

Inspection of a good school: Mereside Primary School

Langdale Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 4RR

Inspection dates: 5–6 November 2019

Outcome

Mereside Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school and happy to attend. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils understand the need to do well. They know that to do so they need to be resilient. Teachers have taught them to 'bounce back and not give up' when they get stuck with their learning.

Pupils support one another in lessons. They sensibly move around the school. Pupils feel safe because they say that their teachers look after them. They know how to stay safe while using the internet and while travelling to school. Pupils know not to speak to strangers. They enjoy the wide range of after-school clubs.

Pupils behave well. They said that sometimes pupils can be boisterous at playtimes. Pupils said that bullying did not happen in their school. Pupils told me that, in the past, if they have fallen out and argued with their friends, some name-calling has happened, but that teachers are good at stopping it.

Pupils said that teachers are fair. They understand the rewards and consequences of the behaviour policy. Pupils particularly enjoy earning 'milkshake straws' for excellent behaviour and working with Fudge, the therapy dog.

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

Leaders have designed an exciting curriculum. It develops pupils' skills and knowledge in a range of subjects. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves. Pupils who leave Year 6 achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Pupils in the resourced provision and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support. Governors and trustees are proud of the school. They hold leaders to account for the achievement of pupils.

Leaders help pupils to know how to stay fit and healthy. Staff provide many after-school clubs and activities. Pupils enjoy raising money for charity. They enjoy learning about other religions and cultures. They said that it helps them to understand the people who live around them. Pupils appreciate that each person is an individual. They recognise that in some countries, women do not have the same rights as they do in Britain.

Leaders have made early reading and phonics a priority. Well-trained staff deliver high-quality phonics sessions. Pupils who fall behind in phonics receive support to catch up. Pupils practise their reading at home. They read books that match the sounds that they have learned in school. Pupils apply their phonics skills well to read new words. Older pupils are unfamiliar with a wide range of stories and authors. They do not deepen this knowledge through their independent reading.

In mathematics, teachers plan well-structured lessons to meet the needs of pupils. The mathematics leaders make checks on the quality of pupils' work. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. Children in the early years explore number and space with high levels of curiosity. Across the school, pupils enjoy their lessons. They take pride in their work. Pupils have few opportunities to apply their number skills to reasoning activities.

Art is a strength of the school. Leaders have carefully mapped out the key skills and knowledge that they want pupils to acquire. Work in pupils' sketchbooks is of a high quality. Pupils know about a wide range of art techniques and enjoy learning about local and international artists. Teachers enable pupils to develop skills logically. Pupils are very proud of their work, which leaders have displayed around school.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They said that communication from school leaders was strong.

Staff enjoy working at Mereside. They appreciate the changes that leaders have made to assessment procedures. This has lightened their workload. They said that leaders listen to them. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to engage in training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have received relevant safeguarding training. They understand that they play an important role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders are alert to the dangers that pupils face. They are vigilant in their duties. Staff know the processes for reporting and recording concerns. Leaders know the pupils well. They take action to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely and effective support from appropriate agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Systems for teaching reading and phonics are having a positive impact on pupils' ability to read. Teachers immerse pupils in a wide range of high-quality texts throughout the

English curriculum. Pupils do not develop and extend their understanding and knowledge of stories and authors. Leaders need to ensure that older pupils experience a rich diet of independent reading.

- Work in pupils' mathematics books is of a good quality. Pupils are developing a wide range of skills across the curriculum. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to explore and deepen their mathematical understanding. Leaders need to ensure that the mathematics curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of reasoning and explaining activities.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Mereside Primary School to be good on 19–20 March 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	143771
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10110971
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Martin Pickles
Headteacher	Samantha Upton
Website	www.meresideprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2013

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection the school has joined the Fylde Coast Academy Trust.
- The headteacher is new to post since the previous inspection.
- The school has provision for eight two-year-old children.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with social, communication and behavioural difficulties. This is run on behalf of the local authority. There are eight places for pupils aged 5 to 8 years.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, executive headteacher and members of the senior leadership team.
- I met with two members of the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer, and with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- I met with teachers and support staff. I discussed their workload and well-being.
- I spoke with pupils about behaviour and expectations. I observed their behaviour in lessons and during breaks. I listened to pupils read and spoke to them about their reading habits.

- I scrutinised documentation in relation to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. I examined the school's single central safeguarding record. I spoke to staff about their understanding of safeguarding.
- I spoke with parents. I considered the 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the 15 free-text responses. I considered the 128 responses to the pupil survey and the 38 responses to the staff survey.
- I evaluated the school's approach to the curriculum. I considered the teaching of early reading and phonics, mathematics and art. I spoke with subject leaders and scrutinised the quality of pupils' work in these subjects. I also visited lessons and spoke with pupils and teachers.

Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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