School report

Liberty Primary

Western Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3EB

Inspection dates	20–21 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	**Good**
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**Good**
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	**Good**
Outcomes for pupils	**Good**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have improved the quality of education provided by the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. This has made a positive difference to the progress that pupils make in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was well above the national averages.
- Current pupils are making good progress in reading and writing. However, there are inconsistent opportunities for them to solve problems and develop reasoning skills in mathematics. This slows down their progress.
- Governors are ambitious for the pupils and know the school well. They hold senior leaders to account effectively with regard to all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are polite, considerate and well mannered. They talk eloquently about their school values. Pupils are safe and happy, and enjoy coming to school.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Fundamental British values are at the core of the school's work and this prepares pupils well for their futures in modern Britain.
- The varied curriculum provides pupils with a good range of practical and real-life experiences. It is planned to cover the full range of subjects, linking them effectively through topics that pupils enjoy. Overall, however, beyond English, mathematics and science, the curriculum has inconsistent opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Teaching is highly effective in the early years. This has resulted in children making excellent progress. They leave the Reception Year very well prepared for their learning in key stage 1.
- Foundation subject leaders are enthusiastic to develop their subject areas further. However, their work to check pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is still developing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics by ensuring that:
  - teachers provide pupils with work that is suitably challenging
  - pupils receive more opportunities to solve problems and develop their reasoning skills.
- Increase the influence and impact of leaders of subjects in the wider curriculum by ensuring that:
  - they provide more opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning so that they make even better progress
  - they continue to develop their checks on pupils' learning in their respective subjects, with a focus on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- The headteacher, effectively supported by other leaders, has secured rapid improvements in the school since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now consistently good. Leaders have been successful in addressing weak teaching. This has led to good outcomes for pupils as shown by their performance in the national assessments in 2017 and that of current pupils in the school.
- Staff morale is high and teachers value the support and challenge provided by senior leaders. They receive constructive feedback and training opportunities to further improve their teaching. Leaders have created an environment where teachers relish the opportunities to improve their teaching by observing each other.
- Leaders carefully check the progress and attainment of all pupils to ensure that no pupil is left behind in their learning. They keep a close eye on the progress of different groups of pupils including the most able, those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The topic-based curriculum has strengths in providing pupils with exciting learning opportunities that make strong connections between subjects. For example, as part of their topic on 'Beachcombers', in a Year 2 history lesson pupils learned about chronology and compared seaside holidays at different times in the past. Pupils receive specialist teaching in some subjects, including French. All of this contributes to pupils enjoying learning and making strong progress in a wide range of subjects. However, leaders acknowledge that there is a need for planning for greater depth in the humanities, music, art, design and technology and computing.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visits and activities that support the development of pupils' personal and social skills. Teachers plan educational visits that are linked to topics and pupils are offered a wide range of clubs, such as sewing and art. Visitors enrich pupils' learning and personal development. As one pupil told the inspectors, 'Visitors inspire us to be the best we can be and motivate us to do exceptional things.'
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and is at the core of the school's curriculum. For example, pupils presented their work about British values to members of the governing body. They visit the Houses of Parliament to get a better understanding of democracy in action. They are well prepared as citizens of modern Britain.
- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge to the school since the previous inspection. For example, help has been provided to develop systems to check pupils' progress, as well as training for staff in English and mathematics.
- Foundation subject leaders' work to find out what pupils know in their subjects and deepen pupils' learning is at the early stages of development.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They visit the school regularly and speak to leaders, staff and pupils. They check that safeguarding procedures are followed robustly.
- Governors know the school well. They contribute to key school documents such as the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvements. Consequently, they have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account effectively. They ask leaders searching questions about pupils' outcomes, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained on safeguarding matters. Staff questioned during the inspection knew the school's procedures well for raising concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare.
- Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, agree their children are safe and well cared for at school. The school's own questionnaire shows that an overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. Parents attend workshops on e-safety to help their children stay safe online.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff working with pupils are checked in line with the government's latest legislation. They work closely with external agencies to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment — Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading and writing. Pupils respond well to adults and this contributes to the strong progress that pupils make. However, leaders agree with inspectors that pupils are not sufficiently and consistently challenged in mathematics.
- Teachers have successfully created stimulating classrooms that motivate pupils to learn. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school support and extend pupils' thinking. This makes them feel valued. One pupil said, 'Learning is fun, organised and it is a joy to learn.'
- Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' different abilities and use this information well to plan interesting lessons that meet the needs of most pupils.
- Reading is given a high profile in the school. Teachers use a range of high-quality children's texts effectively. They enable pupils to develop good reading skills. Teachers promote the joy of reading effectively through the school's 'Super Star Reader' initiative, which celebrates pupils' achievements. Younger pupils use their knowledge of

phonics well to sound out unfamiliar words. The teaching of writing is also effective, because teachers model writing well and provide good explanations of different styles of writing to pupils. They are given opportunities to write for different purposes across the curriculum.

