

Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery Profile

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School Lane

Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 1ST

Telephone: 020 8950 2166

<http://www.merryhill.org.uk>

Children's Service Authority:	Hertfordshire
Age range:	3-7
Number of pupils:	230
Head teacher:	Mrs Pauline Hannibal
Chair of governors:	Mr Robert Lewis

What have been our successes this year?

Merry Hill continues to be regarded highly for the standard of education it provides for all of its pupils, in a supportive, nurturing environment. There have been many successes during the last year, which have ensured the school remains a vibrant and exciting place to learn. The highlights include:

1. Excellent results at the end of the Foundation Stage (5 year olds) and Key Stage 1 (seven year olds) which exceed Hertfordshire and National averages.
2. Receiving the DfCSF Activemark Award in recognition of high quality PE and Sport taking place each week.
3. Implementation of the new Literacy and Maths frameworks.
4. Preparation for the new Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
5. Enhanced use of Interactive Whiteboards and computers.
6. Extremely enjoyable Science Week and Sports Day.
7. Very positive responses from formal questionnaires to parents.
8. Physical improvements include a new library, new playground equipment and outdoor playhouse and newly decorated classrooms and toilets.

Above all, our children enjoy school and are well-rounded individuals showing great independence in their learning. Our biggest success continues to be our happy, well behaved children who really enjoy coming to school and who love to learn.

What are we trying to improve?

At Merry Hill we continually strive to improve teaching and learning and so ensure that children receive the very best education possible. We are very positive and forward thinking. We recognise that our staff are our most valuable resource and that effective self evaluation is the key to future success. This process involves seeking the views and opinions of everyone connected with the school, identifying priorities and detailing them in our School Plan.

Currently we are working towards the ambitious targets of:

1. Achieving the Herts Quality Standard Mark for Excellence in Nursery and Reception - awarded to schools that provide a high quality service and environment that exceeds the requirements of the Ofsted standards.
2. Achieving the Hertfordshire Healthy Schools' Award - awarded to schools that have an ethos and environment that supports learning and promotes the health and well-being of all.
3. Achieving the British Dyslexia Association Quality Mark – awarded to schools that promote excellent practice in seeking to improve accessibility to learning for all children.

How have our results changed over time?

Standards have been maintained at a very high level, (above Hertfordshire and National averages), for a number of years. "most seven year olds leave the school achieving exceptionally high standards of attainment. All groups of children make good progress"(Ofsted). This has been challenging work, and everyone in the school has had their part to play in supporting children's learning to make sure they achieve their best.

Although we work hard to ensure that children make good progress in reading, writing and maths, we also value other areas of the curriculum. We aim to help children to enjoy their learning experiences and keep them on the path to becoming happy, well-rounded and caring individuals.

How are we making sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs?

At Merry Hill we consider what children will need to learn in order to lead successful lives. We think they will need to be able to read, write and understand maths; be fit, healthy and happy; to be able to think creatively; to be able to use Information Technology expertly, and to understand how to care for their environment. We have tailored our curriculum to give children these skills.

We carefully assess children when they first start school and throughout their time at Merry Hill so that we know what they need in order to learn effectively.

We make sure that all children get interesting, well-taught lessons. We strive to make learning fun!

Some children need extra help, and we have clear procedures for the early identification of children with special educational needs (SEN) and also those children who are more able and talented. Teachers give children different learning challenges to suit their different abilities.

We teach children in a way they will learn best. The youngest children learn mainly through play, and the oldest children are given a lot of choice and responsibility in the way they do things.

What have pupils told us about the school, and what have we done as a result?

We are very keen for the children to play a valuable part in the life of the school and value their opinions. We consult with the children in a variety of ways during daily lessons, lunchtimes and at play and they tell us that they enjoy coming to Merry Hill School, that they feel respected, supported and safe and that they enjoy the learning activities.

As a result of conversations with children we have:

1. Arranged for 'packed lunch' and 'school dinner' children to sit together at lunchtimes
2. Cut back some of the stinging nettles in the wildlife area
3. Installed more all-weather large apparatus on the playground
4. Trained our Midday Supervisory Assistants to teach 'Huff and Puff' games at lunchtime
5. Invested in more outside play equipment
6. Increased the number of visiting speakers to our assemblies

How do we make sure our pupils are healthy, safe and well-supported?

