

Millbrook Junior School

Churchill Way, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 5DP

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. Their high expectations for pupils and staff have ensured that the school remains good.
- Under the headteacher’s effective leadership, standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly in 2017.
- In 2017, standards of attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 were above the national average. Pupils’ rates of progress in reading and writing also improved from the previous year.
- Pupils’ attainment and progress in mathematics have not improved as quickly as in reading and writing. The most able pupils do not always reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- As a result of good teaching, the progress of disadvantaged pupils improved significantly in 2017, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers use their skills of questioning and assessment effectively to direct pupils’ learning. However, teachers’ expectations for the standard of pupils’ work in their topic and science books are not as high as for English.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are respectful towards others. They listen well, value each other’s differences and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils behave well, both in their lessons and at other times of the day. As a result, most lessons flow smoothly and promote effective learning.
- Leaders and governors make sure that the school’s safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that teachers:
 - consistently set challenging work in mathematics that is matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the most able, leading to faster progress for pupils
 - apply the same high expectations for the quality and presentation of pupils' written work in topic work and in science as they do in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher and her senior leaders work as a united team with a strong, shared vision for the school. Since her arrival a year ago, the headteacher has brought about significant and widespread improvements. As a result of her dynamic leadership, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved rapidly. These improvements apply equally to the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The new senior leadership team has developed precise and measurable action plans for the school's key improvement areas. The deputy headteacher has instigated a new, effective system for assessing pupils' progress. As a result of these concerted efforts, leaders and staff at all levels work with one accord and there is a strong capacity for continued improvement.
- The special educational needs coordinator is an effective middle leader. She involves parents and outside agencies skilfully and makes sure that each pupil's additional needs are quickly identified. She provides regular reports for senior leaders and governors. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive effective support and make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff speak very highly of the support and clear direction they receive from leaders. Positive relationships abound and staff morale is high. Staff value the effective training they receive and they understand how this has led to the recent, rapid improvements in standards.
- The curriculum leadership team has designed a successful curriculum which uses pupils' interests as its starting point. Learning then builds towards a presentation of achievements for parents each half term. Each class topic begins with an inspirational 'wow' day in order to immerse pupils in the new learning. Pupils make good use of the wide range of extra-curricular activities available for them such as gymnastics, drama, fencing and a wildlife club. As a result, pupils develop good knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects and activities.
- Leaders' and teachers' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and equalities is strong. Pupils are able to reflect meaningfully on a range of social, moral and ethical issues presented through lessons and assemblies. Pupils cooperate very well with others, displaying positive qualities of patience and tolerance. Pupils say they value opportunities to learn about a range of faiths and cultures and they spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably about a recent visit to a Hindu Mandir.
- The school's work in helping pupils to understand fundamental British values is effective. Pupils speak with confidence about the importance of drawing up their class rules and they can relate this to the rule of law in the United Kingdom. Pupils can describe how their school council elections help them to understand how the British parliament works. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Following a review of governance, a new governing body was formed in 2016. The highly experienced and skilled chair of governors brings strong leadership to the school.
- Governors provide a strong degree of support and challenge for the headteacher. They are ambitious for the school and their guidance has been a contributory factor to the rapid improvements that have taken place during 2017.
- Governors make sure that staff appraisal systems are rigorous. They do not shy away from withholding pay awards where objectives are not met.
- Governors carry out regular checks on many aspects of the school's work. These aspects include the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the physical education and sport premium. Through their checks, governors make sure that funds are used well, in order to raise standards and improve pupils' fitness and well-being.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has improved procedures so that all checks are rigorous and training is up to date.
- Leaders, staff and governors all display a secure knowledge of the school's systems for raising child protection concerns. Records show that all such concerns are dealt with swiftly and scrupulously.
- Staff show a vigilant attitude towards safeguarding. The degree of care and support for vulnerable pupils is very evident across the school. Parents, staff and pupils agree that the school is a safe place to learn and pupils are protected from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan and structure their lessons well. They provide interesting activities and vibrant, well-organised classrooms. Teachers make sure that the learning objectives for each lesson are clear. This means that pupils use their time well in lessons and work with a sense of purpose and enjoyment.
- Teachers use assessment well to steer learning for pupils. Teachers are probing and challenging in their questioning, taking care to allow pupils adequate thinking time. Teaching assistants adopt the same approach, encouraging pupils to reflect on their learning. As a result, many pupils have developed an inquisitive attitude to learning as well as the confidence to keep going when work is tricky.
- Pupils value the homework activities that teachers set for them, as do parents, especially the online mathematics and reading homework. These activities effectively support and extend pupils' basic numeracy and literacy skills.
- In lessons, teachers usually match the work well to pupils' abilities. Pupils are encouraged to choose their own level of learning challenge: core, challenge or extend. An increasing number of pupils make sensible, and often ambitious, choices.

