

# Inspection of The Merton Primary School

Cherry Drive, Syston, Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 2PT

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Patrick Betts. This school is part of Bradgate Education Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gareth Nelmes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Cotton.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at The Merton School are encouraged to be 'the best that they can be'. They are given the confidence to develop their talents and interests. Pupils access a range of opportunities, such as taking part in the school's basketball team or being part of science club. Pupils are proud to represent their school in sporting competitions and other events.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils live up to these expectations. Most pupils achieve well. The school continues to work on curriculum improvements. Staff are developing their understanding of how best to teach this curriculum so that pupils know and remember more.

Pupils feel safe in school. Bullying is rare. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Behaviour around the school is calm and respectful. Many parents and carers commented on the fact that their children enjoy attending the school and it is a happy environment for them.

Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils. They are role models who demonstrate to their peers how to be successful. For example, the school's reading ambassadors enjoy reading stories to children in the early years. They talk with enthusiasm about how they encourage younger children to love reading.

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

The school's curriculum sets out what pupils should learn and when, from the early years to Year 6. Teachers help pupils to think in increasingly sophisticated ways about the subjects they study. For example, in mathematics, pupils can talk about the strategies they use to solve problems. Across the curriculum, pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary, which helps them to explain their thinking well. Pupils can share their knowledge of tectonic plates in geography and of different types of balance in relation to physical education. This ensures that across the majority of subjects, pupils build their knowledge over time. However, sometimes, the strategies that teachers employ to help pupils recall their prior learning are not as effective as they could be. On these occasions, pupils struggle to recall their learning connected to some subjects.

The school checks pupils' learning in most subjects to identify gaps and address misconceptions. This helps pupils to develop secure knowledge in these subjects. In a minority of subjects, the checks on pupils' previous learning do not precisely identify gaps in their knowledge. Pupils do not consistently receive guidance about how to deepen their thinking and address areas of learning in which they lack confidence.

Reading is prioritised. The school has thought about the different ways in which children learn to read from the moment that they start school. Pupils access a range of different texts. Pupils who need extra help with their reading receive effective support and keep-up with their peers. There has been careful consideration given to how the school develops pupils' enjoyment of reading. This includes ensuring that children have regular

opportunities to read and that they are involved in reading events. These include author visits and opportunities to write book reviews.

The school uses clear strategies to identify pupils that may require additional help and support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from adaptations made to some aspects of the curriculum. Most teachers know the pupils in their classrooms well. However, at times, the targets that are set for pupils with SEND do not identify clearly enough what pupils should be trying to achieve. This means that some pupils with SEND do not make as much progress as they could.

Pupils benefit from an effective personal development programme. They are able to talk about their learning connected to online safety and staying physically healthy. Pupils are able to identify the fundamental British values and how they relate to aspects of their life. They do not always recall their learning connected to different religions and cultures. Pupils also access a range of different clubs and trips. They talk with great enthusiasm about the trips that they have been on, including residential visits for both younger and older pupils.

Classroom environments are calm and orderly. Pupils, including those in the early years, enjoy coming to school. They make friends quickly. Children benefit from positive relationships with staff.

The trust works with the school to ensure that staff have the confidence to lead their areas of responsibility well. However, in a small number of areas of the school's provision, leaders have not ensured that they have the information that they need to identify what is going well and what needs to improve. Some leaders new to their roles have not had the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of some areas of the school's work. Trust leaders work with the school to support staff in developing their confidence connected to the different areas that they lead. Staff appreciate the different professional development opportunities that they receive and the opportunities that they have to work with other teachers across the trust.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some of the targets designed for pupils with SEND do not define clearly what pupils should achieve. As a result, there are times when it is difficult for staff to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge to set targets for pupils with SEND and that it provides teachers with the information they need to adapt their teaching to help pupils with SEND achieve well.

- Sometimes, the school does not have detailed oversight to identify what is going well and what needs to improve. This means the impact of actions taken to improve are not fully understood, which slows the pace of progress. The school needs to ensure that there are processes in place to evaluate the effectiveness of its provision and make improvements when necessary.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138818
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347546
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	416
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Stephen Cotton
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Gareth Nelmes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patrick Betts
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.merton.bepschools.org">www.merton.bepschools.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 and 15 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up his post in August 2024.
- The school is part of the Bradgate Education Partnership.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar member of staff.
- Inspectors also reviewed the curriculum in early years and other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders, such as subject leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, chair of trustees and a member of the local academy board.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at social times and around the school. The lead inspector met with school leaders to discuss how they respond to behaviour incidents and the action they take to ensure that all pupils attend well.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

## Inspection team

Roxanne Fearn-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tim Leah	Ofsted Inspector
Priya Saujani	Ofsted Inspector

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