

# Merriott First School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123654
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	359481
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Caroline McKee

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Sale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zoe Coghlan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Merriott TA16 5PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01460 72547
<b>Fax number</b>	01460 72547
<b>Email address</b>	office@merriott.somerset.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–9
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	359481

---

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 assesses 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 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto: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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons or parts of lessons were seen and five teachers were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and documents, the development plan, pupils' assessment records and monitoring of teaching records. They also inspected the additional breakfast and after-school clubs. Inspectors evaluated the responses from 49 parental questionnaires and responses from pupils and staff.

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

- How is the leadership of the school ensuring that the recent improvements in pupils' achievements are being sustained from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Year 4?
- How has the governing body contributed to this improvement?
- How effectively is the school working to improve the teaching from good to outstanding, as stated in its self-evaluation?

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average first school. The acting headteacher has been in post for two terms. The school serves its immediate village as well as some neighbouring villages. All of the pupils are White British and a below number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and there are no pupils for whom English is a second language.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils' academic attainments at the end of Year 2 are now above average, having improved steadily over the last three years, and are continuing to improve this year. The school provides a caring, supportive yet stimulating environment where pupils are seen as individuals and encouraged to be independent and enquiring young people who can take the initiative to improve the work of the school. The acting headteacher has successfully maintained and improved the work of the school, ably supported by the governing body. The staff, parents and carers recognise and appreciate the improvements being made. The acting headteacher has a good grasp of the quality of teaching in each class and recognises what inspectors found. The best practice in raising the level of pupils' independence has yet to be implemented consistently across the school so that pupils can decide for themselves when and what to do next to improve. The strengths in leadership and management, and effective ongoing improvements, particularly in standards of writing, demonstrate good, sustainable capacity to move the school on even further.

Pupils benefit from very effective pastoral care that ensures that their personal needs are met. This is particularly the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Every effort is made to ensure their individual needs are met and to enable them to make good progress towards their own targets. The outstanding work of the teaching assistants makes a major contribution to all pupils' progress. They and the class teachers work effectively and in close partnership. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school, though a few feel that communication about what is happening is not always well organised and that they would like more regular formal feedback on how well their child is doing. While the school has done much to improve this, it recognises that more still needs to be done, especially in keeping parents and carers up-to-date about improvements.

Children in the Reception class get an outstanding start to their education. They enter the school with skills that are broadly average but below those expected for their age for writing. The broad range of activities provided in an exceptionally stimulating environment and the high quality of teaching and support mean that they make outstanding progress. Pupils then make good progress from Year 1 until the time they leave in Year 4. In 2010, pupils reached standards that were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. The school recognised that standards in writing were below those of reading and mathematics and, through secure planning and intervention, has managed to narrow the gap, particularly for boys, with pupils achieving well. One pupil said, 'We love writing because we can write about the things that excite us.'

**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 do well because of good, engaging teaching, a good curriculum that finds ways of enriching their lives and broadening their horizons, and much that is outstanding in care, support and guidance making a strong contribution to their personal development. They attend exceptionally regularly. The school capitalises on pupils' positive, enthusiastic attitudes to help them to understand their progress better, reflect on their achievements, and reflect upon how they feel and think about important things in their lives.

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

- Use the best teaching practice in school to raise the awareness and understanding of all teachers of how pupils can contribute to their own learning and help to choose when and what to do to reach their own targets.
- Improve communication with parents and carers to make sure that:
  - they are fully aware of what the school is doing and why
  - they have more regular updates of how well their child is doing.

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

**2**

Overall, pupils achieve well in lessons because they are excited about learning and want to find out more for themselves. They make outstanding progress when the teacher has high expectations of what they can achieve and has provided a range of resources for pupils to solve problems, research, experiment with practical activities and then refine their skills. This was particularly so in a Year 4 writing lesson where pupils wrote high quality poems showing vivid imagination with an above average understanding of poetry techniques. They were able to use their definition poster to ensure that they knew what each technique meant and even adapted it when they found a better definition that helped them more. Pupils' books and work in lessons show that standards reached in Year 2 have been sustained and built upon in Years 3 and 4. Writing, particularly by boys, has improved so that they are now making the same progress as the girls and to the levels attained in reading and mathematics. This is due to effective planning from the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards.

Pupils enjoy school immensely, growing in confidence and developing very positive attitudes to learning. Happy relationships support the hardworking atmosphere. Pupils are very aware of possible dangers outside school and are clear about how to stay safe. They develop a good understanding of their responsibilities to the school and the wider community, and eagerly take advantage of the many opportunities that contribute to both. This, together with good and improving standards in the acquisition of basic skills, means that they are well prepared for the next stages of their lives. Their attendance has improved to well above average because of the school's high level of support and encouragement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and assemblies are celebratory and thoughtful occasions in which pupils are encouraged to think about others and their own place in the world.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

In most cases, the pace of learning is brisk and a good variety of activity engages and stimulates pupils so that they develop a curiosity and a love of learning. Assessment is good, and feedback in lessons often stimulates a greater understanding and desire to find out more. The marking policy is well applied so that pupils know what their targets are and how to work towards them. The outstanding support from the teaching assistants means that pupils are challenged to think more about what they are doing and able to access all aspects of the lesson. They are very skilled in meeting the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and, as a result, they make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress towards their targets. The school has improved its system for tracking pupils' progress and teachers use this data well to plan tasks to match the varying levels of ability within the class. However, in a few lessons, teachers are not always keen to let the pupils learn on their own soon enough and they sometimes have to wait too long to get onto the task that meets their own level of ability. This slows their learning at this point of the lesson.

