School report

Inspection of Merdon Junior School

Merdon Avenue, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 1EJ

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is emerging from a period of leadership turbulence. Pupils feel safe because of the work the new leaders have done to stabilise the school. Pupils are thriving in a culture of raised expectations. They know the school's three golden rules and they apply these consistently in lessons and at playtimes. Their commitment to be safe, kind and respectful means that they are happy at school and love their learning.

Pupils achieve well. The school's expectations for learning across the curriculum have been refocused. Staff aspire for all pupils to do their best. Pupils rise to meet this ambition and are proud of their learning. Pupils show maturity and interest when learning new subject content. They think deeply and make connections across subjects. For example, when studying the Shackleton Antarctic expeditions, pupils confidently made links between learning in geography and history. This helps pupils to become reflective and resilient learners.

Pupils relish the opportunities to learn outdoors. The school's extensive grounds and woods are special places for pupils. They delight in exploring and interacting with nature and each other. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have a broad selection of opportunities to develop their talents and interests.

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

The school has identified what pupils will learn and in what order. Pupils learn an interesting and broad curriculum. The school has identified clear systems across the curriculum for supporting pupils to remember key content. Staff are confident and effective at checking pupils' knowledge in lessons over time.

Staff implement the curriculum expertly to help pupils deepen knowledge over time. Teachers use a consistent approach to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, they model clearly what they want pupils to learn and provide well-chosen activities. The school swiftly identifies pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs appropriately. Pupils can recall learning over time confidently, which means they are well prepared for the next stage of education. Pupils achieve positively across the curriculum. Those who are disadvantaged achieve equally well.

Staff routinely check the quality of pupils' reading, which ensures that they have a solid understanding of pupils' fluency and accuracy. The school ensures that pupils at an early stage of reading receive teaching to improve their phonics knowledge. As a result, these pupils learn to read accurately and catch up well. Staff foster and model a passion for books so that pupils develop a love of reading. Adult-led reading sessions broaden pupils' exposure to different book types from various cultures.

Pupils behave well and are keen to attend school. The school teaches pupils consistently well about how to behave. Pupils respond enthusiastically, and they swiftly learn the routines and rules. This means that pupils usually focus well on learning. Occasionally,

they lose concentration, but staff are typically swift to refocus pupils. The school works in close partnership with parents to encourage good attendance.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are supported to engage in extra-curricular clubs and experiences. Pupils learn to keep safe online and in the community. They show a detailed understanding of healthy relationships. As a result, pupils at the school are well rounded and mature in their reflections and work with others. Teaching of personal, social and health education has been variable over time. This means aspects, such as pupils' recall of some fundamental British values, are more mixed.

Leaders care deeply about the school and its community. The staff have a strong commitment to the school's values, ethos and ambition. Governors are well trained and active in their roles. They provide a suitable level of challenge and support to help move the school forward. Staff feel well supported, and the school benefits from a positive relationship with its community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's work to implement the personal development programme is not fully embedded. As a result, pupils are sometimes unclear about important content. The school should ensure that the personal development programme is implemented securely so that all pupils gain a deep understanding that prepares them fully for life in modern Britain.

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	115873
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10341357
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alex Guthrie
Headteacher	Rosemary Diskin (interim headteacher)
Website	www.merdon.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision and three registered alternative provisions.
- The headteacher has changed since the previous inspection.
- The members of the current senior leadership team are all interim and appointed in September 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work from a range of other subjects.
- 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 inspection team observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The team spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They considered the views expressed in Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Toby Martlew, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Judith O'Hare	Ofsted Inspector

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