

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Cricket Green School

Lower Green West, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3AF

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Cricket Green School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and inspirational school. They thrive here. Leaders have high expectations and an unrelenting ambition for the pupils in their care.

The school café, the garden, and the school animals, provide exciting contexts for pupils to develop and practise skills. The parents and carers that inspectors spoke to said that learning is not just transferred to the community, it starts in the community. Pupils who may have struggled with school in the past really see the point of what they are learning.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school. Staff are always on hand to help them with any worries. Pupils behave very well. Skilled staff support any pupil who struggles, so they can get back to learning. Pupils are confident that adults will quickly sort out any concerns about unkind behaviour or bullying.

Parents and carers describe the staff as having 'unlimited patience, compassion and energy'. They are especially appreciative of the work of the headteacher and her dedicated leadership team.

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

Leaders have continued to improve this outstanding and outward facing school. The school has grown in recent years, with an increasing number of pupils on roll and a wider range of needs.

Leaders have designed a highly effective curriculum that meets each pupil's needs. They give careful consideration to pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plans). Leaders have set out the curriculum in small steps to develop independence and communication as well as subject knowledge. Teachers use pupils' EHC plan targets to expertly craft lessons. Staff work hard to make sure that learning is fun and that lessons capture pupils' interests.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that puts no ceiling on pupils' success. Staff work closely with other organisations to help them tailor the curriculum to suit pupils' particular talents and ambitions. These positive experiences ensure that pupils do not feel defined or limited by being in a special school.

The curriculum for older pupils focuses on enabling them to access qualifications across a range of subjects. This includes in mathematics and English, but also in subjects based on pupils' interests and ambitions for the future.

Teachers know each pupil's needs exceptionally well. They make skilful use of ongoing checks on what pupils can do, routinely adapting their teaching to meet pupils' exact learning needs.

Staff are experts in teaching pupils to read. Children in the early years and pupils at the early stages of reading are taught to listen for different sounds. This prepares them well to learn phonics. Pupils benefit from a personalised programme of support to develop their understanding of phonics and they use their knowledge to read words independently. Teachers continue to provide this support for as long as each pupil needs it.

Leaders' work to support pupils' personal development and physical well-being is remarkable. Personal, social, health and economic education underpins everything the school does. From a young age, staff help pupils to be more confident in different social settings. This includes travel training and visiting local shops. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and how to be as independent as possible. This prepares them well for the future.

Staff use positive approaches to manage pupils' behaviour. They know that all behaviour conveys a message, and they interpret it well. Teachers put actions in place that result in change. Some pupils need extra help with their behaviour. Any lapses in behaviour are dealt with and do not impact on the learning of others.

The fact that some pupils in the school need extra help with their behaviour does not limit leaders' ambition for pupils. Leaders and staff put on innovative and exciting whole-school events that purposefully disrupt the usual routine, for example turning the school into the setting for a music festival. These special events are only possible because pupils feel secure and trust the adults working with them.

Governors share leaders' passion for getting the best for each and every pupil. They know the school well. They work strategically but are aware of the day-to-day business of the school. Governors are knowledgeable and active in their work. This ensures that they carry out their statutory duties effectively.

Parents believe the school has made an enormous difference to their lives, and to the lives of their children. They feel that their children are challenged, and because of this, achieve way beyond what even they thought possible.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel privileged to be part of such a unique school. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and take this into account when they are making decisions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff make sure that pupils' well-being and safety are their top priority. All staff and governors have regular training, which helps to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding. As a result, staff know how to identify risks and what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Pupils are treated with dignity and gentleness. Leaders work effectively with other agencies and are not afraid to challenge other professionals if necessary.

Leaders ensure that detailed records are kept. Records are monitored regularly to ensure that when changes appear in pupils' behaviour, leaders are able to act on them.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in February 2013.

## **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>	102699
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255542
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	248
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Vickers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Celia Dawson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cricketgreen.merton.sch.uk">www.cricketgreen.merton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with a diverse range of needs, including those with moderate and severe learning difficulties, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and those with difficulties in speech and language development.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, personal development and physical development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their

learning and met with teachers. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how pupils are safeguarded. Inspectors also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks on staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, and they observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff about safeguarding, behaviour and their workload. Inspectors also looked at the responses from staff and parents to Ofsted's surveys, including Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Aliki Constantopoulou

His Majesty's Inspector

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