There are good links between subjects so that pupils can link ideas and skills. They use information and communication technology well in their work in a variety of ways, and different techniques in art allow pupils to express and illustrate ideas and concepts such as fireworks and the wonder of the galaxy. Pupils talk enthusiastically about extra-curricular sport, art and drama, and value all the different opportunities that are on offer such as the

**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

visits that add richness to their experiences. The school provides good care for pupils, with much that is outstanding. For example, efforts to improve pupils' attendance has meant that it is now well above other schools nationally. Members of the school council were quick to say that they felt well cared for and that bullying is extremely rare. Inspectors found this to be the case with any such incidents promptly and fully addressed. This is strong evidence of outstanding safeguarding arrangements.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher's clear determination and drive to improve the school have quickly been established because they are shared by all involved in decision making, including staff, governors and pupils. All are committed to sustaining the improvements already underway and looking for ways to move to outstanding practice. The school predicts pupils' attainment accurately and meets its targets. There is a strong and effective focus on improving practice and provision at every opportunity. Relationships with homes and families are dealt with sensitively and members of staff feel valued and proud of their achievements. The school's systems for ensuring the safeguarding of the pupils are outstanding. Aspects of safeguarding such as personnel checks and carrying out risk assessments are very secure, often with the school going well beyond what is required. Staff are very ably supported by the governing body.

The governing body has made a good contribution to school improvement since the previous inspection through an increasingly clear understanding of its performance and close monitoring of each action point for improvement. Partnerships with organisations such as the church and visits to places of worship belonging to other faiths add depth to the pupils' multicultural understanding. Visits to the school by drama groups and local artists enrich pupils' experiences. Community cohesion is promoted at all levels and the school has identified ways to improve further, particularly in its links with schools in England of a different diversity. The school very successfully ensures that all pupils are treated equally in ways which support their personal as well as academic development. There is no evidence of discrimination of any kind and this makes a very strong contribution to pupils feeling safe at school. The school manages its finances very well and provides good value for money.

**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

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are broadly average but below expectations in writing. Throughout the year, they make outstanding progress in all areas of learning, including narrowing the gap to reach average standards in writing. Relationships are particularly good between adults and children, and the children start their day in a purposeful way with parents and carers working alongside them if they wish. Children demonstrate through their behaviour that they know how to keep themselves safe. They help each other to learn. A good example of this was one girl in the den area patiently explaining to another how to paint a house and make the roof look right. The classroom is an exciting environment with a myriad of activity areas that the children move freely between, but only after they have finished what they are doing either with an adult or on their own. They know where the equipment is kept, and take out what they need if not provided and put it away carefully.

There is an exceptionally good balance between adult-guided learning and play. Children love the challenges of learning both indoors and out. Although they were not able to go outside because of extreme cold and snow, they spoke enthusiastically about what they did when it was better weather. Assessment is used very well to ensure that children make progress at their own level and good communication ensures effective transition into Reception from outside nurseries and then on into Year 1. Adults use questioning skilfully to ensure children have understood and to encourage them to think further. As a result, they are independent young learners who work well on their own and in small groups with awareness of each other's feelings. The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstandingly well led, leaving no stone unturned to provide the very best for the children.

**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers were supportive and appreciative of the school, reflecting that they feel that their child is safe and enjoys school. There were a very few individual concerns about how much progress their child was making and how they could support their learning. The school has identified where this might be the case and has plans to improve the quality and regularity of information that the parents and carers receive, and to address any areas of concern. There were extremely positive comments about the warm and caring ethos of the school and recent improvements. The vast majority felt that their child was making good progress. These views match inspection team findings.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Merriott First 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 116 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	73	13	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	80	10	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	47	25	51	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	51	18	37	6	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	63	16	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	45	21	43	5	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	69	15	31	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)	27	55	18	37	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	47	22	45	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	53	16	33	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	43	24	49	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	59	17	35	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	61	17	35	1	2	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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



3 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Merriott First School, Marriott TA16 5PT**

Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome at your good school. You reach above average standards and make good progress overall, and the children in Reception make outstanding progress. You behave well, both in lessons and in the playground, and you look for ways to support each other, especially if you think that others are being treated unfairly. You have a good understanding of how to live healthily and you try hard to do the best that you can when you are learning. You know how to stay safe, and you have really good ideas on how to improve the school and how you can budget for that. You have improved your attendance records so that you are now better than most other schools.

You make the most of the opportunities that your curriculum provides for you and take the chance to try different sports, drama, music and topic work. Your work on display around the school is vibrant and exciting, showing off your achievements so well. We were impressed with the way your acting headteacher and her staff care for you, make you feel good about how well you are doing, and how the staff are encouraged to improve what they do and try new ideas that help you to learn even better.

Staff and governors agree with us that there are two main things that will help the school to become even better.

- Teachers need to let you choose more often when you can move to the task that is set for your ability rather than waiting for others to complete easier tasks.
- The school is to improve ways of letting parents and carers know more about how you are doing and what arrangements are being made in different classes.

We hope that all of you will take the opportunities to choose when you can learn more for yourselves. We wish you the very best for your exciting future lives!

Yours sincerely

Caroline McKee

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**