

Millbrook School

Gews Corner, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 9BX

Inspection dates

14–15 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until very recently, leaders and governors have not had sufficient impact on improving outcomes for pupils, or on ensuring that the quality of teaching is good throughout the school.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics remain below the national average at the end of key stage 2.
- The school's self-evaluation is too descriptive and lacks analysis. Improvement plans are not sufficiently well written to help to bring about rapid improvement.
- The pupil premium grant is not spent effectively. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not achieve as well as they should because their progress is not monitored closely enough.
- Governors do not focus well enough on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. They do not hold leaders fully to account.
- The teaching in some year groups is not good enough. Where this is the case, pupils make less progress than they should.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly established senior leadership team is committed to ensuring that the school becomes good. There is demonstrable evidence of the team's impact on improving the school's effectiveness.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They usually behave well as they move around the school and play happily together at breaktimes.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Children make good progress, and an increasing proportion reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils rightly feel very safe at Millbrook. They feel safe from bullying and know that they should tell an adult if they are worried about anything.
- Some teaching in the school is strong. Where this is the case, pupils make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership of the school by ensuring that:
 - self-evaluation is analytical rather than descriptive
 - self-evaluation and improvement plans link closely together
 - improvement plans include deadlines and milestones
 - leaders and governors monitor the impact of pupil premium grant spending on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - governors monitor the progress that pupils make, particularly disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and most-able pupils, and hold leaders fully to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good throughout the school so that all pupils make good progress, by:
 - sharing the best practice that is already in the school
 - ensuring that teaching meets the needs of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve attendance and reduce persistent absence so that both are at least in line with the national average.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders and governors have not had sufficient impact on the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Although progress has been made in some areas, such as making sure that teaching assistants are deployed more effectively, limited progress has been made in other areas.
- The quality of teaching is not good throughout the school. In some classes, teaching is much stronger than in others. The headteacher has addressed some of the weak teaching in the school, but some remains. Performance management processes are not used well enough to reward good teaching and hold others to account fully.
- The school's self-evaluation summary is too descriptive and lacks insightful analysis. As a result, the most important priorities for improvement are not identified clearly enough. The school's self-evaluation does not link with its improvement plan.
- The school's improvement plan does not include deadlines and milestones to ensure that actions are taken in a timely fashion. The actions proposed in the plan are not always the right ones, and the plan does not show clearly enough how progress will be monitored and evaluated. The plan does, however, include some of the right priorities for improvement.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not fully effective because leaders do not monitor these pupils' progress well enough. Meetings have been introduced to monitor the progress that pupils are making. However, these are not sufficiently sharply focused to have the intended impact on outcomes for these pupils.
- The pupil premium grant has not been spent effectively. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is below the school's expectations and less than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders have not ensured that the funding is spent in a sufficiently focused way, in order for it to have a demonstrable impact on the pupils it is intended for.
- Leaders and governors have not been quick enough to tackle the school's high rates of absence. As a result, overall attendance remains below the national average. A member of the senior leadership team now has responsibility for improving attendance. Appropriate actions are being taken and there is an increased sense of urgency to improve this area. There is demonstrable impact of the actions taken, and attendance is starting to improve as a result.
- The sport premium is spent effectively. The funding has been used in a range of ways, such as funding sports clubs for pupils at lunchtime. However, leaders do not monitor spending closely enough to be sure that it is having the desired impact on improving sporting outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and are taught the full range of national curriculum subjects. The topics that pupils learn about become progressively more challenging as they move through the school. For example, in history, pupils in Year 4 learn about the Anglo-Saxons while pupils in Year 1 learn about toys and games. The school is planning to review the curriculum in the near future.

- Most parents are positive about the school. The majority of those who spoke to inspectors said that they feel that their children are happy and safe at Millbrook. Just over three quarters of the parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The headteacher is highly committed to the school and its pupils. She has shown great resilience in overcoming a number of significant issues since her appointment. The recent establishment of a senior leadership team has improved leadership capacity. The headteacher has already taken some successful action to improve the quality of teaching in the school.
- Since March, for the first time since the headteacher took up her post, a complete senior leadership team has been in place. This group of leaders share a common goal for the school to be a securely good one. Despite being new to leadership, leaders are beginning to have an impact on improving the overall effectiveness of the school. There is now evidence of much stronger capacity to secure further improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been fully effective in ensuring that the school has improved quickly. Their attention has not been sufficiently well focused on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. As a result, these key aspects of the school require improvement.
- Governors do not hold the school's leaders to account well enough. The questions that governors ask are frequently too vague and poorly focused. Governors accept the answers that leaders give them too easily and this limits their ability to provide appropriate challenge.
- Governors do not monitor how the pupil premium is spent effectively enough. They do not routinely check that the way that the funding is spent is having a clear and positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are committed to the school and clearly want the best for the pupils who attend it. They are keen to increase their knowledge and understanding in order to become more effective in their roles.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks now meets statutory requirements, following improvements made during the inspection. Strong processes are in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with children.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They said that there is little bullying and that most staff sort issues out quickly when they arise. Some of the small number of parents who responded to Parent View expressed concerns about bullying. However, almost all this group of parents said that they feel that their children are safe at school.
- The school's designated safeguarding leads have been suitably trained to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. They know what to do when staff raise child protection concerns, and records show that leaders take appropriate action in a timely

