

Merton Abbey Primary School

High Path, South Wimbledon, London, SW19 2JY

Inspection dates 6–7 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from starting points that are generally low to achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Due to a focused and effective programme of support aimed at improving individual teachers' performance, teaching is now good overall with some teaching that is outstanding.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate this in the way they contribute to lessons. For example, they answer questions thoughtfully and take great care when evaluating their own work or that of their classmates.
- Pupils say they love coming to school because they feel extremely safe, teaching is fun and teachers really help them to learn. Consequently, they attend regularly and arrive on time so lessons can start promptly.
- Under the capable and caring guidance of the headteacher, leaders, managers, and the governing body have ensured that the school has successfully tackled all areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
- The school is a collaborative community where everyone works well together. Staff involve pupils in their own learning and leaders and governors involve teachers in setting their performance targets. This approach ensures a high degree of commitment and involvement so that targets are almost always met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout all year groups.
- Although there are opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills across a range of subjects, these are not as well developed as they are for English.
- Comments in marking usually indicate how pupils can improve their learning, but teachers do not regularly provide opportunities for pupils to respond to these comments in lessons.
- Occasionally, opportunities are missed to deploy additional adults effectively throughout the lesson to ensure rapid progress for all.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, including the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and guided reading. Nearly all of the teaching staff were observed.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and listened to pupils read. They held meetings with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, the views of parents they spoke to during the inspection, and the questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work pupils were doing in lessons as well as work pupils have completed over time in their books.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation and development planning, documents related to safeguarding and child protection procedures, minutes of meetings of the governing body, notes of visits from local authority representatives, data on pupil performance, attendance figures and behaviour logs.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional Inspector

Elaine Hamilton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who are supported through school action is slightly below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children and pupils eligible for free school meals, is much higher than the national average.
- A third of pupils are of White British heritage. A range of other ethnic groups is represented in different proportions, with the largest of these being pupils of Any Other White background and Black African. A higher number of pupils speak English as an additional language than is found nationally. Some of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school is not currently using alternative provision for any of its pupils.
- There has recently been a high turnover of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school is expanding and took on a new Reception class in October 2011, half a term after the beginning of the school year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order that pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout all year groups by:
 - creating opportunities in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' comments in the marking of their work
 - ensuring additional adults are effectively deployed throughout each lesson to support pupils so that all make maximum progress
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below the levels expected for their age, especially in communication and mathematics. Many of these children are at the very early stages of learning English and staff show they value children's language and cultural heritage by learning greetings and basic phrases in the range of languages represented. This ensures children settle really quickly as they feel comfortable and safe.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make progress quickly because opportunities to write, read and speak are imaginatively presented. This ensures that the children are beginning to catch up with their peers by the time they move in to Key Stage 1.
- Staff check pupils' progress carefully, meeting regularly to discuss any who may be experiencing difficulties and putting measures in place to get them back on track. This ensures that good progress continues and that by the time pupils leave at the end of Key Stage 2, they are achieving in line with all pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because their individual needs are well met, both in class and in carefully evaluated small group work. For example, working with a specialist reading teacher has doubled pupils' rates of progress in acquiring reading skills.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve well. This is because the school thinks carefully about how to spend the funding. It provides experiences and tailored support that bridge identified gaps and ensure an equal chance of success. For example, specialist one-to-one tuition helps pupils make rapid gains in their learning.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Those who are at the early stages of learning English make very rapid progress because skilled staff ensure they acquire the basic language skills they need so that they can access lessons quickly.
- The school is committed to ensuring that pupils from all backgrounds, and of all abilities, have equal opportunities to succeed. Consequently, all of the groups represented in the school make at least the expected progress in both mathematics and English across Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has carefully planned the teaching of phonics, giving consideration to the high number of pupils who speak languages other than English at home. Provision and resources have been fine-tuned. Inspectors saw a number of good lessons which clearly developed pupils' phonic skills.
- Teachers have high expectations. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on fractions, where the quality of teaching was outstanding, pupils were expected to use accurate instructions when guiding the teacher to fold a piece of paper into eighths. Modelling this level of precision ensures pupils strive for it in their own work.
- Teachers use technology well to enable pupils to share their work with the class to illustrate teaching points. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 lesson, pupils showed how they had constructed complex sentences and talked the class through their work, which was projected onto the board, using precise grammatical language.
- Pupils are highly involved in lessons, from discussing key points with partners to explaining how their work meets the intended learning outcomes of the lesson. They find this motivational and it ensures they remain focused throughout lessons.
- Teachers mark pupils' work with comments that relate to their individual targets and help pupils know what to do next. However, opportunities are not given for pupils to respond to those comments, so their effectiveness is limited.
- Teaching assistants support groups well when pupils carry out independent tasks. However, opportunities are missed for them to support learning during whole class teaching and this slows

progress for some pupils.

