

Inspection of Mesty Croft Primary

St Luke's Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0QY

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Mesty Croft is full of happy pupils and cheerful staff. Everyone is made to feel welcome at this friendly school. Leaders take staff and pupils' mental health and well-being seriously. Pupils know they can talk to the school counsellor or a trusted adult if they have any worries. Pupils feel safe and secure at school.

Pupils behave well in school. They want to learn. They are taught to treat others how they would like to be treated. Most do so. Pupils learn about different types of bullying. They know the difference between bullying and one-off behaviour incidents. Staff act quickly to deal with incidents that occur to prevent these from escalating.

All staff, governors and trust leaders want the best for pupils. They have worked hard to design an interesting curriculum to realise the school motto of 'Believe and Achieve'. Their plans are ambitious, and pupils enjoy learning new skills, especially in art. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is less effective.

Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. However, the number of pupils who are regularly absent is worrying. These pupils miss important lessons. This affects how well they achieve at school and some struggle to catch up.

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

There has been a renewed vision and sense of direction since the school joined Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust. Clear lines of accountability are in place. School leaders and governors appreciate the support they receive from the trust. This includes termly reviews of key areas and access to high-quality training. Subject leaders benefit from attending network meetings to share ideas and good practice with other schools in the trust.

Leaders have created a well-sequenced curriculum that runs from nursery to Year 6. They have identified the skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn in all subjects. Pupils achieve well where learning builds up progressively. This is the case in English and mathematics. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in these areas. Pupils also enjoy learning other subjects. Staff identify key words they want pupils to know. For example, younger children proudly told inspectors that rabbits live in a warren. However, there are a few subjects where leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is as well planned. Where this is the case, pupils do not develop a secure understanding or remember what they learn.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain new learning clearly and question pupils to check their understanding. However, checks on how well pupils complete tasks, and how much pupils remember, are at an early stage of development. Gaps in learning and misconceptions are not identified and rectified as soon as they should be. This means pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Reading is a top priority in school. Pupils listen to stories or read for pleasure every day. Leaders make sure that children start to learn their early sounds and letters as soon as they join nursery. All staff, including support assistants, are fully trained in teaching phonics. Pupils read books that match their ability. They can use their phonics to sound out unfamiliar words. Those who struggle with reading receive extra support to help them catch up.

Staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils receive additional adult help in lessons. Teaching assistants know pupils well. They help pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their classmates. The leader for SEND works closely with external agencies to access specialist support and resources where needed. Leaders strive to do what is right for each pupil. They have worked closely with other specialist schools to meet pupils' individual needs. This has been successful.

Pupils in all year groups behave well, including in the early years. Children learn to listen, follow instructions, cooperate and respect others. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and most try their best in lessons. Older pupils look after younger pupils to make sure they are not alone. This is part of the caring ethos leaders have created.

Leaders place great emphasis on pupils' personal development. Popular after-school clubs, such as choir, sewing and dance, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Visits and visitors also enrich the curriculum and extend pupils' knowledge. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures through the curriculum. This helps prepare them for life in modern Britain. Weekly personal, social and health education lessons ensure that pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and relationships. Pupils develop their social skills by taking on responsibilities such as school councillors and house captains.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong focus on safeguarding across the school. Leaders make certain that all staff are trained so that they can identify pupils at risk of potential harm. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Leaders act swiftly to refer cases to the appropriate agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families get the support they need. Robust pre-employment checks are made on adults who work in the school.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, especially online. They benefit from regular teaching about personal safety, including from the police.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of foundation subjects are not as well planned and sequenced as other subjects. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, and they do not build successfully on their prior learning. Leaders should use the successful curriculum model seen in some subjects to reshape the curriculum in subjects where learning is not well ordered.
- Teachers do not check pupils' learning sufficiently in order to assess what they know, can do and remember, particularly in foundation subjects. This means that teachers do not pick up and address errors and misconceptions, or identify gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that there is a consistently effective approach to assessing pupils' understanding and recall across all curriculum subjects.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent. These pupils miss vital lessons and do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should work with parents to instil the importance of sending their child to school regularly.

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.

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	137972
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10256916
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	439
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of board	Andrew Brocklehurst
Headteacher	Lucy Bray
Website	www.mestycroftprimary.co.uk
Dates of the previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust on 1 October 2021, having previously been a standalone academy.
- The headteacher has remained the same since the previous inspection but there has been a restructuring of the leadership team and several staff changes.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. Meetings were also held with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and the chief executive officer from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, reading, mathematics, science and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at work in pupils' books. Inspectors also sampled the curriculum and pupils' work in history, geography, design technology, religious education and modern foreign languages.
- The inspectors checked the school's single central record and spoke to the headteacher and family support practitioner about safeguarding procedures.
- An inspector visited the registered alternative provider used by the school to check on the provision offered to pupils from Mesty Croft.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Minutes of governors' meetings and trust reports were also scrutinised. Inspectors looked at records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes, and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspectors talked to parents both before school and during the parents' evening held at the time of the inspection. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors took account of staff's responses to the online questionnaire for staff. They gathered the views of staff and pupils on site through discussion with these groups.

Inspection team

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