

Merton Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102639
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	335939
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Sinclair
Headteacher	Kirsty Gooderick
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
School address	Church Lane London SW19 3HQ
Telephone number	020 85427128
Fax number	0208 5421788
Email address	headteacher@mertonpark.merton.sch.uk

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 12 lessons, sampled a variety of sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage and saw seven teachers teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including school development planning, monitoring information and records of pupils' progress. Years 5 and 6 were on a school journey during the inspection so samples of their work were scrutinised. Fifty-five questionnaires completed by parents and carers were scrutinised. Questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils in Years 3 to 6 were also taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of strategies aimed at improving the achievement of girls in mathematics
- the impact of work to ensure that pupils achieve as well in writing as they do in reading
- the way in which children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is evaluated
- the progress of pupils learning English as an additional language.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. While the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, a wide range of minority ethnic groups is also represented. Around 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language, a much higher proportion than is found in most schools. A few of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. A small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion with statements of special educational needs is higher than in most schools. These pupils have specific and often complex difficulties.

There have been several changes in leadership arrangements over the past three years. A new permanent headteacher took up post in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pupils do exceptionally well at this school, in terms of both their academic and personal development. They make good progress overall and, as a result, attainment at the end of Year 6 is high. Pupils develop a good range of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' enthusiasm for learning, good work habits and ability to work collaboratively and independently mean that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are enthusiastic participants in a wide range of sports-related activities. Several parents made positive comments about the way that their children are supported, praising the 'happy and inclusive atmosphere'.

During her year in post, the headteacher has gained an exceptionally clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and those aspects of its work that could be improved. She sets a clear direction and has implemented an agenda for change, which is fully supported by governors and staff. A rigorous programme of monitoring means that leaders have an excellent understanding of the effectiveness of provision in the areas that they oversee. Action taken to bring about improvement is effective. This is evident, for example, in the work undertaken to improve girls' progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The most recent assessments demonstrate that girls are doing at least as well as boys in this subject. The school demonstrates outstanding capacity to maintain the current rate of improvement.

Links with other schools, visits and visitors make an excellent contribution to pupils' experiences. The expertise of a variety of agencies is used effectively to support individual pupils where appropriate. Those pupils with complex needs benefit from well-targeted individual support and are integrated fully into mainstream activities. Other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have clear targets on their individual education plans. However, these are not always used to determine the type of work that they are given in lessons. Pupils speaking English as an additional language achieve at least as well as their peers. Their attainment at the end of Year 6 is much higher than that of similar groups nationally.

Lessons are purposeful and characterised by good relationships and a lively atmosphere. Occasionally time is not used as effectively as it might be and introductory sessions last too long. Those pupils who are quick to grasp new ideas could sometimes start working on their individual tasks at an earlier stage. The curriculum is exceptionally rich in the provision made for arts and music, particularly through an impressive programme of special events. Participation in these and pupils' willingness to take on responsibilities and suggest improvements through the class and school councils mean that their

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

contribution to the community is outstanding. The curriculum successfully promotes high attainment. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their key skills in a range of subjects or to engage in specific projects where they can make decisions about how to organise their learning independently.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the work given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities takes full account of their targets by
 - linking lesson plans with the targets identified in individual education plans
- Ensure that time is used effectively in all lessons by:
 - making sure that introductory sessions are conducted at a good pace
 - creating opportunities for those who are quick to learn to start their work as soon as they are clear about what they need to do.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum by
 - planning specifically for these skills to be used for a variety of purposes in different subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils are keen to learn and often show excellent application to their tasks. This was evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson where pupils worked extremely well in pairs to estimate and check the lengths of a variety of lines. They demonstrated good skills in reasoning as they animatedly discussed findings related to the key question 'Does practice improve estimation skills?' Pupils working on a design and technology project in Year 3 made rapid progress in applying their knowledge of shape to establish how to create stability in a variety of structures.

All groups of pupils do well as they move through the school. While attainment in English is consistently high, pupils' skills in writing are not as strong as in reading. This is a focus for improvement, and initiatives to improve pupils' skills in this area are having a positive impact, with the gap between reading and writing closing. However, the school has rightly identified that there is more to do, particularly to boost boys' skills in this area in Years 2 and 3.

Pupils are keen fund-raisers for a variety of causes. They show good appreciation for the wider world, initiating, for example, a variety of ideas to improve the environment. They are very positive about opportunities to learn about and celebrate the diversity of cultures represented in the school community. Behaviour for the vast majority of pupils is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils themselves acknowledge that there are a few who sometimes lack consideration for others, particularly in the playground, but they are confident that they can turn to staff if they have concerns.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well organised with clear objectives. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, including interactive whiteboards, to engage pupils' interest and to demonstrate key learning points. Teachers' enthusiasm for teaching is almost tangible and they use a variety of imaginative approaches to support pupils' learning. At times, however, the impact of potentially highly effective teaching is diminished because pupils are expected to sit for too long through introductory sessions and their usually good concentration begins to wane. Occasionally, more able pupils mark time in these sessions as they revisit ideas that they have already grasped.

