

# Inspection of Hillcross Primary School

Ashridge Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4EE

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils really love attending this happy and welcoming school. They enjoy their learning and feel known and cared for by adults. They know who to speak to if they are worried about anything. Children in the early years concentrate well on their learning, listen attentively to their teacher and cooperate well with each other. All pupils behave in a mature, respectful and responsible way around the school site, and they are highly motivated in lessons. They meet the high expectations that the school has for them.

The school vision to 'enable a resilient school community of compassionate global citizens' is lived out on a day-to-day basis. Pupils get involved in a very wide range of leadership opportunities. They can join the Junior Leadership Team, the Junior Business Team or the Equality and Well-being Committee. They can also become subject ambassadors, thinking pioneers or eco warriors. Across the school they feel that their voice and ideas are heard and acted on. One pupil said that "democracy is rooted in this school".

Parents and carers are exceptionally positive about the school. They greatly value the many opportunities that their children have for learning inside and outside the classroom. They value the school's pastoral care and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. The school weaves reflective, philosophical and creative thinking through the curriculum. All classes vote for three 'trailblazer' topics each year, where they study particular topics in greater depth. Last year for example, Year 1 studied the topic of 'Languages' and Year 2 studied 'Japan'. The whole school learned about 'The Power of the Word' in the summer term.

The school has also carefully considered what pupils learn and the order in which they should learn it across the range of subjects. For example, in art pupils learn about the connection between the three key strands and seven formal elements. They explore space, shape and texture through sculpture, line and tone through sketching, and colour and texture through painting. In science they build on their learning about magnets in Year 4, through the study of gravity in Year 5.

Reading is a priority at the school. In Nursery, children listen attentively to carefully chosen stories, songs and rhymes. From the start of Reception, they learn to decode sounds and segment and blend words. Staff are well trained and ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds they are learning. Those who struggle with reading are given many opportunities to practise reading. All pupils are encouraged to love reading. They encounter a diverse range of authors of the week and poets of the month.

The school identifies pupils' additional needs swiftly and ensures that effective adaptations are put in place to support their learning. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve as well as their peers. They are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and typically check pupils' understanding regularly. At times, the curriculum is not implemented as precisely and consistently as it should be. Where this happens, sometimes pupils cannot recall in sufficient detail the key knowledge that they have learned previously.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school sets very clear routines from early years onwards. This enables children to have very positive attitudes towards their learning. The school closely tracks pupils' attendance and takes highly effective action to address any emerging weaknesses. As a result, attendance is high.

The school's programme for personal development is exceptional. Equality is at the heart of the school. Pupils learn to respect difference and show tolerance for the rights of others. They visit a different place of worship every year and attend many cultural trips. For example, children in the early years visit the theatre, the farm and the library. For geography, pupils in Year 2 go on an open top London bus tour. Pupils in Year 6 undertake a residential trip to Belgium. Pupils can also attend a wide range of clubs that they themselves have helped to choose. These include chess, coding, baking club and dance.

Staff are incredibly positive about working at the school. They appreciate the care they receive as individuals and the school's kind and collaborative ethos. Leaders at all levels are strategic, ambitious and focused on continuous improvement. Parents, pupils and staff are rightly proud to be part of this 'wonderful' school community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a few subjects, in Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is not implemented with the consistent precision that leaders intend. As a result, some pupils do not secure the depth of knowledge and understanding that they should. The school should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum in each subject is checked, so that any necessary support or professional development can be provided.

## **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>	102655
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323330
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	429
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Co-Chairs of governing body</b>	Stuart Field and Rob Chidley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Francis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk">www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	28 February and 1 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of 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 judgement 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 met with members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subject areas.
- 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 met with those responsible for governance, including the co-chairs of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted’s online surveys.

## **Inspection team**

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