forward constant improvement as the school expands. The school is well organised and runs effectively. Strong line management procedures ensure that all staff feel part of the team and are held to account for the impact of their work. Close monitoring of the teaching by senior staff is a decisive factor in securing further improvement. Senior leaders have a clear idea of the school's performance through their accurate self-evaluation. This information is well used in drawing up a development plan. There is strong capacity for further improvement as the school grows.

Parents and carers feel welcome in the school and support its work strongly. The school communicates with them regularly and they receive all the information to which they are entitled. There is a suitable complaints policy. The school's accommodation and premises are well maintained. There is a suitable outside playing area and additional use is made of off-site facilities for sports. There is scope within the building for further development as the school grows, and sensible plans have been drawn up for this. The proprietors and trustees have ensured that all the independent schools regulations are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	139811
Inspection number	443012
DfE registration number	306/6012

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Secondary day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	PACT Educational Trust
Headteacher	Mr Robert Teague
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,700
Telephone number	020 8185 7770
Email address	enquiries@thecedarsschool.org.uk

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