fashion when necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet good in every class. Teaching is much stronger in some year groups than in others. In some classes, staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. As a result, pupils make better progress in some classes than in others.
- Some teachers' explanations and demonstrations are not clear enough to ensure that all pupils understand what they are being taught. Pupils are sometimes not given the apparatus and equipment they need to help them to develop their understanding, for example, in mathematics.
- Some staff do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough. Their expectations of how pupils should behave are too low and they do not deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly or effectively enough. When this is the case, low-level disruption, such as talking when the teacher is talking, fidgeting and daydreaming, occurs and this slows progress for some pupils.
- In some classes, the most able pupils are given work to do that is too easy. As a result, they do not attain as highly as they should because they are not properly challenged. For example, they are not given enough opportunities to deepen their understanding through solving problems and reasoning.
- Where teaching is good, teachers use questioning well both to extend pupils' learning and to check their understanding of what they have been taught. Teachers give pupils opportunities to deepen their knowledge by giving them tasks that encourage them to develop good reasoning skills.
- Some teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They show high expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils respond well to this. Pupils achieve well in these classes because it is easy to concentrate and time is not lost to low-level disruption.
- Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils know that the staff like them and, in turn, they love their teachers. This helps pupils to feel safe, both in their lessons and in less structured parts of the day. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and support each other well.
- The learning intentions of lessons are routinely shared with pupils to try to ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. Nonetheless, in some classes, the purpose of lessons remains unclear and this slows learning. Where this is the case, teachers focus too much on helping pupils to complete tasks rather than on what they want pupils to learn by doing the task.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe at Millbrook. They feel well supported by staff and know that they can

talk to any adult if they are worried about something. Pupils are taught well about issues such as e-safety. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe at school, and inspection evidence supports their view.

- Pupils are regularly taught about, and given opportunities to talk about, bullying. They know what it is and the forms that it can take. Pupils said that bullying rarely happens and that, when it does, it is usually sorted out quickly by staff.
- Pupils show good attitudes to equality and diversity. They know that it is wrong to judge people by the colour of their skin or other characteristics protected by law. Staff are good role models and this helps pupils to understand that discrimination is not acceptable. The religious education curriculum is used well to promote understanding of, and tolerance between, different faiths.
- The school's strong culture of celebration encourages many pupils to work hard and do their best. Weekly assemblies are used to share pupils' successes with each other. Pupils show pride in each other's achievements.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because attendance is not good enough. The overall rate of attendance remains below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Very recently, there have been improvements in attendance.
- Where teaching is less strong, there is some low-level disruption in classrooms. Where expectations are too low, some pupils do not take enough care with their handwriting or the way in which they present their work.
- Pupils behave very well in classes where the quality of teaching is better. They listen carefully, do their best and take care with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils move around the school sensibly. The school's rules are displayed clearly and pupils usually follow them. Generally, they play well together outside and enjoy their breaktimes. Pupils are polite and respectful towards adults. They are keen to talk to visitors about their work and their school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The results of the key stage 2 national tests show that pupils do not attain as highly as they should, or make the progress they should. Pupils' progress and attainment in reading and mathematics remain below the national average.
- The school's own assessment information shows a mixed picture. In some classes, pupils' progress is much better than in others. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the progress that they should until they reach upper key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils make better progress in some year groups than others, and too few make rapid progress. The additional funding for these two groups of pupils is not used well enough to ensure good outcomes.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not attain as highly as they should. In some year groups, teachers' expectations of what this group

of pupils can achieve are not high enough, and this limits the progress that pupils make.

- Attainment in phonics is improving. Results of the Year 1 phonics screening check improved in 2017, although they remain below the national average. Pupils do not routinely use phonics as their first strategy when trying to read unfamiliar words, and this slows how fluently some pupils read.
- Nevertheless, the results of the 2017 national tests show that outcomes are improving in reading, writing and mathematics. These improvements are also reflected in the school's assessment information. Most pupils are now making at least the minimum expected level of progress.
- Where teaching is stronger, more pupils are starting to make better progress. For example, almost all groups of pupils in upper key stage two made at least the expected amount of progress during the last academic year.
- Pupils' exercise books show a range of work across the curriculum. Pupils work at an appropriate level for their age, but leaders are not currently able to provide evidence that pupils are making good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of their age. However, some children's communication and language skills, and their emotional development, are below what is typical. A greater proportion of children enter the school's Nursery class with low starting points. Typically, about half of the intake to Reception have attended the school's Nursery.
- Children make good progress during their time in early years. The proportion of children who have reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been similar to the national average for the last two years.
- Staff in early years assess children's progress regularly. They keep detailed records of what children can already do and what they need to work on next. Staff work both with other local schools and with representatives of the local authority to ensure that the assessments that they make are accurate.
- Staff plan a good range of activities across all the areas of the early years curriculum, in response to children's needs and interests. Staff have created a good-quality learning environment both indoors and outdoors. The covered 'quad' is a bright and attractive outdoor learning space that staff make very good use of.
- Children learn the school's rules very quickly. This inspection took place during the second week of the school year, and children are already following the instructions they have been given. They know the class routines and are starting to become independent learners.
- Safety is given a high priority in the early years. Children are taught to follow rules that are designed to keep them safe. Staff are very kind and caring towards children. For example, they are quick to provide comfort and first aid when children trip and scrape their knees.
- The early years leader is new to her role. She has quickly started to develop a good

understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. The leader is ambitious for the provision and improvements can already be seen. For example, the progress that children make is now tracked more carefully and assessment is more accurate.

School details

Unique reference number	117379
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031438

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Brett Cooper
Headteacher	Ruth Bamlett
Telephone number	01992 622975
Website	www.millbrook.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@millbrook.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014. The previous deputy headteacher was absent due to illness for approximately two years before resigning her post. A new deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers were recruited from the school's existing staff in March 2017.
- The school meets current floor standards. These are the minimum standards, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents including assessment information. They checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector spoke with another representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 26 additional comments.

Inspection team

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