

Mill Hill Community Primary School

Crosby Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 1AE

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are not making consistently strong progress in English and mathematics and in subjects across the wider curriculum.
- In recent years, pupils' progress and attainment by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been well below the national average.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. Most subject leaders are new to post and have, therefore, had limited impact on raising standards or developing the curriculum in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum is not coherently planned to build on pupils' prior learning or to support them in reaching the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Too many pupils produce work with poor handwriting and presentation.
- The teaching of phonics lacks consistency. Time is not always used effectively to make sure that lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) keep up with the expectations.
- Pupils who are not on track with their reading by the time they enter key stage 2 do not always have enough practice to help them catch up rapidly.
- When pupils enter Year 1, teaching does not always build effectively enough on the positive start they have received in Reception.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for improving the school. Parents and carers, pupils and staff support this new direction wholeheartedly. Improvements are increasingly evident.
- The school provides strong support for vulnerable pupils and families, making effective links with external agencies when necessary.
- Pupils are enthused by the first-hand experiences they encounter. This contributes to their positive behaviour and good attendance.
- Effective teaching in Reception means that children make strong progress and are well prepared for key stage 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that:
 - staff have consistently high expectations of the presentation, quality and accuracy of pupils' writing
 - there are more frequent opportunities to teach handwriting
 - the curriculum is appropriately sequenced so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding over time and staff have the necessary subject knowledge
 - there is a clear and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics
 - pupils who need to catch up with reading receive sufficient practice and effective support
 - pupils with SEND are supported appropriately when working in class
 - the transition from Reception to Year 1 continues to build on pupils' prior learning.
- Rapidly increase the proportion of pupils who reach and exceed the expectations at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance, by making sure that subject leadership is developed so that it contributes more significantly to rigorously addressing inconsistencies in teaching and learning, developing an effective curriculum and raising standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following a decline in pupils' outcomes since the last inspection, the new headteacher has established a new team of leaders and has begun to develop the capacity for more rapid school improvement. Owing to a legacy of underachievement and remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, actions are not yet resulting in consistently good progress across the school.
- A wider group of leaders is now beginning to take responsibility for improving pupils' outcomes. Many subject leaders are new to their roles and are being supported to make checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Therefore, they have been unable to contribute sufficiently to improving consistency in the quality of teaching and ensuring that the curriculum is effective. This has meant that their capacity to improve pupils' achievement has been limited.
- The curriculum is not coherently sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. Subject-specific knowledge and understanding are often not considered sufficiently well at the planning stage. This leads to isolated activities which lack depth and are not designed to help pupils learn and remember the most critical knowledge for each subject. However, the topic-based curriculum offers pupils a broad range of first-hand experiences which spark their interest in the world around them. The curriculum also contributes successfully to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has acted with determination to elevate the profile of reading throughout the school. A new library, high-quality texts and raised expectations are contributing to pupils' increased enthusiasm with their reading. However, leaders have not checked the effectiveness of support for pupils who are struggling with their reading.
- Leaders have worked with vigour to improve pupils' attendance. Consequently, levels of absence and persistent absence have rapidly decreased so that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND has evolved since the last inspection. There are now much clearer systems for identifying pupils' needs and making sure that provision is more closely matched to pupils' needs. This is particularly the case when pupils receive small-group or individual intervention.
- Pupil premium funding provides disadvantaged pupils with access to a range of educational experiences and opportunities. Leaders are beginning to make more rigorous checks on the difference the funding is making to pupils' academic achievement.
- Staff feel well supported by leaders. They are encouraged to reflect on their teaching and seek advice when needed. This includes observing others, both internally and externally, and accessing training or support from the local authority.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They recognise the recent improvements which the headteacher has implemented. They particularly welcome the greater community involvement, sporting opportunities and the wide range of

curriculum experiences such as visitors and visits.

Governance of the school

- Over time, the governing body has not exercised sufficient strategic influence to reverse the decline in pupils' achievement. However, governors now have a much clearer understanding of pupils' outcomes and the priorities for improvement. They use this to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. This has contributed to the recent improvements in pupils' attendance.
- Governors are committed to improving the school and recognise the important part the school plays in the local community. They visit the school regularly and talk to staff and parents to see for themselves the impact of leaders' actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has very high expectations of the support and welfare for pupils and ensures that there is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. Leaders have ensured that keeping pupils safe is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. Leaders and governors have put clear systems in place for safeguarding pupils. These are understood and carried out diligently by staff. Regular training and updates about safeguarding support staff in being alert to possible signs of concern which pupils may present. Staff report concerns promptly to the designated safeguarding leader who acts swiftly and takes effective action.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and thorough. They show a close and effective working relationship with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The curriculum supports pupils in learning how to stay safe. Consequently, they are able to talk with confidence about how to stay safe when faced with potential risks such as using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In key stages 1 and 2, teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not always high enough. Pupils are often unchallenged when they produce work of a poorer standard than they are capable of. This results in many pupils not demonstrating security in basic skills, such as the use of capital letters and full stops. It also results in poor presentation and handwriting for many pupils.
- Key stage 1 teaching does not build well enough on the effective teaching strategies that children experience in early years. For example, pupils are not always expected to use their phonic knowledge when spelling unfamiliar words. Neither does teaching value the production of accurate writing. Instead, too often, the emphasis is on quantity rather than quality. This is particularly the case for lower-attaining pupils and is slowing their progress.
- In key stage 2, there is variability in the teaching of writing. The grammar and punctuation activities which teachers plan do not always link well to the style of writing

