

# Merrydale Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120024
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	327177
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Horwood

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	295
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Lee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Dickson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Claydon Road Leicester LE5 0PL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 767708
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 762820

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large junior school. About half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups with a wide range of backgrounds. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is much higher than average. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. The school is currently undergoing significant improvements in its facilities through an extensive building project. Those pupils with physical difficulties now have good wheelchair access to appropriate toilets and benefit from a special room for physiotherapy and other treatment.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team has recently been restructured to incorporate the newly appointed business manager which allows more time for others to focus on raising standards. Improvement over the last year has been good, with standards now rising, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve further. Governance is good and governors are regular visitors in school and have a good understanding of how to monitor outcomes and support the school. Parents are generally pleased with all aspects of the school although a very few identified concerns over behaviour. Pupils say they enjoy school because lessons are interesting. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion and pupils develop a caring understanding of the community in which they live. Not all pupils have a complete understanding of what life is like for people who live in other parts of the world where conditions can be so different to what they experience at home.

Pupils join Year 3 with standards well below the national average and make good progress, with the current Year 6 pupils on track to reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are close to the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given effective support so they make the same progress as their classmates. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal skills and their personal development and well-being are good. Systems to monitor and record progress are good and the information is used well by leaders and teachers in the majority of lessons. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Work planned for groups of pupils is well matched to their levels of ability to ensure it is appropriately challenging for all. Target setting is in place and most pupils are aware of their targets. The marking of their work is regular and tells pupils where they have gone wrong. However, the teachers' comments do not always tell the pupils exactly what they need to do to improve and reach their targets. The curriculum is good and engages pupils best when they are involved in practical activities where they can work independently or in small groups. This practical approach is not used in all subjects. Information and communication technology is used throughout the school to support learning. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and enriches pupils' learning and personal development.

Pastoral care is good and safeguarding requirements, including those for internet security, are met. The school's strong links with external agencies contribute to the good support for pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils behave well and they know how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy all aspects of school. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, eat healthily and take part in sport with enthusiasm. The sound basic skills they acquire, as well as their good personal development, ensure they are well prepared for their future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the marking of pupils' work consistently gives guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and reach challenging targets.
- Develop a more practical approach to learning that enables pupils to work more independently and take greater responsibility for their learning.
- Develop a more robust evaluation of how well pupils understand about what it is like to live in areas beyond the local community.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' achievement is good. They enter the school with standards well below the national average and make good progress throughout the school. During recent years pupils made good progress but still only reached standards below the national average. However, improved teaching has now resulted in pupils throughout the school attaining standards much closer to the national average which is a significant improvement on outcomes for recent years. There are no significant differences between the progress made in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress in school because of the additional support they are given. A very few pupils have made less progress than expected but these have been pupils with unusually complex needs or pupils who have not had continuous education within the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

All elements of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and the school operates as a harmonious community. They have good opportunities to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness through the good relationships which exist within this multicultural community as well as through the curriculum content. Not all aspects of citizenship beyond the local community are yet fully understood by all pupils because at present there is little direct contact with pupils in more distant schools. Pupils are able to communicate their feelings in a responsible manner and they show respect for their peers and adults. Through their good behaviour and their respect for others, pupils show they know right from wrong. Within lessons, their good behaviour allows all pupils to concentrate on learning for which they show good attitudes. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance being close to the national average. They know how to keep safe and who to talk to if they have any problems. Pupils say there is some low-level bullying in the school and they know what to do if any occurs. They make healthy choices of food and look forward to sports activities. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. For example, they enjoy being school councillors and 'buddies' to support younger pupils. The school council has worked with the local council to improve facilities at a local park. Pupils take part in activities to raise money for charities. Their good personal development, supported by sound basic skills in academic subjects, prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a good range of teaching activities to pass this on to the pupils. They set clear objectives in lessons so that pupils know what to do but are not always clear about what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the tasks. Activities are well matched to pupils' differing abilities in both mixed-ability classes and those when classes are grouped by ability. Teachers set clear expectations of behaviour and have established good routines for learning which develop continuity between lessons. In many lessons the pace of learning is brisk as a result of dynamic teaching but this is not always sustained throughout the lesson because some activities are too long or rely too much on pre-prepared resources.

The latter restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons for those who need extra help with their work including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes enjoyment of school. It is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the changing needs of the school. This also ensures that the improved resources provided by the current building work are used fully at the earliest opportunity. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well. The grouping of pupils by ability contributes significantly to the progress made in literacy and numeracy. The personal, social and health education provision helps pupils integrate well into the school community and to lead safe and healthy lives. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good access to all areas of the curriculum. Work on topics enables a more practical approach to learning with more opportunities for independent learning but this approach is not yet used across all subjects and year groups. While pupils learn about the various faiths of populations within the locality and the United Kingdom, the school does not fully exploit the diversity of languages within the community or develop pupils' awareness of citizenship at a national level. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits and workshops from external groups including local sports groups. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including specific provision for pupils identified as being gifted and talented.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Caring staff ensure pupils are well looked after throughout the school. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are securely in place and health and safety requirements are met. Risk assessments are carried out although the formal recording of these is not always evident. There are good systems for managing behaviour and monitoring attendance. All staff work well together to ensure all pupils are included in activities. Pupils who need extra help are provided for effectively and make the same progress as others. Good support for pupils who have limited knowledge of English is provided through specialist teachers and support from helpers who speak their home language. There are good partnerships with external agencies to ensure appropriate support is provided for all pupils. Academic guidance is good, but teachers' written comments in books do not always give specific guidance on what to do to improve. Systems to monitor progress are good, especially with the revised tracking system introduced this year. There are strong links with the infant and local secondary schools. Pupils are well supported when they join the school with good systems in place to help them settle quickly and they say they are well supported when moving to the secondary school. Communication with parents is good ensuring staff and parents work together to support the pupils. A small minority of parents indicated that they would like even better communication with the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior leaders have a common vision of improving the school to give pupils the best opportunities. The management structure has been revised to incorporate the

new role of business manager. The leadership structure for 2009/10 has been established with clear responsibilities for raising standards with increased ownership given to middle managers. The areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection have been addressed well although there are still some inconsistencies in marking. Accurate self-evaluation shows that leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for development. These are addressed in the school development plan and the good impact of actions taken is evident. Governors are enthusiastic and work hard to support the school. They are developing skills to effectively monitor the progress made by pupils. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of what is needed to promote community cohesion. They have completed an initial audit of requirements and identified what needs to be done to support the pupils and the local community. They also monitor the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities to give pupils the opportunities to meet and understand other faiths and cultures. National and global links are at the early stage of development. All aspects of community cohesion are satisfactorily addressed but at this stage monitoring of impact is informal.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Merrydale Junior School, Leicester, LE5 0PL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing how your school is helping you learn. We were impressed by how well you behave in lessons and how polite you are to visitors.

Your school is providing you with a good education. These are some of the strengths of your school.

- You all get on very well together and enjoy being at school.
- You are making good progress in lessons because of good teaching.
- The standards you have reached in your work are better than in previous years.
- All the staff look after you well and help you learn how to live a safe and healthy life.
- You behave well and develop good personal skills.
- There is a good range of clubs, activities and visits.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to improve your learning further.

In order to improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following.

- Ensure that when teachers mark your work they always tell you how to improve it and what you need to do to reach your targets.
- Introduce a more practical approach to your lessons so that you can become more independent in your work and take more responsibility for your own learning.
- Help you all understand about citizenship beyond the local community.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Horwood Lead inspector