We have a number of practices in place to ensure that our children feel happy, safe and well supported, including:

1. Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship (PSHEC) forms the basis for all of our teaching and learning at Merry Hill.
2. A well-ordered indoor learning environment
3. A safe and inviting playground and outdoor learning areas
4. A highly effective Behaviour Policy (e.g. excellent feedback from parents and visitors)
5. Regular celebrations of success (e.g. achievement assemblies)
6. High quality curricular provision (e.g. physical activity / personal, social, health education and citizenship)
7. Provision outside of lessons (e.g. quality playtimes / after school clubs)
8. Strong liaison with parents (e.g. curriculum meetings, weekly newsletters, 'Open Door' policy)
9. Effective links with other agencies (e.g. School Nurse)
10. An emphasis on health and safety (e.g. inspections / child protection training / CRB checks)

What activities and options are available to pupils?

At Merry Hill all children are taught a carefully designed curriculum, by good teachers and teaching assistants. In addition, we offer after-school clubs such as drama, art, gym and football. Parents can also arrange for children to attend an after-school club held nearby.

As part of our broad and enriched curriculum, the children have the opportunity to visit local places of interest such as places of worship, museums, the allotments, farms etc.

We hold focus weeks, such as for Art, Maths, Literacy, Science and History, where the children can sustain their interest in a topic or curriculum area over several days.

How are we working with parents and the community?

At Merry Hill we recognise the vital role parents and carers play in their child's education and highly value our relationship with them as the first educators of their children.

The Headteacher and staff are a visible presence in and around the school. We work hard to help parents participate in their children's learning through induction meetings, curriculum workshops, parents' consultation sessions and a written report at the end of the year. We have a weekly 'Merry Hill Matters' Newsletter and an up-to-date website.

We ensure that we take the views of parents into account and questionnaires are sent out on a regular basis.

The wider community holds the school in high regard. We have close links with Ashfield Junior School, local secondary schools and the University of Hertfordshire. We are an active member of our local Extended Schools' Consortia.

What do our pupils do after leaving this school?

Almost all of the children go to Ashfield Junior School, just down the road, which is our designated junior school. We make arrangements for the children to visit during the summer term and Mrs Dalziel, the Headteacher, informs us each year that the children move on to Ashfield School ready and able to learn, being well-motivated and of high ability. They settle quickly and have a positive attitude to learning.

Ofsted's view of our school

Inspectors agree that Merry Hill is a good, effective and improving school. It provides an exceptionally welcoming, well kept environment for the school community. The school is well led and managed and staff have a secure knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has a clear vision for how the school can be further improved and this is shared by staff and governors. The leadership team effectively works together to drive standards up and improve provision. Leaders and managers systematically and diligently monitor the quality of teaching and learning but their evaluation currently lacks sufficient rigour and points for development. Key issues raised in the previous inspection have been effectively tackled. The capacity to improve is good and the school provides good value for money.

Children achieve well in the good Foundation Stage. Most seven year olds leave the school achieving exceptionally high standards of attainment. Children achieve well because teachers keep a close check on their progress and any underachievement is swiftly tackled. Teaching and learning are good. In their planning teachers make meaningful links between subjects. However, in some lessons teachers are insufficiently precise about what they want children to learn. Children's personal development is good and outstanding in the Foundation Stage. The caring ethos generates a positive climate for learning. However, occasionally high levels of noise and a lack of attentiveness in some lessons inhibit learning. Curriculum provision is good with an exceptionally rich outdoor environment for learning. However, the library environment is dull and unwelcoming, which the school is working to improve. There is a lack of new material for readers, and learners are

not successfully able to retrieve authors or information.

Date of last inspection: 10-May-2006

Ofsted graded our school as good

Inspectors made judgements on a scale: outstanding (grade 1); good (2); satisfactory (3); inadequate (4).



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What have we done in response to Ofsted?

Ofsted (May 2006) judged Merry Hill to be a 'Good' school with many 'Outstanding' features:

- The standards reached by the children
- The children's enjoyment of their learning
- The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles
- How well children develop workplace and other skills
- Value for money

Ofsted identified four areas for development (see below) and all have been successfully addressed as externally judged by our School Improvement Partner.

1. Further improve the quality of teaching and learning through rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
2. Refine daily lesson plans with improved precision about what teachers intend children to learn in every lesson.
3. Further develop children's listening skills and attentiveness.
4. Improve the quality of provision in the library and teach children how to find their choice of stories and information.

More Information

If you would like more information about school policies, including our policies on special educational needs and disability, admissions, finance, school food and our complaints procedure, please contact us:

By telephone 020 8950 2166

Our website <http://www.merryhill.org.uk>