

Inspection of Merriott Primary School

Church Street, Merriott, Somerset TA16 5PT

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Merriott Primary School. They describe the school as a kind and welcoming place. Pupils talk confidently about how the school values help them to try their best and be accepting of others.

The executive headteacher and her staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. This starts in the early years, where children listen to instructions and behave well. Pupils are polite and courteous. They know what staff expect of them, both in and outside the classroom. Disruption is rare. If it does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils feel safe. Parents agree. Pupils value the positive relationships they have with staff. They say that adults support them if they need to share any worries. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. If it were to occur, they are confident that adults would deal with it quickly.

Pupils enjoy the range of clubs on offer to them, such as art, netball and cooking. They value their roles as members of the school council, playground monitors, and buddies. Pupils say that these roles make them feel proud and help them to set a positive example to others.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. They have responded well to address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Leaders have designed a curriculum that carefully considers what pupils need to know and when they need to know it.

Reading is a priority in the school. Staff and pupils share a love of reading. Pupils read a wide range of texts with increasing fluency and accuracy. They say that reading helps them to 'imagine new places'. Pupils enjoy listening to adults read stories. They talk enthusiastically about how teachers develop their understanding of new words. Children begin phonics as soon as they start school. They learn new sounds well. All staff benefit from the training they receive to teach phonics and reading effectively. Books that pupils read match the sounds they learn, which helps them to gain confidence. If pupils fall behind, they have the support they need to help them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have put in place a well-structured mathematics curriculum. This starts in the early years. Staff develop children's mathematical vocabulary from an early age. As a result, children are able to describe patterns in number confidently. Teachers ensure that pupils practice important mathematical skills. Pupils become confident and build their understanding well because of this. For example, older pupils use their knowledge of fractions and decimals to solve more complex problems involving percentages.

Pupils learn well in most of the wider curriculum subjects. In art, for example, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Teachers check on what pupils have remembered before moving on to new learning. Pupils respond well to this. They talk confidently about different artists and the techniques they use, such as sketching. However, in some areas of the curriculum, this is not the case. Assessment information is not yet used well enough to check on what pupils know and can do to plan future learning. This slows the progress that some pupils make.

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils with SEND, can achieve. They work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help they need. Pupils' plans are precise and regularly reviewed. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers.

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their learning. This starts in the early years. Children are eager to learn, take turns and play well together. The environment in classrooms and around the school is calm and purposeful.

Leaders support pupils' personal development well. Pupils understand the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They develop their sense of community by singing at a local care home. Pupils talk confidently about fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance. They understand why it is important to treat everyone equally.

Governors are ambitious for the school. They know the school well. Governors ask challenging questions to help the school improve. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the way in which leaders support them and consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a clear safeguarding culture across the school. They provide staff with up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff use this well to spot the signs that indicate a child might be at risk and act quickly. Leaders work well with a range of professionals. This ensures that families and pupils at risk receive the early support they need. Appropriate checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the real and online world. They understand the importance of not meeting strangers online or sharing personal information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is still being developed in some subjects. It is not yet used well enough to check that pupils have remembered the knowledge they have been taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not build their knowledge well over time. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment effectively across all subjects and use this information to inform future learning.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	123654
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10227252
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Oliver Spurway
Executive Headteacher	Lois Bowery
Website	www.merriottfirstschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Merriott and Haselbury First Schools Federation.
- Currently, the school has an intake of pupils from Reception Year to Year 5. From September 2023, the age range will include pupils in Year 6.
- The executive headteacher has been in post since January 2023.
- There have been some changes to the governing body since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils and representatives from the governing body. The lead inspector also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The lead inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ben Jordan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matt Fletcher

Ofsted Inspector

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