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This helps them to make good progress.
- Typically, the teaching of mathematics is effective. Pupils gain strong knowledge and skills in a wide range of mathematical topics. However, some teachers provide inconsistent and limited problem-solving and reasoning activities to deepen pupils' learning. Sometimes, the questions within the challenges set for pupils are too easy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare — Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and articulate and talk with enthusiasm about their learning. Pupils say that the school's values 'really happen'.
- Pupils are offered many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, 'peer mediators' look out for other pupils in the playground. Pupils are given a voice in the life of the school through the school council.
- Pupils report that bullying is a rare occurrence in the school, but know the different forms that bullying can take. They say that they can talk to adults or use the 'worry boxes' should there be anything that concerns them, and that staff respond quickly.
- Pupils say they are safe. The curriculum incorporates many opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. They know how to stay safe online and about the dangers associated with talking to strangers, for example. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of living healthy lifestyles.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and staff agree that pupils are well behaved. Typical comments from pupils to describe their behaviour include, 'We are like one big family.' They get along well with each other. However, occasionally, low-level disruption is evident in lessons when the teaching does not fully engage pupils in their learning.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate. Inspectors were impressed with the way pupils held discussions with adults. Pupils listen attentively, respect each other's views and encourage their peers to contribute to discussions.
- Pupils rise to teachers' and leaders' high expectations of behaviour.
- Leaders' and governors' actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence have paid off. Although attendance is slightly below the national average, it has improved since last year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced.

Outcomes for pupils — Good

- Improvements in the quality of teaching have resulted in pupils making strong progress, particularly in English but also in mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is consistently effective. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is above average.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who met the expected and greater depth standards in reading and mathematics was above average. Pupils' attainment in writing was average. Pupils made strong progress from their different starting points.
- At the end of key stage 2, in 2017, pupils' progress was well above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in these subjects was well above average. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard in writing and mathematics was also well above average. Pupils' attainment at the higher standard in reading was in line with pupils nationally. Consequently, pupils were well prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading and writing. Pupils learn to write well in different styles and for a range of purposes. For example, as part of their topic on 'Gods and Mortals', pupils in Year 3 used their imagination to write a diary entry from a historical perspective. Pupils use their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills well and have good opportunities to write in a range of subjects.
- Leaders have effectively targeted the use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress and achieve well. Leaders continually monitor the progress of these pupils to ensure that outcomes are good.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Leaders identify these pupils' needs and provide well-targeted support.
- Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 used their mathematics skills well to read scales on the thermometer to investigate materials as they change state, such as melting chocolate.
- Although current pupils in school make good progress in mathematics, their problem-solving and reasoning skills are not consistently developed. Pupils are provided with inconsistent opportunities. This limits them from making even better progress.
- Pupils acquire a range of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. However, opportunities for them to gain a deeper understanding in the wider curriculum are inconsistent and this limits their progress.

Early years provision — Outstanding

- The early years is outstanding because the provision is very well led and managed. Leaders have created a highly motivating environment in which children excel in their learning and development.

- Over the last three years, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was consistently above the national average. Teachers' assessments of children currently in Reception indicate that this is set to continue. Children make excellent progress from their starting points and are exceptionally well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1. Similarly, they have developed very strong personal and social skills to be successful in their learning.
- Teaching is very strong. Adults use their checks on children very well to provide them with excellent opportunities to explore and investigate. They routinely challenge the children to think hard and provide activities that deepen their learning.
- Children apply their knowledge of phonics very well to read words and sentences. The attractive reading corners in the classrooms promote a love of reading.
- The work in children's writing books shows that they are given opportunities to write in different styles. Children make very strong progress in writing.
- Children's behaviour is impeccable. Staff ensure that routines are clear and consistent. This contributes to the calm and purposeful learning environments. Children demonstrate high levels of concentration on their chosen activities and are not easily distracted by each other.
- Leaders check both the classrooms and outdoor provision to ensure that any potential risk to children's safety is minimised. Children learn and play happily in a safe and secure provision.
- Partnerships with parents are very effective. Parents are given many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents celebrate and record their child's achievements through the use of 'wow clouds', which are displayed in the classrooms. They are invited to join their children during school time through 'stay and learn' sessions to observe their child's learning and talk to adults and other parents.

School details

Unique reference number	102656
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10047422

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	522
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stella Croissant
Headteacher	Nadine O'Hara
Telephone number	020 8646 5290
Website	www.liberty.merton.sch.uk
Email address	liberty@liberty.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 April 2016

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2017. These set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- The school receives support from the local authority.
- The school manages its own breakfast club and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils' learning in a range of subjects, sometimes jointly with senior leaders. They scrutinised pupils' work within and outside of lessons.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils to seek their views about learning. They met formally with two groups of pupils. Pupils accompanied an inspector on a tour of the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in classrooms and at break and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with governors, senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents informally at the start of the school day. They considered the 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including seven free-text responses. They also considered the school's questionnaire for parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered the 48 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 126 responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including documents related to safeguarding, the school self-evaluation, plans for improvement and information related to pupils' progress and attainment.

Inspection team

Rajeshree Mehta, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lando Du Plooy	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Harvey	Ofsted Inspector

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