

Millfield Primary School

Coleshill Street, Fazeley, Tamworth, B78 3RQ

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The school did not improve after its last inspection.
- For at least three years, previous leaders and governors did not ensure that teaching was good. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, though clearly now improving, was inadequate in Key Stage 2.
- Governors, until the summer of 2014, did not hold the school to account for pupils' weak progress. This led to pupils reaching barely average standards in reading, writing and mathematics for the last two years.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in Year 6 in 2014 made inadequate progress, and were poorly prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers sometimes set the same work for all pupils in a class. The more able find the work very easy, the less able find it too hard. Consequently, neither group makes consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils. They do not always demand good-quality handwriting, or check that pupils act on the advice they are given when teachers mark their work.
- Subject leaders do not check closely enough on the amount of learning taking place in lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has rapidly and radically improved the leadership of the school, particularly in securing better teaching. This has led to pupils learning much more quickly in reading, writing and mathematics
- The reconstituted governing body now provides rigorous challenge to the school, and particularly about the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teaching in the early years is consistently good. This area is a strength of the school, and the children achieve well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their attendance is above average. They behave well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils feel safe. Adults look after them well. They behave sensibly and know how to avoid dangers.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 31 lessons, six of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. They looked at pupils’ books in several different subjects, including mathematics and English. They heard pupils from Year 1, 2 and 3 reading.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents, subject and senior leaders, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were gained through discussions at the school gates, through the 68 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and by email communication.
- The views of staff were gained through various meetings, and from the 28 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at school documents and records pertaining to: the monitoring of teaching and learning; development and curriculum planning; school self-evaluation; governing body meetings; and the progress being made by pupils currently in the school and those who recently left.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Terry Payne	Additional Inspector
Enid Korn	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Millfield is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Each year group comprises two classes, including the full-time Reception Year.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is much lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2014.
- Four new leaders were appointed in September 2014.
- Eight new teachers have joined the school since September 2014.
- The governing body reconstituted in July 2014. A new Chair and Vice Chair were elected in October 2014.
- A pre-school setting on the school site is managed by an outside provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it secures pupils' strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - setting tasks which are always hard enough for pupils of different abilities
 - insisting that pupils present their work neatly and legibly
 - making sure that pupils always respond to the advice they are given when their work is marked.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that leaders at all levels, including subject leaders, check closely on the amount of learning taking place in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed, experienced and determined headteacher has provided strong and effective leadership in driving forward necessary changes. He has eradicated systemic weak teaching through rigorous performance management and high quality training and professional development. He has been rigorous in focusing the efforts of staff on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. He has built on this priority, set out clearly by the governing body on his appointment, to lead the staff to making considerable improvements in a short time. This has been accomplished despite major leadership and staffing changes.
- He has set out a clear vision of taking every opportunity to provide a stimulating, attractive learning environment, underpinned by persistently asking pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning. He leads by example. This means that pupils enjoy school, behave well and attend regularly.
- Robust systems are in place to hold staff to account, and staff speak positively about the tailored support they have received to help them improve. The coaching and modelling provided by leaders have resulted in the quality of teaching improving significantly since September 2014, as shown through pupils' much more rapid progress in all subjects across the school. Other well-targeted measures have also brought about improvements. For example, a focus on mental mathematics is resulting in much-improved progress and rapidly rising standards in this subject across the school.
- An expert SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) was recruited for one day per week from within the local authority. Good leadership and tightly targeted support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has ensured that these pupils are now making much better progress than those in Year 6 did in 2014. This accelerated progress is consistent throughout the school. The role of the special educational needs coordinator is to be extended to three days per week for the next school year.
- A new co-leader for the early years has been appointed to extend the quality of teaching in that phase. This has made a significant difference to an already strong area of the school, where teaching is now consistently good.
- The school's leaders at all levels, and other staff, have a very clear picture of the school's current position. They are fully aware that recent positive changes must be sustained if the school is to continue its current rise. Staff morale is high because they believe they can achieve this aspiration.
- Pupils enjoy the new National Curriculum which the school has already implemented. Though there is a very strong focus on rapidly building literacy and numeracy skills, pupils also have many opportunities to study a wide range of different aspects of the world in which they live. Practical scientific enquiry about electricity and light or learning about the history of Anglo-Saxon Britain through studying artefacts, is balanced by a wide range of sporting activities, music and art.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed through assemblies, visits and visitors, stories and a clear expectation that pupils behave with kindness and tolerance towards each other. The religious curriculum enables pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures, through the recognition and celebration of Diwali and Chinese New Year, and visits to mosques and synagogues. Pupils learn about British values through the democratic election of a school council, through topics on 'Diversity and Equality', and by taking responsibility for preparing assemblies on a range of cultural and religious topics.
- Leaders and other adults promote equality of opportunity, foster good relationships and tackle discrimination very well. Pupils of all backgrounds are fully included, and pupils themselves are consistently kind and considerate to each other.
- Adults ensure that all pupils, regardless of race, gender or disability can make much better progress than was previously the case.