Consequently, most pupils are successful, independent learners who thoughtfully assess their own, and each other's, work.

- The quality of pupils' work in their books is good, in English and mathematics, and it is especially strong in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers do not apply the same high expectations for writing across a wider range of subjects. As a result, the quality of pupils' written work in other subjects is not as good as that seen in English and mathematics. The standards of handwriting and presentation are not as high in pupils' topic work and science as in English.
- In mathematics, teachers do not always set work that is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. As a result, those pupils do not always reach the higher standards of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. For example, each class has a system in place for pupils to 'post' any concerns they would like to discuss with an adult. Staff follow this up quickly and make sure that each child has a trusted adult with whom they can share any worries they may have.
- The majority of pupils respond well to opportunities to be independent and to take on responsibilities. For example, there is a system of class 'ambassadors' whose job it is to greet visitors to the class and explain the learning that is taking place in each lesson. Another example is some pupils' eagerness to run their own lunchtime activities such as a dance class.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are respectful towards others. They work well in small groups and in pairs and are developing good skills of cooperation and mutual support. The impact on their self-confidence and on their communication skills is very positive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers manage behaviour effectively and pupils have high expectations of themselves. The majority of pupils regulate their own behaviour well, both in lessons and at other times of the day. They respond well to teachers' clear routines and, as a result, lessons flow smoothly.
- Leaders' systems for recording the occasional occurrences of misbehaviour are thorough. There are effective measures in place to support the small number of pupils who have challenging behaviours. As a result, no lessons are adversely affected by disruptive behaviour.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and they know how to stay safe online. The school provides a helpful information leaflet for parents about online safety. Pupils also say bullying is rare but, when problems occur, staff will quickly 'sort it out'.
- Rates of attendance are typically above average, for all groups. Few pupils are

persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Following a period of decline since the last inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly in 2017. This improvement was a consequence of the skill and determination of the newly appointed headteacher and her effective senior leadership team.
- The school's latest assessments show that the recent improvements in attainment and progress at the end of 2017 are being sustained by current pupils. These improvements were confirmed during the inspection, by observations of learning in lessons and by the good work in pupils' English and mathematics books.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress improved significantly from 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of good teaching, these improved rates of progress are currently being sustained. Disadvantaged pupils are currently making particularly strong progress towards their end of year targets in mathematics, in all year groups.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make consistently good progress from their starting points because the support they receive is closely matched to their needs.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2, at both the expected and high standard, improved significantly and was above the national average.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics have not improved at the same rate as in reading and writing and are now a major focus of the school's improvement work.

School details

Unique reference number	122109
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10037608

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Harris-Bridge
Headteacher	Danielle Warren
Telephone number	01536 517 049
Website	www.millbrookjuniors.co.uk/
Email address	school@millbrook-jun.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the national floor standards, which set the minimum expectations at the end of Year 6 for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance in 2014–2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, across all year groups. They looked at work in pupils' books covering a range of subjects, abilities and year groups.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, and leaders with responsibility for mathematics, the curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They also met with other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and break times.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector also considered 39 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The lead inspector considered the responses from the pupil and staff online surveys.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and the self-evaluation summary, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's current information on pupils' progress and achievement, attendance records, behaviour logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Hall	Ofsted Inspector

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