

# Merryhills Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101999
<b>Local Authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	323566
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	426
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Daren Metcalfe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kim Stephenson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 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>	Bincote Road Enfield EN2 7RE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8363 1403
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8367 2297

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large school has two Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Just over half the pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. A quarter of pupils speak an additional language to English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties. The school has the Activemark and Artsmark awards. It has the Healthy Schools award and is an Investor in People. It also has the International Schools Award for links with schools in other countries. The governing body runs a breakfast club and an after-school club. At the time of the inspection, there were no children in the EYFS on the roll of either facility.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Merryhills provides a satisfactory level of education. It has an outstanding EYFS and is a happy school where pupils feel valued. Its ethos of friendliness and warmth has continued successfully under its new headteacher. Her leadership has had a positive impact on the curriculum, which is now increasingly creative and effectively meets the learning needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils receive good provision and consequently achieve well. All other pupils make satisfactory progress. Provisional results at the end of Year 6 for 2008 reveal standards to be broadly average overall, but above average in mathematics. In Year 2 standards fell and were below average, mainly because not so many pupils attained the higher levels. Teaching is satisfactory but inconsistent, especially in challenging more able pupils sufficiently. There is also variation in the quality of marking and the extent to which assessment shows pupils clearly what they need to do next to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They approach their learning with enthusiasm and are keen to participate in lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices, with the gardening club producing fresh vegetables for them to eat at lunchtime. They say they feel safe in school and would turn to an adult if they had a worry. The school's good range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school, including many clubs and visits to places of interest such as the Roman town of Verulamium. Pupils support one another well as reading partners and playground buddies, and the school council plays an influential role in the life of the school. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for secondary school, leaving with the expected levels of basic skills.

Pupils generally enjoy their lessons because the teaching involves them well in working together. Learning usually proceeds at a brisk pace, with a clear purpose to the lesson. While tasks often engage pupils productively, planning does not always extend the learning of more able pupils sufficiently. There is good support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are included well. There is good pastoral care for pupils, but academic guidance varies, so that pupils are not always fully aware what the next steps in their learning should be.

The impact of leadership and management on standards and achievement and upon teaching and learning is satisfactory, but many initiatives are new this term and have not yet had time to bear fruit. Monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to show clearly where the key areas for improvement lie. This is partly because many of the school's leaders are new to their roles and are getting to grips with additional responsibilities. Self-evaluation is rather generous and does not take full account of the inconsistencies in teaching and approaches to marking and target-setting. Parents are very supportive of the school and raise large sums of money each year to supplement resources and subsidise trips. One said, 'The teachers are always there for you to talk to,' reflecting the good relationships that are at the core of the school's work. Governors are beginning to hold the school to account, but are not sufficiently involved in giving it strategic direction. The school has made sound improvement since its last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Pupils get off to an exceptionally good start in the Reception classes because induction procedures are excellent, and the learning environment suits young children extremely well. All staff make it their business to know the children through careful observations and outstanding assessment procedures. They compile comprehensive learning records for each individual that give a complete picture of their strengths and needs. Children's abilities when they enter Reception vary from year to year, but are often below expectations in language and communication. They make very rapid progress as a result of outstanding teaching and a stimulating curriculum that fires their imaginations and gives them a hunger for learning. Even children who begin well below expectations succeed in reaching the early learning goals by the end of the year in most areas of learning. The variety and ingenuity of the outdoor area is particularly effective, with areas of activity themed to develop a range of skills. Outstanding leadership and management ensures that the highest quality provision is maintained, with an extremely effective team of practitioners working closely together. Parents are full of praise for how well their children are doing. A typical comment ran, 'My child's start at school could not have been better: she is confident, happy and keen to start her day.'

