

# Merton Abbey Primary School

High Path, Merton, London SW19 2JY

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have not acted swiftly enough to address weaknesses in pupils' performance. Consequently, leadership and management require improvement.
- Governors have not been successful in holding school leaders to account for pupils' performance.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Teachers do not plan challenging enough work for pupils to make good progress.
- School leaders are overgenerous in their evaluation of teaching and learning over time.
- Pupils' handwriting is a weakness because the teaching of handwriting is haphazard and lacks purpose and precision.
- Outcomes for pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, require improvement. Pupils are not making fast enough progress to make up for previous underperformance.
- School leaders overestimate pupils' attainment in comparison with national expectations. Work in pupils' books, particularly in writing, shows that fewer pupils are working at a level typical for their age than the school's own progress data would suggest.
- The provision for the early years requires improvement. Leaders have not ensured that assessments of children's progress are accurate.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and all staff demonstrate a high level of care for pupils. Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are confident and self-assured.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in class and conduct themselves well around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average.
- Staff feel well supported and are very appreciative of the headteacher's collegiate leadership style. As a result, staff morale is high.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching, including in the early years, by ensuring that teachers:
  - make better use of pupils' progress information to ensure that they are working on activities suitable for their starting points
  - plan learning activities for pupils which challenge them so that they can move on to more difficult work quickly
  - have appropriate opportunities for training so that they can plan activities for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities which promote good progress.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, including in the early years, by ensuring that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported more effectively so that they make more progress
  - leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning has a much sharper focus on pupils' progress
  - all adults have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve academically
  - teachers work with colleagues in other schools to see that their checks on pupils' work are accurate.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

An external review of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- School leaders have not ensured that pupils currently in the school are making consistently good progress. In 2016, pupils at both key stages did not make as much progress as they should, and the proportions attaining expected levels were below national figures. School leaders have sought to address these performance issues, but have not taken swift enough action. As a result, pupils are not making enough progress.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership of teaching. The system for monitoring teaching is well organised and feeds effectively into teachers' performance management. Senior leaders visit classes regularly and teachers really appreciate this. Teachers feel well supported and value the feedback on their teaching. However, leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching over time. This is because they do not have a sharp enough focus on pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are clear about the development priorities for the school and the progress and attainment targets for the range of pupil groups. However, their enthusiasm and determination is undermined by the overgenerous assessment of pupils' skills and abilities at age-related expectations and lack of challenge in teaching.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistently effective. Information about pupils' needs is well documented and shared appropriately with staff. Relationships with parents are strong and links with external agencies are well developed. However, teachers do not have enough guidance on teaching and learning strategies to support this group of pupils effectively.
- The pupil premium funding does not ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The impact of the funding is limited by the weaknesses in teaching and assessment.
- Newly qualified teachers and recently qualified teachers are full of praise for school leaders and the positive learning environment. They feel very well supported and are keen to develop their teaching and do their best for their pupils.
- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is spent effectively. The school is part of the Merton schools' partnership which runs competitions and provides training for staff. Pupils experience of range of sports, including swimming, which encourages their interest and participation.
- The curriculum is well planned, broad and balanced. Leaders review the curriculum regularly and supplement class teaching with specialist teaching, for example in languages.
- School leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. The ethos of the school supports pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is promoted effectively.

