

# Inspection of a good school: The Merton Primary School

Cherry Drive, Syston, Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 2PT

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Matthew Lee. This school is part of Bradgate Education Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gareth Nelmes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Cotton.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is an innovative and happy school. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Leaders are aspirational. The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. One pupil shared: 'The adults here are understanding of our mental health too. If you feel like you can't talk to your friends about something, teachers are always there to help you and solve your problems'.

The school has a purposeful buzz about it. Staff use effective behaviour management strategies that are considerate of different needs. Strong pastoral support is in place for some pupils who exhibit the most challenging behaviours.

Pupils are encouraged to find reward themselves, in what they do and achieve. A typical comment was: 'Our teachers are motivational - our lessons always build towards a big piece of work and you get to feel proud of yourself at the end.'

During break and lunchtimes, pupils play and interact with each other respectfully. Some older pupils support younger ones with their behaviour choices. Pupils enjoy the

extra roles and responsibilities they can take on. For example, some act as 'playground guardians' or 'digi leaders'.

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

Children get off to a strong start in the Reception Year. The provision is well resourced and organised. Staff have high expectations and routines are well established. Children learn through playing, exploring and taking risks. Teachers plan activities that encourage children to practise their phonics and early number knowledge and skills. Relationships between staff and children are warm and nurturing. There is a strong focus on the development of early language and communication. Children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school prioritises reading. The phonics programme is well organised and resourced. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. They can talk with confidence about their favourite books and characters. Extra support is in place to help some pupils to keep up. Reading books match pupils' phonics knowledge. This is supporting them to develop their fluency. In key stage 2, reading lessons support pupils to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Book choices expose pupils to a diverse range of cultures. Books are also sometimes linked to different subject areas. These links develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of particular topics.

In mathematics lessons, pupils develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills well. The school promotes 'purposeful mathematics' in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers plan lessons that give mathematics learning a real purpose and relevance for pupils. Lessons include opportunities to revisit prior learning. This supports pupils to know and remember more of the mathematics curriculum.

Other subjects are ambitious and aligned to the school's clear vision. 'Roadmaps' show the progression of knowledge and skills for every subject. This is helping pupils to build their knowledge and skills successfully over time. Pupils can talk about their learning in a range of subjects with confidence. Leaders are passionate about making all learning purposeful. The school has built innovative connections with local businesses. This has created opportunities that enhance pupils' learning experience.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support and achieve well. The school works with a range of external agencies to ensure that these pupils' needs are identified and met. Pupils with SEND, wherever possible, access the same curriculum as their peers. For some of these pupils, this is through an individual timetable that is designed to meet their specific needs.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Personal, social and health education lessons prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Teachers deliver extra sessions in reaction to world or school events. This supports pupils' understanding of global issues. Pupils understand what the British values are and can relate them to their everyday lives. One pupil shared: 'No two people are exactly the same. We need to treat everyone with respect no matter what their skin colour or faith is. Even twins are

different and we should respect their differences.’ Pupils understand different types of relationships and families. Pupils enjoy taking on a wide range of responsibilities.

The school is well led and managed. Those responsible for governance support and challenge leaders effectively. Staff feel very well supported. Teachers say that leaders care about their workload and well-being. Staff feel that leaders support their professional development. Staff access subject networks through the trust, to share good practice.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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 June 2014.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138818
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10298490
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	416
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust board</b>	Stephen Cotton
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Gareth Nelmes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Lee
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.merton.bepschools.org">www.merton.bepschools.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bradgate Education Partnership academy trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector checked pupils' work, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with pupils and leaders for several other subjects.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. The inspector met with members of the local advisory board and trust board.
- The inspector met with the director of education and the CEO of the trust.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments, as well as the results of Ofsted's survey for school staff.

### **Inspection team**

Luella Manssen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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