

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



3 November 2015

Mrs Michelle Sheehy  
Headteacher  
Millfield Primary school  
Catshill Road  
Brownhills  
Walsall  
WS8 6BN

Dear Mrs Sheehy

### **Short inspection of Millfield Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 October 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your school was judged to be good in March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

'My son enjoys every day and always comes out smiling', wrote one parent in a recent school questionnaire. Parents and pupils I spoke with during the inspection echoed this view. Senior leaders and staff have effectively created a school where pupils treat each other and adults with respect, are inquisitive, have positive attitudes towards school, and are keen to talk about their work.

You, staff and governors continue to place a high emphasis on ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to participate in a wide range of outdoor learning experiences. Pupils' learning is imaginatively brought to life by walking through bluebell woods, bird watching, kayaking and camping. The pupils I spoke with explained that these activities are 'fun', 'interesting' and that they help them to 'explore and learn' about the environment.

Following the previous inspection, you and other senior leaders took appropriate action to further strengthen teaching across the school. Staff training led to an overall rise in the standards attained by pupils in 2014. Last academic year, the school experienced a number of changes in staffing. Additionally, a few staff were absent from work due to maternity leave and consequently a few classes were taught by temporary teachers. You recognise that as a result of these changes more work is now required to ensure teaching in all classes enables pupils to reach higher

standards. The actions that you and other senior leaders have identified, although not fully articulated in the school improvement plan, are suitable and having a beneficial impact on teaching and pupils currently in the school.

Last term, the local authority asked senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body to support another local primary school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team and members of the governing body ensure that arrangements for keeping pupils safe are adhered to by all staff. They also make sure that training for teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors is kept up to date. Pre-employment checks on staff meet statutory requirements. Staff keep a watchful eye on individual pupils and make certain that any concerns they have about pupils are carefully recorded and appropriate action is taken. External agencies are involved as required.

The school's safeguarding policy has been updated this term to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from radicalisation.

The pupils I spoke with stated that they feel safe in school and that staff listen and promptly respond to any worries they may have. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They spoke articulately about the importance of using the internet with care and staying safe when crossing the road.

### **Inspection findings**

- The 2015 provisional results reflect the impact of staffing changes last academic year. Standards at the end of Year 2 are not as high as previously. From their significantly below starting points at the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils in Year 6 attained the standards expected for their age. However, a lower proportion attained the higher level 5 in mathematics and reading than in the past. Leaders and governors have responded quickly and appropriately to these results. They are taking suitable action to strengthen teaching and raise standards.
- Governors are highly committed to ensuring that pupils leave Millfield Primary as confident young people who are able to make a beneficial contribution to their community. Through meetings and visits, the school governors keep themselves well informed about the work of senior leaders. Members of the governing body use their expertise and experience to ask insightful questions about pupils' learning and about teaching.
- Although you and other senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, the school improvement plan does not identify the precise actions that will be taken to enable pupils in all classes to

reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Neither does it state who will evaluate the impact of these actions or explain how success will be measured. Consequently, it is difficult for governors to accurately establish whether leaders are making enough of a difference to the learning of different groups of pupils in each year group.

- You and other senior leaders use a suitable range of strategies to collate information about the quality of teaching in the school. This information is used well to provide individual teachers and teaching assistants with precise guidance and helpful training.
- School leaders meet regularly with class teachers to discuss what pupils know, understand and can do. Pupils identified as at risk of not meeting their learning targets are provided with personalised support. This approach is successfully enabling individual pupils to catch up quickly and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in the school and pupils nationally are closing because of the additional focused support these pupils receive. The latest information shows that a higher proportion are reaching at least the standards expected for their age than in the past.
- All children in the early years are continuing to benefit from a suitable range of activities that effectively develop their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills. The youngest children enjoy attending the additional 'Woodland Wednesday' sessions. These sessions give children the chance to explore the school's nature areas. During the inspection, the children used a range of interesting adjectives to correctly describe the worms they discovered under the autumn leaves.
- Leaders stress the importance of planning activities that interest the pupils. Pupils told me that the teachers in the school make their work interesting and enjoyable. Pupils in Year 5, for example, were particularly excited about taking on the role of an 'archaeologist' while finding out about different Anglo-Saxon artefacts.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning, listen carefully and respond promptly to instructions from adults. They walk around school calmly and play together well in the playground. Senior leaders are aware that some of the youngest children in the school do not always take turns or share equipment. Adults in the early years are increasingly planning activities to develop these social skills.
- In a few classes, pupils do not consistently make rapid gains in their learning. There are occasions when activities do not sufficiently challenge the most able. Also, pupils do not always know what to do if they are struggling with an

activity. This slows the pace of learning, as some pupils wait until an adult is available. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. However, not all teachers insist that all pupils write neatly.

- Senior leaders' plans to share good practice in teaching are relevant and timely. They intend to provide further training for staff on better meeting the needs of the most-able pupils and on helping pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Following a decline in pupils' attendance to below the national average for primary schools, leaders revised the school's approach. An increase in rewards, and more contact with parents whose children do not attend regularly, are having a beneficial impact. At the time of this inspection, pupils' overall attendance was above national figures. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, although below their peers, is higher than before.
- Leaders have continued to extend the range of sporting and out-of-school activities on offer. Pupils and parents were particularly complimentary about the opportunities available to learn to play instruments such as the flute and clarinet. Parents also spoke proudly about the inter-school sporting competitions their children enter and win.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teaching in all year groups is of a consistently high quality and that it enables all pupils, especially the most able, to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- the school improvement plan identifies the precise actions that will be taken to enable pupils to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics and states who will evaluate the impact of these actions and how success will be measured.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection I met with you, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. I also spoke informally with pupils and parents. We made brief visits to lessons where we spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. I took account of the school's own questionnaires to parents, and 18 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed a range of documentation including the most recent information about pupils' achievement, minutes of governing body meetings, and records related to keeping pupils safe.