

Inspection of a good school: Mersey Drive Community Primary School

Mersey Drive, Whitefield, Manchester M45 8LN

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils play a large part in making Mersey Drive Community Primary School the welcoming learning community that it is. They are happy in school. Pupils benefit from the positive relationships that they develop with staff.

Pupils know that leaders expect them to behave well. The youngest children listen attentively to staff and respond well to instructions. Pupils' conduct across the rest of the school embodies the values that they themselves have helped to create. They are respectful and kind to others.

Pupils said that there are adults whom they can go to if they have any concerns or worries. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have strengthened the curriculum across many subjects. However, much of this work is in its early stages. It is too soon to see its impact. Pupils' learning across a range of subjects is uneven as a result.

Pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), enjoy helping to make their school a better place. They are proud of the roles that they have in school, for example as members of the school council and eco-committee.

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

There has been instability in leadership and staffing over recent months. Despite this, leaders have maintained a sharp focus on improving the curriculum. Over time, subject leaders have benefited from working with external consultants. This has helped to develop their curriculum expertise. Leaders are clear about the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn, from the early years to the end of Year 6. They have designed a well-thought-out curriculum that develops pupils' vocabulary and broadens their experiences across subjects.

Some of leaders' revised subject curriculums have been recently introduced. Subject leaders have provided teachers with extensive support about what these curriculums should contain. However, they have had limited opportunity to check that teachers use this guidance consistently well or to deepen teachers' subject knowledge. This means that the delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent across and within subjects.

In some subjects, most teachers deliver new curriculum content in a logical order. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, achieve well in these subjects. For example, they remember important vocabulary and use this purposefully. However, in other subjects, teachers are not as adept at designing learning that builds on what pupils already know. For instance, some teachers do not systematically support pupils to remember key content. Pupils have limited recall of their previous learning. This hampers their ability to make sense of new curriculum content.

In some subjects, teachers carry out regular checks on what pupils know and remember before moving on to new learning. However, in other subjects, teachers do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new concepts. Some pupils develop misconceptions as a result.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have put a well-designed phonics programme in place. Children in the early years get off to a brisk start with learning to read. Teachers deliver the phonics programme well. They match books carefully to the sounds that pupils know. Staff keep a close check on how well pupils are keeping up with their phonic knowledge. If pupils need additional help, leaders put appropriate support in place. This helps pupils to catch up quickly.

Leaders make sure that staff seize every opportunity to develop children's language and love of books. For example, across the school, staff have created inviting reading nooks to foster pupils' love of reading. Teachers share high-quality texts with pupils. Pupils display positive attitudes towards reading. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently.

Leaders make sure that the needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. This means that pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, receive the support that they need to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND feel fully involved in the life of the school.

Pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision, work well together. They are attentive and focused during lessons. This means that they can learn without interruption.

Leaders carefully consider how best to prepare pupils for adulthood. They encourage pupils to aim high for their futures by introducing them to the varied world of work. Pupils are keen to play their part in the school community. For example, they take part enthusiastically in sponsored events to raise funds for worthy causes. In this way, pupils develop well as active citizens.

Governors know the school well. They fulfil most of their duties effectively. Leaders take account of staff's well-being. Staff appreciate the support given to them to help manage their workloads.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the needs of pupils and their families. They make sure that all staff are appropriately trained to keep pupils safe. Leaders provide timely updates to keep staff well informed about any new risks that pupils may face. Staff know how to identify safeguarding concerns, and report them appropriately. Leaders take effective action to provide support for vulnerable pupils when concerns are raised by staff or other agencies.

Leaders make appropriate use of the expertise of other professionals, including school health, to deepen pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This includes keeping safe when working and playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum has recently been reviewed and implemented. This means that the delivery of the curriculum is uneven across subjects. Leaders should ensure that staff are well equipped with the expertise to deliver the curriculum as leaders intend.
- In some subjects, leaders do not support staff to design learning that enables pupils to successfully retain knowledge, including key vocabulary. Pupils struggle to recall previous and more recent learning as a result. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise to support pupils to know more over time.
- Some teachers do not routinely check that pupils are fully secure with prior learning before they move on to new content. This means that some pupils do not build on their prior knowledge as well as they should. Leaders should make sure that teachers check what pupils understand so that misconceptions are quickly addressed before new learning is introduced.

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.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2012.

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

Unique reference number	105299
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10211318
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patrick Heneghan
Headteacher	Angela Ridley
Website	www.merseydriveprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of this inspection, the school was being led by an acting headteacher until the substantive headteacher returns to school.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The specially resourced provision has places for 14 pupils from Reception age to Year 6. At the time of the inspection, places were allocated to 11 pupils. Pupils' primary need is autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders provide a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

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 acting headteacher, other school leaders and staff.

- The inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. She met with two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. She looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. The inspector also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in a small number of other subjects.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at lunchtime. She considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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