

Inspection of a good school: Meryfield Primary School

Theobald Street, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 4PA

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

Meryfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very inclusive school. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and speak many different languages. Pupils spoke warmly about how they make new members of their class welcome. They enjoy playtimes in the spacious grounds, making good use of the play equipment and many games on offer. They are polite and well behaved.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They talked excitedly about the different activities they do in lessons and the trips they go on. They enjoy learning djembe drumming. Children in the early years are settled and happy. They are curious about the world around them, for example being fascinated by a crow taking a bath during a heavy hailstorm. Adults in the early years make good use of these moments and engage pupils in a discussion about what they see.

Pupils love reading. They really appreciate the high-quality books on offer for them to read. They take recommendations from fellow pupils on what to read next.

There is rarely any bullying, but pupils were clear that when others are unkind, teachers sort it out quickly.

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

The curriculum is well constructed. It is very clear for teachers what should be taught and when. As a result, pupils make progress, gaining knowledge and skills, year on year. Some parts of the curriculum have been more recently introduced. Leaders are making sure that subject leaders get the training they need to support colleagues to deliver these newer curriculum sections.

The teaching of phonics is highly consistent throughout the school. As a result, pupils learn to read quickly. There is a high emphasis on the use of stories, particularly in the early years. Children listen intently to stories that they are read and join in with actions

and repetitive sections. They actively choose to read and write as part of their play.

As pupils get older, books sent home continue to match their reading stage well. There is a very wide range of books on offer, including lots about people from different cultures and countries.

Pupils work hard and are confident to talk in class discussions. Teachers are supporting them to develop their abilities to further debate and discuss what they are learning. There are times when pupils are ready to access more complex aspects of the curriculum, but teachers do not always quickly identify and move pupils on to develop this more complex understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met very well. They access the same learning as their peers, with teachers making subtle adaptations to ensure work is appropriate and pupils' needs are met. Plans for pupils with SEND are detailed and useful for staff. Regular reviews ensure that as needs change, the plans and provision do as well.

Leaders have made good use of the tutoring funding to enable pupils of all attainment levels to both catch up and keep up. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils access this tutoring, plus the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Pupils are taught about fundamental British values through personal, social and health education and assemblies. They demonstrate these through their good behaviour, tolerance and respect for others.

Leaders know their school well. They have worked on the right priorities over several years to improve the curriculum and teaching on offer. However, there are some inconsistencies in the knowledge and confidence of teachers in the delivery of the chosen curriculum. Sometimes, pupils are not moved on in their learning as quickly as they should be. These staff have not had as many opportunities to be trained and guided in this area of their work.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the teaching of more complex areas of the curriculum and the impact of staff's training may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders in this school know pupils really well. Where pupils are at risk, this is quickly identified by staff and acted upon. Leaders are tenacious in challenging other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families are not left without the help they need. Staff have regular training and updates on safeguarding.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe. Year 6 pupils talked positively about workshops they had taken part in with other

schools about knife crime and avoiding gang culture. Younger pupils are clear about road and online safety.

All appropriate checks are made on adults who are in the school, and these are checked by local governors as well as the multi-academy trust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are occasions where staff's training has not supported a few staff to be able to deliver the curriculum adeptly and confidently. Additionally, in some lessons, pupils are not being supported to access more complex aspects of the curriculum and to develop skills of debating and discussing their learning. As a result, some pupils do not gain a deeper understanding of what they learn. Leaders need to make sure that all teachers have the training to adapt learning to support those pupils who are ready to achieve more, and to deliver all subjects with confidence and skill.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Meryfield Primary School, to be good in November 2011.

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.

If you are the school and 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	145351
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10227571
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patrick McAteer
Headteacher	Alexandra Gage
Website	www.meryfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in January 2018. When the predecessor school of the same name was inspected in July 2016, it was judged to remain good.
- The school is part of the Agora Learning Partnership multi-academy trust.
- The school is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school has two nursery classes, offering both part-time and full-time places to children from the age of three.
- The school has its own breakfast club.
- A separately run and registered after-school club operates on the school premises.

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 her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a wide range of staff. The inspector also met with the chief executive officer and representatives of the trustees and academy governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked at the schools' single central record and a sample of safeguarding records. The inspector spoke to staff, parents and pupils to check their views on safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 40 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also considered the 34 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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