

# Inspection of a good school: Merton Junior School

Romsey Close, Popley Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 9HB

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Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

## Outcome

Merton Junior School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Merton. They get on well together. Pupils trust adults to help them when they have problems.

Pupils are keen to learn. They enjoy their lessons and they work hard. Leaders have high expectations for every pupil. Their determination to inspire pupils to achieve as much as they can is largely effective. As one pupil said, his positive attitude to work was inspired by the visit of an athlete who had told him, 'When things get tough, try harder!'

Pupils behave well. They understand and agree with the school rules. Rewards and sanctions for behaviour are fair, and everyone is treated equally. Pupils know that on the rare occasion there is any bullying, this will be dealt with sensitively and straightaway.

Leaders consistently promote pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievements. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the wide range of opportunities they have, such as competing in sporting competitions and performing as part of the school choir. They demonstrate care and concern for each other and for their world. Pupils are determined to recycle as much as they can. They collect money, food and gifts for local charities.

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

Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils' achievement in a full range of subjects. They have built a curriculum that is ambitious, broad and well organised. Leaders have identified what knowledge they want pupils to know and the order in which it should be learned.

In most subjects, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present information clearly to help pupils to develop their understanding. Teachers regularly check what pupils know. They give pupils enough time to practise and embed knowledge before moving on

to new learning. As a result, pupils typically achieve well, particularly in physical education (PE), geography and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively in their learning.

Leaders recognise that in a minority of wider curriculum subjects, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. Leaders have rightly identified that this is because they have not yet provided enough training for staff. Consequently, some teachers are not yet well equipped to teach the curriculum in these subjects.

Leaders have created a culture where reading is valued. They successfully promote pupils' enjoyment of reading through challenges and frequent discussion about books. Teachers make good use of information from ongoing assessments. While most pupils at an early stage of learning to read get the help they need, support for these pupils is not consistently effective. This is because some staff do not have sufficient training and because pupils' reading books do not yet connect closely to the phonics knowledge that they are learning. Leaders know that some pupils who are still at the early stages of reading do not learn to read as quickly as they could.

Leaders quickly identify those pupils who may need additional help, especially those with SEND. They engage with external partners and specialists where necessary to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. Leaders and teachers review and adapt the curriculum to make sure that it consistently benefits pupils. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils are respectful and keen to learn. Pupils behave well in lessons because of the high expectations and well-established routines. Teachers ensure that pupils are attentive and respond well to questions posed by the teacher.

The school's values are embedded throughout the curriculum. Adults model respectful relationships. Pupils respond well and are kind and courteous. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They learn about democracy by voting for the school council. They develop self-confidence by taking on a wealth of leadership roles, such as house captains, road safety officers and sports leaders.

Governors know the school well. Leaders and staff work effectively as a team. Staff appreciate the considerate ways in which leaders take account of their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture is strong. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training. They provide a range of helpful information to parents. Everyone is alert to potential risks to pupils, and leaders rigorously check that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff quickly identify and report any concerns.

Leaders follow up concerns rigorously. They seek support from external agencies where needed. As a result, pupils get the help they need.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know how to use the internet safely, and know about the dangers of sharing personal information.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are inconsistencies in the teaching of reading for pupils at an early stage of learning to read. Consequently, some pupils struggle to read fluently. Leaders should ensure that all staff have secure subject knowledge and that the books these pupils read are precisely matched to their phonics knowledge.
- In a minority of subjects, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. As a result, pupils do not always learn as much in these subjects as leaders intend. Leaders should ensure that staff have the training they need to implement the curriculum as intended in all subjects.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## **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' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116001
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241720
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	265
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Esme Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kayleigh Reading
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mertonjuniorschool.co.uk">www.mertonjuniorschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, leaders of teaching and learning and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. The inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors, and held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. The inspector also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read to a known adult.

- The inspector evaluated safeguarding by talking to the designated safeguarding leads and governors, reviewing recruitment checks on staff and reviewing other safeguarding documents and records. The inspector also talked with staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered responses made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Clare Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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