

# Merstham Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124989
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315110
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Marshall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	250
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	76
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Rod Simpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Spencer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	London Road South Merstham Redhill RH1 3AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01737 643978
<b>Fax number</b>	01737 642455

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the quality of leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the pupils' achievement, the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, and the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school records, discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership teams, governors and parents, and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

## Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils in this average size school live in the village of Merstham. The school, reflecting the village, has a large majority of pupils of White British heritage. The nursery, with its larger admission number, draws children from a wider geographical area than the school. The school has relatively little pupil mobility and is consistently oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but this fluctuates significantly from year to year. Many of these pupils have moderate learning or speech and language difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Merstham is a good school. The way in which the headteacher has transformed the school over the last four years and is ensuring that it continues to improve, is impressive. There is a strong ethos of seeking out, developing and celebrating the individual achievements of all pupils. Standards are above average and pupils make good progress academically and outstanding progress in their personal development. The school has a friendly and extremely supportive atmosphere where, as one parent put it, 'No-one goes unnoticed.' The high level of care, guidance and support for pupils is a significant strength.

A whole school focus on developing provision from the Early Years upwards has paid off. Children make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage and, when they move into Year 1, their attainment is just above average in all areas of learning. Between 2001 and 2004, there was a downward trend in attainment in the main school. Thanks to the zeal and expertise of the headteacher, and the way in which all staff work together, the school reversed this trend in 2005. In 2007, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels and the higher Level 3 in the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Unvalidated results for 2008 show that these improvements have been maintained in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, standards were below average in 2006. However, the results in 2007 showed pupils attaining above average standards in mathematics, and well above average in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from well focused support and make excellent progress; most attain average standards. The unvalidated results for 2008 show that standards dipped slightly, but this was expected and was due to the exceptionally large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Year 6. The results also show that pupils have continued to make good progress and exceeded the challenging targets set by the school.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. Pastoral care is at the heart of the excellent partnership with parents. One parent commented, 'All I ever seem to see is a very friendly, happy school.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and pupils become confident, articulate young people, exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education. They are extremely knowledgeable about how to stay healthy, and are enthusiastic participants in the many opportunities for physical activities. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all their time in school and really look forward to being with 'all our friends.' They feel safe in school and attendance is good. Pupils of all ages are keen to make their own personal contribution through raising money for charities and, particularly as they get older, taking on a wide range of responsibilities. To be selected as a monitor is seen as an honour, and as one girl stressed, 'Is the highlight of my time in the school - so far.' They enthusiastically take up the opportunities provided by special events and theme days to develop good team-working skills and independence, and these skills are fully evident in everyday school life.

Teaching is good overall. Some lessons are outstanding. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships and a good sprinkling of humour. In the best lessons, teachers use targets well to describe what successful learning might look like. The pupils commented on how this helps them know what to do to improve their work.

Teachers make good use of questions to extend the learning of different groups and, in most lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and try out different strategies. The school uses a good range of external expertise to develop pupils' skills in many

areas and there are many additional activities, which enliven the curriculum. The day-to-day planning is not as interesting or motivating as it might be, and the school is rightly planning to review and improve this aspect of the curriculum further. The teachers are working on ways of linking all areas of learning to ensure their lessons are as exciting and relevant as they can make them. The school has spacious and mature grounds, which are set out very well. The revised curriculum planning is also aiming to build on the use of these so that pupils can benefit more fully from this carefully designed resource.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is very ably supported by all staff and, having recently resolved some significant staffing difficulties, teamwork is excellent. The senior leadership team is enthusiastic and its members work very well together with a developing range of complementary skills. One of the most significant strengths of the headteacher and deputy is how they enable the outstanding professional development of all staff. It is noteworthy that several of the teachers now making exceptionally effective contributions as senior leaders in the school, began as newly qualified teachers there and have developed in their roles.

Senior leaders now use assessment and monitoring information extremely well to identify strengths and weaknesses. One of the most significant outcomes of their careful analysis of the school's needs has been the specific focus by the headteacher and senior team on the learning environment of the school. The whole school is now a tidy, well-ordered and stimulating place to be. Significant in this development of the school environment is the role of the bursar, now on the management team, who enables the well-organised self-evaluation to be carried out as cost-effectively as possible. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to involve parents in the running of the school. It is a testament to their success that the Friends of the School Association has flourished in recent years. The parents thoroughly enjoy making an increasing impact in supporting the school. Governors are very well informed, know the school exceptionally well, provide excellent support and challenge. This, and the consistent improvements in standards and achievement, demonstrates that the school has an excellent capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The provision for the EYFS is outstanding. Children enter the Nursery with levels of basic skills in line with those typical for their age. Children exceed the age-related expectations in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception class having made good and, most often, outstanding progress. Children's progress is checked regularly, so that when they are ready for the next step there are stimulating activities available to them both indoors and outside. There is a good balance between directed tasks and those from which children can choose. This helps them to enjoy their learning and, as a result, children behave well and their confidence increases. Teaching is outstanding because staff work particularly well together to provide enjoyable learning activities for the children. They offer very good levels of support and encourage children to become independent. The strong focus on teaching phonics makes a significant contribution to children's good progress in early literacy skills. Children are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT), for example, they have no hesitation in using the interactive whiteboard to register themselves.

The children in the EYFS are very safe and very well cared for by the staff who provide a wealth of opportunities that engage the children in all the areas of learning. The inside and outside areas are well designed and both are used well as a learning resource. EYFS is very well led and

managed with a clear focus on continuous improvement, based on a very secure understanding of the needs of young children. This ensures that the excellent facilities and resources are used to maximum effect to support children's learning and to provide a safe and stimulating environment for learning and play.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Refine the curriculum to make sure that teachers' planning makes pupils' work as exciting and relevant as it can be.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

07 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Merstham Primary School, Redhill, RH1 3AZ

On behalf of your inspectors, I would like to thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to your school. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with many strengths and we agree with what you told us - it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are good or better.

- You all make good progress in your learning.
- You behave extremely well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- The school council has very good ideas on how to make things better.
- You have an outstanding understanding of how to live healthily.
- You find lessons fun and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits and in clubs.
- The school looks after you extremely well and shows you how to improve your work.
- The headteacher manages the school exceptionally well.

We have asked the staff to look at how they plan, carry out, and link the subjects in your lessons to make sure they are as interesting as they can be. In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make very good progress in your learning.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

David Marshall

Lead Inspector