## Governance of the school

- Governors were disappointed in pupils' outcomes in 2016. Records of governors' meetings indicate that they are making some effort to hold school leaders to account for pupils' performance. However, this has not been done with enough urgency and so is not yet having an impact. They have not yet been successful in ensuring that the school is providing a good standard of education.
- There are many strengths in governance. Governors are highly committed to the school, visit regularly and contribute time and expertise to school and community events. Governors are clear about their focus on equalities and take practical steps to promote all cultures in a positive light. They are dedicated to raising aspirations.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff training is effective and staff are confident and knowledgeable about keeping children safe. They have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and respond appropriately if they have any concerns. Record-keeping is detailed and thorough. Staff vetting checks are completed correctly. Leaders have strong links with a range of organisations that deliver training for staff and workshops for pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- There are weaknesses in teaching because teachers do not always provide challenging activities for pupils and do not move pupils on quickly enough to more difficult concepts. As a result, too many pupils are not making the accelerated progress that they need to in order to catch up.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently take account of pupils' different starting points. Often, almost all the pupils are given the same work, which limits pupils' progress. Teachers do not always set appropriate work at the correct level for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In mathematics, pupils are given an appropriate choice of levels of challenge. However, pupils are not given clear enough expectations or guidance about how they should make choices. Consequently, the most able often choose activities that are too easy and therefore do not enable them to reach the higher standards.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning because teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and level of participation. Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give pupils effective individual support in classes. They question pupils effectively and rigorously check their understanding of the task and give helpful feedback on their work.
- Teachers' questioning has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers give pupils time to think and consider their answers before asking for answers. Pupils speak confidently and ask questions which enable them to develop their understanding further.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They were keen to talk to inspectors about their work and their school. They enjoy good relationships with each other and this has a positive impact on their learning.
- Pupils like the house system, they enjoy collecting house points and there is a strong culture of celebrating pupils' achievements in assemblies and classes. 'Working hard and caring for each other', the school motto, is a consistent message from school leaders, which has a strong impact on pupils' personal development.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. Pupils of all ages understand how to keep themselves safe on the roads and to be wary of strangers. Older pupils know about keeping themselves safe on the internet and mobile phones. Pupils can identify key adults who can help them stay safe if they are worried.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that if it happens, it is dealt with by adults. Year 5 have been trained as pupil mediators to help pupils sort out differences between themselves.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in classes; they have positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, off-task behaviour results when a few pupils lose focus, but there is little disruption to learning.
- Pupils conduct is good; pupils are polite and respectful to each other and adults. They manage their own behaviour well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and, in 2016, their attendance was just above the national average. There is very little variation in attendance across different groups of pupils. Persistent absence has reduced and is now lower than the national average. This is as a result of well-run systems which have had a positive impact on improving pupils' attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers set work for pupils which is pitched at too low a level of challenge. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making the progress that they should. This is because pupils' targets focus on pupils' personal and social development and do not always address their academic needs. School leaders have not ensured that teachers know how to adapt work appropriately for this group of pupils.

- At key stages 1 and 2, pupils make less progress in writing than they should because the work is not challenging enough for them. The school's information on pupils' progress is inaccurate. This is because school leaders overestimate the standard of pupils' work and, as a result, writing activities are not always sequenced effectively.
- Pupils are starting to make better progress in mathematics. School leaders have recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics with a greater focus on understanding and explaining the reasoning behind mathematical ideas. However, these changes are too recent to have had an impact on pupils' attainment in mathematics.
- Pupils' handwriting is a weakness because planning for progress in handwriting is not clear. Mistakes are not corrected and so pupils make the same errors repeatedly.
- Key stage 2 pupils enjoy reading and can speak with confidence about a range of authors and genres of books that they like. At key stage 1, pupils have less choice about their reading books and are less confident in talking about the progress in reading.
- In reading, disadvantaged pupils are not making accelerated progress, which would diminish the difference and enable them to reach age-related expectations. They make expected progress and so they are not catching up to the standard expected for their age group

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers of the early years do not have a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Consequently, they are not able to address gaps in children's knowledge effectively.
- The school's information on children's progress is not always accurate, because leaders' evaluation is overgenerous. Children identified by the school as making at least typical progress are, in fact, making less progress than described.
- In Reception, children's progress in writing is inconsistent and sometimes regresses over time. Pupils make the same mistakes in letter reversal in March 2017 as they were doing in September 2016.
- In the Nursery, children make stronger progress in their learning, as a result of effective adult support. . Adults encourage children to talk about what they are learning and ensure that they remain focused on the activities through skilful questioning.
- Children behave well across the early years. Adults set clear expectations of behaviour and support children well to achieve these. Children share play resources, take turns and cooperate very well together. This has a positive impact on their personal development and learning. Adults' management of behaviour is a strength.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that children are well cared for and safe.

## School details

Unique reference number	102638
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10023758

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Cowling
Headteacher	Michael Bradley
Telephone number	020 8542 7129
Website	<a href="http://www.mertonabbey.merton.sch.uk/">www.mertonabbey.merton.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:mertonabbeyprimary@mertonabbey.merton.sch.uk">mertonabbeyprimary@mertonabbey.merton.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2012

## Information about this school

- Merton Abbey Primary School is a community primary school in the London Borough of Merton. The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standard (the minimum expected of pupil attainment and progress).
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The Abbey Children's Centre, is located on the same site as the school.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all year groups. The majority of visits to lessons were made jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Two groups of pupils spoke with inspectors about their views of the school and inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online pupil survey. Inspectors talked informally with pupils around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work with senior leaders to see how well pupils are learning and what impact this has on their progress. Inspectors also looked at pupils' books in classes and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of governors, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- School leaders met with inspectors to discuss their views of the school and the impact of their work. Inspectors also met with newly qualified teachers and those who had recently completed their training to discuss their views of the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including the school's own self-evaluation, records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, minutes of governors' meetings and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors talked informally with parents at the start of the day about their views of the school and considered the 34 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and two letters from parents.

## Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Jaeggi	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Corbett	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017