

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Perseid School

Bordesley Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5LT

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

## **Outcome**

Perseid School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

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

Staff warmly welcome pupils as they arrive each morning. Pupils are happy and eager to start their day. They make exceptional progress at this school because the staff are highly skilled. Staff deliver expertly bespoke curriculums that are aspirational and matched carefully to pupils' individual needs and education, health and care plan (EHC plan) goals. The school's aim to 'blaze a trail through exceptional holistic learning' is realised through a variety of creative ways. The school is highly successful in preparing pupils to transition seamlessly into their next steps. Where appropriate, pupils go on to study relevant courses at local further education colleges.

Behaviour is excellent. Staff know pupils exceptionally well. They quickly get to grips with the best strategies to support pupils with their learning, emotions or behaviour. This helps pupils to feel safe in this calm and highly positive environment. Staff quickly de-escalate tricky situations, so that pupils can refocus on enjoying their learning.

The curriculum contains a range of engaging experiences. These support pupils to build their independence and confidence. This includes activities such as horse riding, participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's award and taking part in well-organised sporting competitions with peers from other schools. Staff's boundless enthusiasm helps to develop a 'can do' culture where pupils want to 'have a go'.

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

There is no ceiling to the ambition staff have for the pupils in their care. The holistic development of pupils drives the meticulously designed curriculum. The curriculum is expertly tailored to the needs of each pupil. It provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to function and thrive in adulthood. Staff have a comprehensive

knowledge of each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is in addition to pupils' well-being and behaviour needs.

Staff have a highly secure knowledge of which learning activities best support pupils with complex needs. Staff use the information from pupils' 'personalised learning plans' and EHC plans to outline manageable steps that will help pupils to be successful. For instance, supporting pupils to improve their mobility or to begin to communicate. The school fosters close partnerships with the highly skilled specialists and therapists, including speech and language therapists, to help pupils learn to communicate and develop physically. Pupils express themselves using a range of equipment and technology. Staff consistently use the school's assessment system effectively to help spot any gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils develop extremely well from their starting points.

Staff consistently follow the school's approach to early reading. Children at pre-phonics and pre-reading stages learn to listen and respond to sound and visual stimuli. Pupils who progress in learning phonics do so using books that match the sounds they know. Staff read regularly to pupils. Books and stories are made accessible by sensory activities, rhymes and songs. Pupils learn about key characters and events in stories. They act out scenes in various school performances.

Routines are exceptionally well embedded in the school. This starts in the early years where children are taught to develop autonomy through opportunities for high-quality play. Staff watch behaviour closely. This helps inform a change in approach or communication. This supports non-verbal pupils to find their voice. Adults empower pupils to take responsibility for managing their own emotions, feelings and behaviour. Pupils attend regularly and behave well.

The schools' personal development programme is incredibly well considered and organised. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities the school provides to develop and extend their talents and interests. These experiences include swimming, camping and developing pupils' confidence to sing and perform before various audiences.

There is a strong focus on helping pupils navigate their day-to-day lives, including learning how to order at the local café or travel on public transport. Pupils with physical difficulties learn to access the full range of facilities on and beyond the school site. Pupils learn how to plan and organise fundraising events for various charities. Educational visits into the community allow pupils to learn important social skills or practise their communication and mathematics skills. Post-16 students have careers input, including work experience. By the time pupils finish in this school, they are incredibly well prepared for their next steps.

Governors offer highly effective support and challenge to the school. Staff and school leaders at all levels are firmly committed to continuous improvement and excellence. Staff are dedicated to their work and to sharing exemplary practice locally, nationally and internationally. They appreciate the school's investment in their continuing professional development, which is highly personalised. Staff feel leaders consider and manage their

well-being and workload well. Many parents and carers highlighted in their survey responses the positive difference the school makes to their children's lives and families.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 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](#)' 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>	102698
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345833
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 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>	160
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	21
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing</b>	Tom Alexander
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Copeland (executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.perseid.merton.sch.uk">www.perseid.merton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	05 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with autism, severe and complex learning difficulties and/or physical difficulties.
- The current executive headteacher took over the full substantive role in September 2023. Prior to this, she was the associate headteacher under the predecessor executive headteacher.
- There have been some recent changes to the senior leadership team, including the appointment of heads of school and an assistant headteacher.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the chair and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders and staff.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

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