

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Merrydale Junior School

Claydon Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 0PL

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Antony Corbett. The school is part of Discovery Schools Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for the school. The trust is run by a chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Stone, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Bettsworth.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, warm and welcoming school. The school's values of belonging, excellence, aspiration and respect are very important to the whole school community. Many pupils arrive at the school at various times throughout the four years, with little English. It is important to the school that new pupils feel welcomed and quickly belong in the community. This is through respectful behaviours shown by all.

Pupils behave well and engage in their learning. The high aspirations of the staff and pupils permeates through everything that they do. Pupils have the resources they need to support their learning and can choose what to use and when. This ensures that pupils become independent with their learning. Pupils accept that getting things wrong helps them build their resilience. They particularly enjoy practical activities and are keen to explain what they did. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils understand and adhere to the school's high expectations set for them. Therefore, pupils ensure that they adhere to these expectations. Many pupils have leadership responsibilities, such as being members of the school council or taking part in a local leadership programme with other schools. Pupils routinely raise funds for charity. These opportunities help to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

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

The school's broad and balanced curriculum is clearly sequenced. It intends to build pupils knowledge over time. It identifies the subject-specific vocabulary that the school expects pupils to know and use. In a few subjects, however, the school has not identified the most important subject content that pupils need to know and remember. This sometimes means that this important content is not covered in sufficient detail and sometimes causes gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The 2024 end of key stage 2 data highlighted several pupils did not meet the expected standards in reading and writing. These pupils arrived at the school below the expected standard, and many have little, if any, English upon arrival. These pupils did achieve well from their starting points. However, they did not make enough progress to achieve the expected standard.

Reading is a priority of the school. Pupils who need to catch up, including those who are new to English, learn phonics. Staff are well trained and deliver the phonics programme consistently well. This enables pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils explore a wide range of texts. This helps them to develop a broad understanding of different authors and genres. Pupils build up their reading fluency and accuracy as they move through the school.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. The school puts in place the adaptations and interventions that pupils need so that they can access the curriculum. For pupils who are new to the country, the priority is for these pupils to learn English so that they can fully access all the curriculum as soon as possible.

Behaviour is well managed throughout the school. Pupils' rates of attendance are generally high. The school works with individual families, where necessary, to address any barriers to regular attendance.

The school puts in place a variety of systems to support pupils' social and emotional well-being. For example, pupils benefit from the support of trained staff, who help them talk through any problems and to manage their feelings and emotions. Lunchtimes are organised so that pupils who want some quiet time, get the space they need to reflect and relax.

The school's personal development programme helps pupils to find out about a wide range of important themes, including physical and mental well-being. Pupils get to learn about other people and the importance of treating people fairly. For example, pupils are taught about different families, faiths and cultures.

Staff are well supported to manage their workload and well-being. Staff work well together as a team and regularly share advice and ideas together. The local advisory board knows and supports the school well. The school works effectively with the trust to ensure that it continues to develop.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not identified the most important subject content that pupils need to know and remember over time. Sometimes, this means that key content is not taught and leads to gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, the most important content is identified and taught and that pupils know and remember this over time.

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 good 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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

Unique reference number	143244
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10347625
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Bettsworth
CEO of the trust	Paul Stone
Headteacher	Anthony Corbett
Website	www.merrydalejuniors.com
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Discovery Schools Academies Trust Ltd.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been in position since September 2023.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational 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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with members of the local advisory board and the director of quality assurance.

- The inspector also spoke to school leaders, including those responsible for SEND, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The inspector 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 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.

Inspection team

Katie Devenport, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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