

# Inspection of a good school: Mere School

Springfield Road, Mere, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 6EW

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

## Outcome

Mere School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders' vision, 'we enjoy, we learn, we achieve', reflects the pupils' day-to-day experience. Pupils enjoy attending Mere School and thrive on the broad range of experiences they are offered. Many parents and carers are delighted with the school. One parent's comment was typical of parents' opinions: 'My children are very happy at Mere and feel part of the school community.'

Pupils are polite, well mannered and respectful. They know what is expected of them and understand the 'Golden Rules'. As a result, their behaviour and attitudes are positive. Pupils listen carefully, work collaboratively and are keen to share their ideas. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults in school would sort out any problems if they arose.

Staff provide a wealth of experiences to enrich pupils' time at school and enhance learning. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and talk positively about their recent visits to Montacute House and the Ancient Technology Centre.

In some wider curriculum subjects, the key knowledge that leaders want pupils to know and remember has not yet been identified. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge of the subject well over time.

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

Leaders at all levels are enthusiastic and dedicated. They engage with staff well. There is a strong sense of team spirit. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being and this is appreciated by the staff, who are motivated and proud to work at the school.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. They have thought carefully about what pupils must learn and by when in most subjects. As a result, pupils build on what they know and can do successfully. In mathematics, for example, pupils can rapidly recall number facts and times tables so that they can tackle more complex concepts and solve problems effectively. Pupils in Year 2 confidently use their knowledge of number bonds to find the sum of two-digit and single-digit numbers. They progress well through the

intended curriculum. However, in some subjects the essential knowledge pupils need to know and remember is not clearly identified. As a result, learning does not build on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of what the gaps are and, therefore, learning is not adapted to address this.

Leaders promote a love of reading. Children are introduced to books right from the start of their schooling. Staff nurture this by organising 'snuggle-up days', where pupils spend time enjoying a range of stories and are gifted a book to take home. Older pupils enjoy listening to and reading a variety of books by different authors. They appreciate the wide range of texts available in the school library. Leaders ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics. This enables children in the Reception Year to know the sounds that letters make. However, some pupils who struggle to read are given books that do not match the sounds they know. Some staff are not well skilled to support them. As a result, they do not read fluently and are not catching up quickly enough.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Adults find creative ways to make sure that pupils can access the curriculum. This helps pupils to develop a sense of independence.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils work hard in lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, there is no loss of learning time. Pupils are considerate and respectful. They hold doors open and stand aside to let adults pass through.

Leaders ensure that the provision for pupils' wider development is considered well. Pupils recognise that there are people less fortunate than themselves and collect food for the local food bank. They are proud to be part of the democratically elected student council and eco council. They know that their ideas are listened to. Pupils enjoy the broad range of clubs that are offered, including football, table tennis and cooking. Pupils understand and respect differences. They talk about the importance of fairness to people of all backgrounds. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They can talk about what they would do if they had a concern about something they had seen online.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors attend safeguarding training regularly. This helps them to carry out their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. A robust recording and reporting system is used by staff to share concerns about pupils' welfare. Adults know that the information they have creates a piece of a bigger picture. Leaders follow up on these concerns with the appropriate actions in a timely manner.

Appropriate safeguarding checks are carried out to ensure that adults who work in the school are suitable.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, the important knowledge that leaders want pupils to know and remember has not been identified. This means that pupils do not experience a well-sequenced curriculum and develop gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that they identify the important knowledge they want pupils to learn, and in what order, so they have the building blocks for future learning.
- Some pupils who find reading difficult are not reading books that match the sounds they know. Some adults are not skilled to support them to learn to read. Leaders need to ensure that books are matched with greater precision to the sounds these pupils already know and that all adults are well equipped to support pupils, so that they catch up quickly.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126263
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227193
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Carolyn Godfrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catriona Williamson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mereschool.co.uk">www.mereschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school has an on-site breakfast and after-school provision run by a private company.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector also spoke to the geography and art subject leaders.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.

- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. She met with the designated safeguarding leader to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to the online survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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