- The school makes effective use of primary school sports funding. Participation rates are high in a range of activities, and the school turns out representative teams in many sports. Gymnastics and dance clubs for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils are held after school. However, the use of coaches in delivering physical education lessons is not measurably improving the quality of teaching of physical education. The school is currently reviewing how this can be improved.
- School leaders ensure that statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are met and are effective in securing pupils' well-being, health and safety.
- The local authority did not hold the school to account with enough rigour for its previous performance. Since January 2015, however, a local authority representative is supporting the new headteacher effectively in moving the school forward.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics have taken on new roles relevant to their areas of expertise. They do not check closely enough on the amount of learning taking place in classrooms in their subject.
- The pupil premium has previously not been used effectively. Until recently, disadvantaged pupils were not well served in this school. They made much less progress and reached lower standards than their classmates. From September 2014, the school radically refocused its attention on improving outcomes for these pupils. Their progress is tracked very carefully, specific extra work is done with small groups to improve reading, writing and mathematics skills, and support is made to ensure access to all parts of the exciting new curriculum. There is now a perceptible difference in the progress being made currently by disadvantaged pupils as compared to their peers in school. Gaps in standards are now closing across the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The members of the reconstituted governing body are knowledgeable about the school and are committed to its improvement. They give a significant amount of time to the school and have an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. They have supported and challenged the headteacher well in his determination to eradicate weak teaching, accelerate progress and raise attainment in a short space of time. They understand clearly how very effective performance management has tackled the weak teaching that was present in the school, and make sure that only effective teaching, as judged through the progress pupils are making, is rewarded.
 - Governors demand and receive regular updates about pupils' attainment in different subjects and different classes throughout the school. This gives them an up-to-date picture of how well all groups of pupils are doing.
 - Governors use their professional skills well. They analyse and interpret data on pupils' performance accurately. They manage the school's finances well. They are keenly aware of how the school's previous use of the pupil premium did not have the desired impact on pupils' attainment. They are very determined to ensure this does not recur.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They usually respond promptly to guidance or instruction from adults. They are prepared to give their views or opinions when asked because they know they will be listened to.
- Pupils' behaviour on playgrounds at breaktimes is usually good, and though they can get a little boisterous at times, particularly when playing chasing games, they do not behave in a manner that disturbs others.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is good, and they can be trusted to work hard when not directly supervised. However, they do not always respond to requests from teachers made when marking the work in their books.
- Pupils generally take good care of their books, but their handwriting and the presentation of their work

can be a careless.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Risk assessments are thorough. Senior leaders and governors monitor the school's arrangements and practices closely to ensure that vigilance is maintained.
- Safeguarding policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they comply with local authority and government guidelines, and visitors are screened and checked carefully.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say there is very little bullying in school. They say that name-calling, including offensive racist or homophobic language, is very rare indeed. They know they can trust adults to act firmly upon any form of bullying and stop it happening. This is one reason why they feel safe. Strategies to deal with bullying are taught regularly.
- Teaching about how to avoid or manage the risk presented by some activities begins in the Reception year when, for example, children learn about taking care when climbing. This work continues through the school and, in Year 6, for example, pupils learn about the dangers of drug abuse. Pupils understand the need for rules for safety and are aware of the dangers on roads, of the outdoor learning and play areas, using the internet, and on visits and residential.
- Parents are unanimous in their views that children are safe in school, well looked after and happy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement because there is too much variability in the quality of learning, as is shown in the school reliable monitoring records. Eight new teachers have joined the school since 2014, some very recently, and they are adapting well to the increasing pace of change aimed at securing good teaching.
- Where learning is least effective, the work set does not ensure that pupils of different abilities are both appropriately and consistently challenged in their work. Sometimes, as seen in their books, pupils do not spend enough time on task, and work is incomplete. On other occasions, all pupils have the same piece of work to complete. It is too easy for the more-able, and too hard for the less-able. This slows the progress of both groups
- In some cases teachers do not demand that pupils present their work neatly and legibly.
- The school has recently worked on developing the marking of pupils' work, and there is clear guidance from teachers on what is expected, including opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of other pupils. However, pupils' work shows that the quality of marking is inconsistent. Often, marking is very helpful in guiding pupils towards deeper understanding, but other marking is cursory and does not give pupils guidance on what they need to do to improve. In addition, and more frequently, where areas for improvement are indicated or corrections required, these are not always revisited by teachers to ensure that the pupils have mastered the skill.
- The teaching of reading throughout the school is much improved. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught very well, and younger pupils can decode and sound words accurately and confidently. However, these same pupils did not know the meaning of several words which they could easily read, and had not been trained to find out what these unfamiliar words meant.
- The school's records show that pupils currently in Year 6 are already well beyond the reading standards reached by the 2014 Year 6 pupils.
- The teaching of writing throughout the school has been much improved by a regular and frequent whole-school approach to producing extended pieces of writing, usually based on particular theme. The less-

than-typical standards of writing with which many pupils begin school have been caught up and exceeded by the end of Year 2. However, the presentation of many pupils' written work is spoilt by untidy handwriting which is not consistently addressed by teachers.