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching in Years 1 to 6 by making sure it challenges the more able pupils sufficiently.
- Ensure that thorough and accurate assessment helps pupils to improve their work.
- Make monitoring and evaluation of the school's work more rigorous to identify clearly the most important priorities for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years, although pupils generally make satisfactory progress from their starting points. Most pupils attain the expected standards, but too few reach the higher levels. The rate of progress in Years 3 to 6 varies. Inconsistencies in teaching means that some classes make more progress than others. Sometimes the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Overall achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6, with strengths in mathematics. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties achieve well because they receive good support in attaining their individual targets.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. They have a satisfactory understanding of their own and other cultures. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. A pupil said, 'It's easy to make friends.' Pupils take plenty of exercise and participate widely in sports' clubs. They say they enjoy school. They feel free from bullying and harassment. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Supported by the school council, pupils

get involved in community activities such as raising money for a local hospice. They play an important role in the summer fete, which brings the wider community together and raises large sums of money for the school. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning, especially through cross-curricular projects, and have a sound basis for developing their future skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is interesting and holds the attention of pupils. Collaborative activities, such as putting together a news report to present to other pupils, contribute effectively to pupils' personal development. There is good subject knowledge in mathematics and pupils are encouraged to apply their skills across a range of real-life problems. In reading and writing, assessment is not used effectively enough to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and this slows down the pace of their progress, particularly for the more able. Occasionally too much time is spent talking to pupils and this does not give them enough opportunity to practise their skills.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Improvements introduced by the headteacher have made the curriculum more creative, with good links across subjects and activities that interest and are relevant to pupils. Specialist provision in music, French and sport is effective. The curriculum caters well for the needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, with an emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. There is a wide range of clubs including netball, gymnastics, art and country dancing. Pupils benefit from a number of visitors who share their memories, cultures and expertise. An increasing movement towards topic work is helping to promote pupils' independence and makes learning more enjoyable. Sometimes it is not so clear how the curriculum provides continuity and progression in developing literacy and numeracy skills across all year groups.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school fully meets requirements for safeguarding pupils and all welfare requirements in the breakfast and after school clubs. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Their needs are identified promptly and a range of effective support enables them to make good progress. Parents value the school's friendly atmosphere and the opportunity to meet with their children and the teachers to consider how well they are doing. Targets for improvement are set at these meetings, but not enough is done to follow them up afterwards. Pupils are often unsure about the next steps in their learning. Marking is inconsistent in quality, and does not always tell pupils if they have met the purpose of the lesson or what they need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The new headteacher has reorganised the leadership structure to widen the roles and responsibilities of middle managers. This work is at an early stage, as people are new to their posts. She has also introduced a new tracking system that clearly shows how well pupils are doing and means teachers can identify promptly where pupils are at risk of falling behind. The monitoring of provision has not been rigorous or systematic enough to ensure rapid school improvement, with inconsistency in how effectively agreed procedures are followed. This has led to an overly optimistic view of the school's effectiveness and meant leaders have not always focused in on the key areas to improve, such as ensuring that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged. The school reaches out to its local community well, with a very active parent body, and has good links with other agencies. Some funding for international projects has ceased, and leaders are exploring ways of maintaining links with schools in other countries. Governors bring a range of expertise to bear and ask searching questions, but are not sufficiently involved in strategic planning.

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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?	3
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	3

### 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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

08 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Merryhills Primary School, Enfield, EN2 7RE

Thank you for telling us about your school, which provides you with a satisfactory level of education. These are some of its strengths.

- Children get off to a flying start in Reception and settle into school very well.
- Your behaviour is good and you support one another well.
- You find lessons interesting and enjoyable.
- Standards in mathematics are above average.
- The school supports pupils who find learning difficult well.
- There is a good range of activities, clubs and visits for you to enjoy.

Some of you find the learning too easy and we have asked your teachers to make sure it really challenges you. It is good that you are included in discussing your progress at parents' evenings. We think it would be helpful if you knew more about what you need to do next to improve in lessons as well. We have asked your teachers to check out thoroughly what the school does well and how it could get even better. We think this would help leaders to decide what the most important things are so that they can tackle them first.

Thank you once again for your help. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector