

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Harris Primary Academy Merton

Abbotts Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1JW

---

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 February 2024

## **Outcome**

Harris Primary Academy Merton continues to be an outstanding school.

The principal of this academy is Emma Catley. This academy is part of the Harris Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the academy. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Dan Moynihan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Philip Harris. There is a director of primary education, Sabeena Hasan, and an assistant director, Vikki Forbes, who are responsible for this academy.

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

Harris Primary Academy Merton is an exceptionally nurturing community where pupils' flourish. Staff foster highly positive relationships with pupils and families. Pupils are safe and happy here, confident that if they have concerns, they can go to any member of staff for help.

The school has high aspirations for all its pupils. They receive a well-rounded education and produce work of high quality across different subjects. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future lives.

Pupils' personal development is fundamental to the education that they receive at the academy. The 'Merton Milestones', for example, are a set of 20 experiences that all pupils take part in. These include watching live music, picking fruit and having a picnic. Pupils also take part in a sequence of activities to help them become good citizens in their community. This begins with watering plants and feeding the birds and progresses to include litter picking and volunteering at the local food bank.

A high number of pupils join the school throughout the year. Staff ensure that all pupils feel welcome and part of this inclusive community.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum sets out a deep body of knowledge across a broad range of subjects. The exact knowledge that pupils need to learn in each subject and at

each stage is clear. It has been carefully sequenced in each subject so that pupils continuously build on their learning. As a result, pupils reach the ambitious end points the school has set for them. In art, pupils' knowledge of printing develops securely. For example, children in the early years make prints using simple objects. In Year 2, pupils created a mono print using contrasting colours, inspired by the artist Henri Matisse. Then, in Year 4, pupils designed and made tiles in the style of the Portuguese artist Diogo Machado.

The school is equally ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND, including those in the additional resource provision, are fully immersed in the school's curriculum. Staff adapt teaching skilfully to meet the individual needs of pupils. They incorporate important information from pupils' education, health and care plans. Teachers use assessment information to check pupils' understanding and plan their next steps.

The school makes a considerable contribution to supporting staff with their workload. Staff spoke very positively about the consideration that leaders give to their well-being. Morale is high and the comment of one staff member echoed those of many others: 'this school is my happy place'.

The curriculum is delivered well. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They introduce new ideas clearly and help pupils to understand concepts in depth. Staff emphasise pupils' development of language and key words. This helps pupils to build their understanding in each subject. In mathematics, for example, pupils used a range of words related to measurement to describe with accuracy the size of an object. In another year group, pupils applied their deep knowledge of different mathematical concepts and terminology in order to calculate angles.

Teaching pupils to read is treated as a priority at the school. Pupils take part in a rigorous programme of phonics lessons to develop their accuracy and confidence in reading. Leaders have made sure that all staff are experts in teaching pupils to read. Staff identify pupils who fall behind and provide extra support to help them catch up. Pupils practise using phonics by reading books that contain the sounds they know. Pupils show a genuine love of reading and of books. They enjoy hearing staff read to them in class each day and take home books to share with their families.

Pupils enjoy a range of thoughtfully planned outings, events and after-school clubs. These activities enrich their studies and help to build their confidence, independence and resilience. For example, each year, pupils visit a London art gallery to see first-hand the different artists and media they study.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptional. They are calm and settled during lessons. Pupils collaborate respectfully with each other and follow instructions promptly.

Staff build trusting relationships with parents and carers. They work closely together in many ways, including helping to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Staff identify pupils who are at risk of non-attendance and support them at the earliest opportunity.

The support of the trust is a key part of the school's success. The local governing body performs its delegated responsibilities diligently. Experts from the trust provide guidance, support and challenge to leaders and staff.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the academy to be outstanding in July 2017.

## 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>	141143
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296733
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	489
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lord Philip Harris
<b>Principal</b>	Emma Catley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.harrisprimarymerton.org.uk">www.harrisprimarymerton.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school has a specially resourced provision which caters for up to 21 pupils with autism.
- The school has been part of the Harris Federation multi-academy trust since 2014.
- The principal has been in post since September 2023.

## 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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the trust's chief executive officer and director of primary. The inspector held meetings with the principal and other members of the senior leadership team. The inspector met with the chair of the local governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and design, and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 considered the views of parents through their responses to Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Franklin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024