- Teachers focus well on developing language skills across a range of subjects. For example, during their topic on pirates, pupils in Key Stage 1 learnt how to write informal letters home and to lay out a list of ship's rules. However, opportunities for developing mathematical skills across other subjects are not as widespread.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils treat each other, staff and the school premises with courtesy and respect. Playtimes and lunchtimes are positive and peaceful.
- Routines are well established and ensure a calm and productive environment in which pupils thrive. For example, children come in to Reception purposefully in the mornings and take part in learning tasks in a focused and composed manner, which gets the day off to a very positive start.
- In lessons, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and each other and take full advantage of the opportunities they are given to contribute. Relationships in class are good and pupils are sensitive when commenting on each other's work. This enables pupils to take risks with their learning, such as sharing their work with the class even where it might contain errors or misconceptions.
- Staff have a good understanding of how to manage behaviour. The school's policy is clear and emphasises the need to praise acceptable behaviour. Logs of individual incidents are carefully analysed. In this way, leaders are clear about what is happening in school and can quickly put in place measures to address any concerns.
- The school uses a range of strategies well to support pupils who have particular behavioural needs. Consequently, the rate of exclusions is much lower than average and there have been none in the last two years.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and parents support this view. Both the on-line survey and the school's own questionnaires show that a very large majority of parents feels that behaviour is good.
- Pupils understand the many guises that bullying can present and are confident that it does not happen in school, because minor issues are dealt with before they can become serious or on-going.
- The school has worked successfully with a range of partners to improve the attendance of pupils who had high absence rates. This has resulted in a rise in overall attendance figures since the previous inspection and brought the school broadly in line with national averages.

The leadership and management are good

- The vision and drive of the headteacher, governors and senior staff have resulted in a series of improvements since the previous inspection. This is a school that nurtures its staff to get the best out of them. Those who returned questionnaires were unanimous in stating that their professional development needs were well met.
- Key among the improvements is the management of teachers' performance. The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously so that development points can be accurately identified. These are then worked on and new ones highlighted in a successful cycle supported by a range of different training strategies for teachers, such as coaching, observing outstanding teaching and attending training.
- Teachers' targets are closely linked to pupil progress and are clear and measurable. Teachers work with leaders on shaping their targets and this creates a high level of motivation to succeed.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School development planning correctly prioritises the issues that are most likely to increase pupils'

progress and attainment.

- The range of subjects that pupils learn about is designed to ensure that they experience a variety of activities which broaden their cultural horizons and prepare them well for the next phase in their education.
 - The school provides good stimulus for pupils' developing understanding of moral issues, for example carefully chosen stories or global debates on fair trade. The level at which bullying is discussed is very sophisticated and this deepens pupils' understanding, not only of right and wrong but also of the dynamics of human relationships and the social skills needed to navigate them successfully.
 - Assemblies are often led by representatives of different faiths and give pupils the chance to reflect on elements of spirituality from a range of perspectives. This ensures they are well prepared for the diverse society in which they live.
 - The local authority representative assigned to the school understands the context and needs of the school well. The local authority agrees with inspection findings in judging the school to be good and consequently offers light touch support as appropriate.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have become far more rigorous in their scrutiny of data relating to pupil performance since the previous inspection. They regularly ask questions about how different groups achieve and evaluate whether funding, and in particular the pupil premium, is being spent effectively. For example, governors agree that funding should be spent on providing a homework club for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium because it improves their rate of progress. They scrutinise the reports from the local authority adviser and challenge the senior team as to how the school intends to address any development points identified. They ensure all training is up to date and that safeguarding requirements are met and are effective. Governors understand the link between pay and performance and are clear that staff need to meet targets in terms of the impact of their work on pupils' achievement in order to progress on the salary scale. They have received training in order to ensure that they are suitably equipped to carry out their roles.
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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	102638
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	400561

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Cowling
Headteacher	Stella Fry
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2009
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