

Inspection of Merrydale Junior School

Claydon Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 0PL

Inspection dates: 23–24 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. Most speak English as an additional language. They have good attitudes to learning. They develop their language and communication skills well. Pupils listen to their teachers and enjoy sharing their ideas and opinions. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They relish making links between different subjects when learning new things. Pupils enjoy learning beyond their lessons, including going on trips linked to the curriculum. They develop their talents and interests well. There are lots of opportunities to take part in a range of sports and other clubs.

Pupils are respectful and behave well. They told us that they are treated fairly and equally by other pupils and by staff. Pupils understand bullying. They say that bullying is rare in school. They say that when it does happen, staff sort it out effectively.

School leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils work hard and try their best. The school's curriculum, including the religious education programme, develops pupils' cultural understanding well. Pupils appreciate the support of the pastoral staff. They help pupils with their social, emotional and personal development needs.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Leaders are developing an effective curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers check what pupils already know when they join the school. They plan learning to develop pupils' knowledge in different areas of the curriculum.

Leaders plan structured learning in most subjects that builds on pupils' previous learning. Staff consider the vocabulary they want pupils to know. They are clear about what should be taught to pupils in subjects and when. This helps pupils to learn and progress well. We could see that this is particularly true in subjects such as reading, mathematics, science, geography and history. In a minority of subjects, learning is less well organised. Subjects such as modern foreign languages and design technology are not planned as effectively. Leaders have started to review the content and order in which pupils will learn new things in these subjects. This work is not yet fully developed.

Teachers develop pupils' reading skills well. Pupils who need support to catch up with their reading have additional lessons in phonics. These lessons help them to develop their knowledge of letters and sounds. Training for staff has ensured that these lessons follow a clear structure. However, we found that the books that some pupils read do not accurately match the sounds they are taught. Consequently, pupils who struggle to read are not as well supported as they should be when reading independently.

Most teachers teach pupils to develop strong comprehension skills. Teachers choose texts to interest and inspire pupils. They provide opportunities for pupils to share learning and revisit key vocabulary. Some teachers do not set challenging enough work to encourage pupils who are strong readers to achieve their best.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers have high aspirations for pupils with SEND. They check their understanding throughout lessons. Extra adults provide pupils with specific support when needed. Pupils with SEND are keen to learn and try their best.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language develop their communication skills well. Trained adults provide extra support and resources to help pupils to progress well in their learning.

Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures and religions. Leaders have created a harmonious school which embraces diversity. One pupil summed up the views of many when they said, 'Although I am different to my friend, we are all the same on the inside.'

Leaders, including those who work for the trust, provide staff with effective training and support. They think carefully about the workload of staff. Members of the staff well-being group meet regularly. They ensure that the welfare of staff remains high priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a clear system in place for staff to report concerns. Leaders keep detailed records. These records document concerns and the actions that leaders have taken. Leaders are tenacious in getting the right support for pupils and their families. This includes seeking help from external agencies when appropriate. The pastoral team provides excellent care for pupils. Staff are trained to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in most subjects is planned sequentially and develops pupils' knowledge well. Leaders need to ensure that the good work already exemplified in these subjects is continued in all subjects.
- Some pupils are not sufficiently well challenged in their reading. Not all teachers consistently plan work that is correctly matched to pupils' abilities. This means that some pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the school's approach to the teaching of reading is more consistent and enables all pupils to achieve their best.

- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan other subjects in the curriculum that they are in the process of bringing this about.

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're 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	143244
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10110019
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Williams
Headteacher	Catriona Mugglestone
Website	www.merrydalejuniors.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has a significantly higher proportion of pupils on roll who speak English as an additional language than is seen nationally.
- The school is part of the Discovery Schools Academy Trust.
- This is the first time the school has been inspected since its registration as a new school in November 2016. When the predecessor school was inspected it was judged to require improvement.
- The school is part of the Affinity Teaching School Alliance

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the chair of the advisory board and a representative from the trust. We also met with several school leaders, including those with responsibility for different curriculum areas and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- We considered the following subjects in depth as part of the inspection: reading and phonics, mathematics, science and geography. Our inspection activity included: evaluation of curriculum planning; visits to lessons; scrutiny of pupils'

work; listening to pupils read; discussions with subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants; and discussions with pupils about their learning in these subjects.

- We also considered the quality of the curriculum in physical education, religious education and computing.
- We took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and the school’s own parental satisfaction survey. We also considered the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Andy Lakatos, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jeannie Haigh	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Dales	Ofsted Inspector

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