The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of the vast majority of pupils. Just occasionally, work could be tailored more carefully to support the targets identified for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has identified scope to make the curriculum more dynamic and relevant to pupils' interests and a major review is planned for the next academic year. Enrichment opportunities, through clubs, visits and visitors, are excellent. Pupils particularly enjoy special events such as 'art week' and identify work in subjects such as design and technology as among their favourite aspects of learning.

Staff know their pupils very well and a high degree of attention is paid to their welfare and well-being. This results in some outstanding outcomes in terms of their personal development. Pupils with complex difficulties are fully accepted by their peers and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

included in all activities wherever possible. Other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often benefit from paired work in lessons or support from a teaching assistant, but the work that they are given is not always clearly linked to the targets on their individual education plans.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A particular strength of the leadership is the comprehensive system for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work, and planning specific action to further improve provision where possible. Rigorous monitoring of teaching means that leaders have a clear view of areas for development. Improvements are supported through a good programme for professional development and the sharing of expertise within the school's staff and beyond where appropriate. While the school has a strong track record in terms of attainment at the end of Year 6, there is no complacency and leaders are continually striving to raise attainment still further. Targets set are ambitious and underpin pupils' good progress. Governors are fully involved in planning for school development. They take their responsibilities seriously and are implementing changes to their committee structure to make systems for reviewing and updating policies more efficient. Safeguarding has a high profile for staff and governors, and all relevant procedures are in place.

The school is a harmonious community, pupils of all backgrounds are welcomed and there is no discrimination. One explained that there are pupils in the school with links to many different countries and from a variety of faiths, and commented, ' It's great, we all get on.' Pupils' awareness of global issues and cultural diversity is raised through specific topics discussed in personal, social and health education and subjects such as religious education. The school has identified that the next step in promoting community cohesion is to extend the variety of visits and visitors that are drawn from the immediate community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit from a secure and stimulating environment that provides them with good opportunities to learn through a variety of exciting experiences. The majority start school with a good base of skills. These are effectively built on during their time in the Nursery and in the Reception Year, so that, by the end of this time, attainment is at least above average and high in some areas of learning. Children do particularly well in their personal and social development and in developing a range of skills in language. Most are able to express their ideas clearly and with confidence. This creates a very good foundation for later learning and is a contributory factor to the good progress pupils make as they move through the school.

A high level of attention is paid to children's welfare and their progress is carefully tracked. While there is detailed information on individual children, this is not summarised to give a view of the progress of each cohort. As a result, it is difficult for staff to evaluate the overall gains made in order to check whether children do equally well in all areas. Staff work well as a team to ensure a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Good links are made across different areas of learning. During the inspection, for example, children were discussing the characteristics of different animals and enjoying role play in the 'jungle' as part of the build-up to a visit to London Zoo.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the inspection questionnaire was relatively low. Of those parents and carers that did respond, all expressed confidence that their children enjoy school and are kept safe and helped to lead a healthy lifestyle. A very large majority are happy with the quality of teaching, the way the school is led and managed, and their children's overall experience. A very small minority expressed concerns about their children's progress and the way that their needs are met and how they are helped to support learning. The inspection found that progress is good overall and that individual needs are generally well met, but that there is scope for tightening systems for ensuring that this is done effectively in all lessons. The school is working on ways to improve the information that parents and carers are given about their children's learning and the website is being redesigned with this in mind.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Merton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 253 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	60	22	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	49	28	51	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	31	32	58	2	4	4	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	33	28	51	4	7	5	9
The teaching is good at this school	25	45	26	47	2	4	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	38	26	47	3	5	5	9
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	58	23	42	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	35	27	49	3	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	33	27	49	4	7	5	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	35	27	49	3	5	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	27	28	51	0	0	4	7
The school is led and managed effectively	27	49	22	40	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	62	17	31	4	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Merton Park Primary School, Merton, SW19

You may remember that a team of inspectors visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what goes on around the school. We were sorry not to see Years 5 and 6 classes in action, but we learned a lot from looking at your work, information on your progress and the displays in your classrooms. I hope you had a wonderful time in Cornwall! Merton Park is a good school. It has some excellent aspects, to which you make a significant contribution.

You are keen to learn and work hard in lessons. You make good progress and attain high standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. You are exceptionally well prepared for the move to secondary education and for later life. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. We were impressed with the range of sporting activities in which you take part and with all the activities that take place at playtime. You have put forward good ideas for making the playground a happy place for everybody. This is just one of the many ways in which you make an excellent contribution to the running of the school.

Your teachers have lots of exciting ideas to make learning interesting. You told us how much you enjoy special events and all the clubs in which you take part. Those responsible for running the school know exactly what to do to build on its many strengths. They fully agree with the three things we are suggesting that need to be done.

- Make sure that the introductions to lessons do not last too long so that you can get on quickly with your tasks.
- Give you more opportunities to use your skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in a variety of subjects and to use your initiative in planning how you are going to tackle some aspects of your learning.
- Make sure that the work given to pupils getting extra help with their learning is linked with their individual targets.

Thank you again for all your help.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Billington

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.