

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs K Tomlinson
Executive Headteacher
Millbrook Primary School
Elmfield
Shevington
Wigan
Lancashire
WN6 8DL

Dear Mrs Tomlinson

Short inspection of Millbrook Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2017, 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 the school was judged to be good in July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have managed a period of significant change very well since your appointment as executive headteacher in January 2017. You have provided strong support for the new head of school at Millbrook and staff morale has been maintained throughout this period. Your staff share the same, high expectations of leaders and governors and pupils continue to achieve well as a result. You and the head of school have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it can improve. Together, you are helping the school to move forwards.

Teaching at Millbrook is characterised by positive and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils get along well together and say that they enjoy coming to school. They are well mannered and their behaviour around school, in classrooms and outside is exemplary. Pupils engage well in their learning because teachers explain clearly and question pupils expertly to check that they understand. Where pupils are unsure, staff are quick to step in and offer timely support. Pupils value the many trips and visits which help to bring their learning to life and also enjoy the range of after-school activities. They have an important say in the running of the school because they are able to share their views with leaders in regular 'meeting' assemblies. These assemblies also promote democracy within the school and this helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

At the last inspection, the inspector noted that pupils did not make as much progress in mathematics as they did in reading and writing. This is no longer an issue. Current pupils make similar progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing. Work in pupils' books and your own assessment information confirms this to be the case.

We discussed how pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics but progress in other subjects is not as strong. You and the head of school have already noted this as an area for improvement. You have sharpened your practice, for example by reviewing the curriculum and by strengthening the checks made on learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. We also discussed how the most able pupils are not always challenged to achieve as well as they could. They are not given enough opportunities to secure greater depth in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All of the required checks are completed on adults before they are allowed to work with children and are recorded in detail. Staff understand school procedures to report instances where pupils might be at risk from harm. When such incidents are reported, leaders follow up any concerns swiftly and robustly.

Policies to safeguard pupils reflect the most up-to-date government legislation and staff training is reviewed regularly. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to stay safe. This was the view of every pupil questioned and all of the pupils who responded to a pupil questionnaire. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agree that pupils are kept safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Children make excellent progress in the early years from their starting points. At such an early age, children display effective characteristics of learning. For example, they are well motivated, persevere with tasks and enjoy achieving success. They display impressive confidence and are able to explain clearly what they are learning. As a result of this strong provision, outcomes for children when they leave the Reception class have improved consistently and the vast majority of children now reach a good level of development for their age. They are very well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils who struggle with writing are supported well to improve. They receive regular support within lessons and staff provide clear guidance when pupils are unsure. Pupils also benefit from extra sessions when necessary to help them to catch up when they have fallen behind.
- Leaders place great importance on pupils' regular attendance at school. As a result, pupils' attendance overall is strong and is above the national average. You are aware of families who struggle to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. You are helping these families to overcome any barriers to regular attendance and pupils' attendance is improving as a result.

- Pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. They receive regular feedback on their learning and this helps to support an improvement in learning over time. Much emphasis is placed on the teaching of reading, to good effect. However, the progress pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics is not as strong.
- Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities because teachers know individual pupils well and know what they are capable of. However, the challenge for the most able pupils is not as strong in some classes as it is in others. As a result, these pupils are not consistently challenged and they do not have enough opportunities to achieve greater depth in their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding more rapidly in subjects other than English and mathematics
- appropriate challenge is provided for the most able pupils so that an increased proportion achieve greater depth in their learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wigan. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hardman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the head of school. I met with four members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the Wigan schools consortia. I spoke with four parents who were arriving at school in the morning and considered the responses from 44 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I visited most classrooms with the head of school to observe and speak with pupils about their learning. We also scrutinised pupils' books from a range of subjects in the classes visited. I listened to four Year 2 pupils reading.

I considered a wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance, governance, assessment and safeguarding.

The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.