



# Merrydale Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 120024  
**LEA** Leicester City  
**Inspection number** 291607  
**Inspection dates** 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Edwards AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Claydon Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Leicester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Leicestershire LE5 0PL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2767708
<b>Number on roll</b>	300	<b>Fax number</b>	0116 2762820
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Bob Lee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 January 2003	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Dickson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7 to 11	28 June 2006 - 29 June 2006	291607

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Merrydale is a large junior school. Pupils enter the school with skills that are well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much higher than average. Just under half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a small minority of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The school serves a disadvantaged area and fluctuations in the school's population are greater than in most schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. During the last two years, five staff have commenced teaching at the school.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Merrydale Junior provides a good education. The school has correctly identified its effectiveness and what is needed to improve standards further. The staff, including new members, work very well as a team. Teaching and learning are good and the enthusiasm of staff encourages pupils well. As a result, behaviour is usually good and pupils are keen to learn. Although all pupils are provided with targets for improvement, they are not always sufficiently aware of these. Progress throughout the school is good. From a low starting point, pupils achieve well. They attain standards that are just below average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Too many worksheets limit the opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing further in subjects such as science. Senior staff have correctly identified the need to adopt a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work and ensure that the best practice is shared throughout the school. Pupils are well looked after. The good guidance for pupils with learning difficulties enables them to take a full part in all aspects of the school. Pupils learning English as an additional language are provided with very effective support enabling them to make rapid gains in learning English. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear focus on raising standards and, on the evidence of improvement since the last inspection, the school is well placed to improve further. It provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards further in writing by reducing the number of worksheets used in subjects such as science and by encouraging the pupils to write at length.
- Adopt a more consistent approach to the marking of work.
- Involve pupils more in setting targets for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with skills that are well below average and most make good progress so that by the end of Year 6, their literacy and numeracy skills are just below those expected for their age. Improved use of assessment information and better checking of the progress pupils make are helping to improve achievements. Challenging targets are set for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6, and these targets were met in both English and mathematics in 2005. Good opportunities for improving pupils' speaking and listening skills ensure most speak confidently. The school has rightly identified that writing can improve further by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise writing in subjects such as science, where the overuse of worksheets inhibits the opportunity for them to write at length. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are provided with very good support and guidance, enabling them to make rapid progress in their acquisition of English. Pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress

because of the range of effective strategies the school uses with them, for example individual and group support work and specific learning programmes.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are good. An overwhelming majority of pupils enjoy their education and are very proud of their school. They are well behaved and polite in school, and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils' attendance rates have improved as a result of significant efforts by the school management. Attendance levels are now broadly in line with national averages. The school provides a learning environment which reflects the pupils' cultural backgrounds; pupils are taught within a clear set of values that is supported by an effective and celebratory behaviour policy. As a consequence, pupils feel safe within the school environment. They make good contributions to the community through the responsibilities they are given which they take very seriously. Those new to school value the 'buddy system' which provides them with guidance while they are settling in. Pupils' views are sought and valued in school. The school council presents pupils' views to the headteacher, who acts upon some of their suggestions, for example improvements to pathways have been made and playground markings introduced. In this way, pupils contribute positively to the life of the school. Most pupils are now making healthy choices in the food that they eat at school. The school council has helped to make improvements in this area such as the introduction of water fountains into the playgrounds. Pupils are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and many of them are active in clubs and teams such as football, dance, netball and gymnastics. Improved literacy and numeracy skills and more effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) is preparing the pupils satisfactorily for their transfer to secondary school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress as a result of effective teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make their lessons interesting. Because of the strong relationships between staff and pupils, behaviour is good. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and try their best to improve. Teachers use assessment well in most lessons. The school makes effective use of its assessment information to check pupils' performance in literacy and numeracy. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress throughout the school. Marking is often good but the process is not consistent throughout the school. Not enough marking is sufficiently focused on improving standards for individual pupils. Where pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics, for example, occasionally some of the more able pupils are required to complete work in which they are already competent. There is an overuse of worksheets in science which limits the opportunities for pupils to write at length. The school has recognised this

as an area for development. The school makes effective use of its support staff to enable pupils to make good progress. The staff are well deployed and provide a good standard of support. Teachers and support staff combine well to ensure most pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum that effectively meets the needs of its pupils. Pupils say activities are interesting and they particularly like history and art. There is good emphasis on developing pupils' creative skills through art and technology weeks and singing, drama and dance projects. This makes learning more relevant and enjoyable for the pupils. Provision for ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection. However, the school recognises that the overuse of worksheets in some subjects limits opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills to support their learning across the curriculum. Personal, social and health education is good and successfully promotes pupils' understanding of citizenship, staying safe and keeping healthy. Pupils benefit from a good range of after school clubs. Visits and visitors to the school effectively enrich the curriculum and enhance the pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good levels of care and support for all its pupils. Child protection procedures and other health, safety and risk assessments are firmly in place. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in this happy and friendly environment. Relationships are good, pupils feel valued and know there is always an adult who will help them with any worries they might have. Pupils who move to the school at times other than the usual admission times are enabled to settle well because of the good guidance offered. Outside agencies and specialist teachers work well with the school in providing good support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are established and ensure that most groups of pupils progress as well as they should. Early intervention by support staff for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and regular support for specific ethnic groups ensure there is no significant underachievement by any pupils. This ensures that these pupils are fully included in all that the school has to offer and work to the best of their capabilities. Academic progress is monitored well. Some pupils, however, are unsure of their learning targets when involved in assessing their own learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and he is well supported by colleagues. The leadership team is effective in evaluating the school's work and has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The focus has been clearly on raising standards in the core subjects, the development of tracking

procedures and the establishment of target groups of potentially underachieving pupils. This has been successful. Subject leaders in English and mathematics are proactive and seek to implement new ideas to raise standards further. This has resulted in pupils' mental arithmetic, and speaking and listening skills improving rapidly. Although pupils' achievement in science is good, staff have correctly identified that the overuse of mundane worksheets limits the opportunities for the pupils to improve their writing skills further. The influx of new staff has resulted in the marking policy not being implemented consistently and good practice in some classes not being disseminated.

There are clear procedures in place to ensure that staff and resources are used efficiently and this is very effective in meeting the needs of pupils. New staff are given good guidance, enabling them to become effective teachers. The school works hard to gain the views of parents and to involve them in the life of the school. Community governors have had some success but the overall involvement of parents is restricted to formal occasions. The school council is valued and pupils' views are taken seriously. Governors support the school well, fulfil their statutory duties effectively and hold it to account for the standards attained.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently.

We particularly like these things

Your enthusiasm for lessons and your good behaviour.

The good relationships you have with one another and with the staff.

The interesting activities that you all enjoy.

You are well looked after and given good support by the adults in school.

These are the things we have suggested those in charge of the school do to make it better

Ensure teachers mark your work consistently and show you how you might improve to get even better.

Work to help you become more aware of the targets you need to achieve.

Give you lots of regular opportunities to practise your writing skills in subjects such as science and not give you as many worksheets.

We are pleased that you enjoy school and wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours faithfully

Paul Edwards Lead Inspector