- The teaching of mathematics has improved markedly since 2014, though inconsistencies still remain. At the upper end of the school, pupils can confidently solve word problems because they understand the technical language of the subject. This is not always the case in lower Key Stage 2, because some teachers' explanations are neither technically correct nor build understanding sequentially.
- Teaching assistants are generally deployed well. When some classes are underway, with pupils fully engaged in learning, teaching assistants provide effective support to more- and less-able pupils alike.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers and other adults provide practically based activities that capture pupils' interest and motivate them to work hard and learn rapidly. The very positive outcomes of good teaching can be seen in pupils' extended writing and carefully crafted artwork on display throughout the school. It was also seen to excellent effect in a Year 4 lesson on the Anglo-Saxons, when pupils were given photographs of archaeological finds. They were asked first to ascertain facts about the artefacts, and then to develop theories about what these artefacts could have been used for. This enthralled the pupils, and led to rapid gains in learning and deepened understanding through discussion and the sharing of alternative points of view.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' progress over time, and especially that of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has been slow, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress is now rapidly improving across the school as a result of improved teaching.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, standards in reading and writing were broadly average, but they were below average in mathematics. However, from pupils' starting points, these broadly average standards represented inadequate progress through Key Stage 2.
- In 2014, there was little measurable gap in attainment at the end of Year 6 between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates in reading and writing, but disadvantaged pupils were a year behind their classmates in mathematics. Compared to pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were about a term behind in both reading and writing, and four terms behind in mathematics.
- Since the appointment of a new headteacher, progress has accelerated across the school and standards in all subjects have risen sharply. This is acknowledged by parents, pupils, teachers and governors alike.
- The school's new and easy-to-understand system for measuring pupils' progress shows that Year 6 pupils had passed the standards reached by the 2014 Year 6 classes some time ago, particularly in mathematics. It also indicates quite clearly that disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in Year 6 are now making progress at least as rapidly as their peers, with some doing appreciably better.
- Too few of the most-able pupils made more than expected progress in reading, mathematics and, especially, writing in 2014. However, the school's latest information shows that a greater proportion are already reaching higher standards and making more than expected progress in these subjects this year. Several pupils will be taking the Level 6 tests in mathematics and writing in the national tests this year.
- Standards in Year 2 have been rising for two years, and have been consistent between subjects, with reading, writing and mathematics advancing by similar amounts between 2012 and 2014. Standards in reading and writing were above average in 2014. In mathematics, pupils' attainment was average.

The early years provision is good

- Children start in the Reception classes with a range of previous nursery experiences. Their knowledge and skills in writing are a little lower than those typically found among children of their age.
- Children achieve well in this exciting, attractive and well-resourced setting, where teaching is consistently good. They know they are safe and well looked after, and so they are not at all bothered when other adults enter their happy and secure area. They spend a good amount of time learning basic literacy and numeracy skills, but always through short and well-focused adult teaching which employs a range stimulating and obviously enjoyable activities.
- The early years phase of the school is well led and managed. A recently appointed but experienced teacher has joined forces with a knowledgeable and creative practitioner to jointly lead and manage the provision. They have built a team of considerable strength which is becoming increasingly effective.
- At the end of the Reception Year in 2014, the proportion of children ready for Year 1 was close to the average of children reaching a good stage of development. This was skewed by children reaching only average standards in writing. Standards were higher in the other early learning goals. Overall their progress was good given their starting points. Children currently in the Reception Year are already further advanced from similar starting points.
- Children concentrate for long periods of time because of the interesting and challenging tasks they are presented with. They behave exceptionally well as a result of the high expectations of skilful staff and the well-established, clear and consistent routines in place. This sets very firm foundations for the good attitudes to learning displayed by pupils in the later phases of the school.
- Children are kept safe and healthy. Adults are successful in encouraging them to develop self-help skills. This helps them to make the most of the time they have in the early years provision.
- The school has good induction procedures which include parents' visits, so that a detailed picture of each child's needs and interests can be used to get children off to a flying start. Parents who spoke to inspectors were very pleased with the welcome the school gives to their children.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124081
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	462561

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Read
Headteacher	Simon Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2015
Telephone number	01827 475010
Email address	office@millfield.staffs.sch.uk

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