that pupils are learning to produce. This means there are missed opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in a real context. Similarly, in some year groups, pupils do not have enough extended writing opportunities to allow them to revisit and build on their prior learning.

- The teaching of phonics lacks a coherent approach. Pupils who need to catch up are not receiving the most effective teaching to help them do so quickly. For example, pupils waste time waiting for a turn and therefore do not have chance to practise all elements of phonics within each session. Teachers make effective use of resources such as phonics cards and common exception word cards to support pupils' learning at home.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been implemented this year. Teachers are starting to provide more regular opportunities for pupils to reason and solve problems. Additionally, teachers routinely check pupils' understanding and respond to any misconceptions on the same day. However, weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge sometimes result in explanations which lack clarity and tasks which are confusing and not sufficiently focused on the intended learning. This means that pupils' learning is hindered.
- Teaching assistants provide effective and targeted support for pupils with SEND in individual and small-group interventions. However, the work these pupils complete in class is not always well matched to their specific targets. This lack of consistency slows their learning.
- The topic-based curriculum is providing real purpose for pupils' writing. The experiential nature of the activities is generating pupils' interest and enthusiasm about their learning. However, in the wider curriculum beyond English and mathematics, pupils are given too few opportunities to build on their prior learning and demonstrate any depth of understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's strong safeguarding culture ensures that pupils' well-being is high priority. Pastoral records, completed by all members of staff, provide insight into any patterns or potential issues for individual pupils. This not only means that pupils receive appropriate and timely support, but often identifies any underlying causes which can then be addressed.
- Pupils have circle-time lessons which are used very effectively to enable pupils to talk about their feelings and appreciate others. Pupils' contributions in these lessons show that they highly trust staff and are confident to share their emotions in a safe and supportive environment.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and leaders' records confirm this. Parents have become increasingly convinced that should they have a concern, it will be dealt with effectively. Equally, pupils are assured that staff will resolve any issues which should arise.
- Pupils have access to a broad range of opportunities and experiences which enhance

the curriculum and support their personal development. For example, they enjoy competing in their house teams, the regular visits and visitors which form part of their topic work, and competing in local events such as the recent debating competition, which the school won.

- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as helping in the office, helping with the book fair and as art ambassadors. They take pride in the trust that is placed in them and appreciate that they are making a positive contribution to the running of the school.
- A calm and prompt start to school is encouraged through breakfast club. This is particularly beneficial for those pupils who have struggled to attend school regularly and on time.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave sensibly on the playground, in the dinner hall, during lessons, and as they move around school. Pupils understand what is expected of them. Staff follow the behaviour system for sanctions and rewards consistently. The behaviour approach is effective in motivating pupils to make the right choices.
- Pupils' attendance has dramatically improved in the last year. The importance of good attendance is clearly understood by parents and pupils due to the high profile it is given, for example, through newsletters and assemblies. Attendance so far this school year is at a similar level to the national average in previous years. This is a significant improvement given the school's consistently poor attendance and high persistent absence over many years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' books and leaders' assessment information show that while progress is improving for current pupils, it is not consistently strong throughout the school. Too many pupils are working well below the expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2018, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% nationally. Only 36% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- Current pupils in Year 1 have not built effectively enough on the strong starting points they began with, following their success in Reception. This has slowed development for the lower-attaining pupils in particular.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are not consistently strong. Too few planned opportunities to teach handwriting hinder pupils' handwriting development.
- Pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home and are enjoying selecting books from the new library. Older pupils remember fondly the books that teachers have shared with them. However, pupils in key stage 2 who are working below the expected standard for their age in reading do not have enough practice to help them build their confidence and fluency. Limited language comprehension further prevents some pupils

from understanding the books they are reading.

- Despite a dip in 2018, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 has generally been in line with the national average over time. There has been a year-on-year increase in the proportion of pupils meeting the standard by the end of Year 2. In 2018, this figure rose to 94%.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 showed improvement. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard was in line with the national average in writing and mathematics and was above average in reading.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective leadership and teaching have been sustained over time in early years. This has resulted in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development being consistently close to or just above the national average, despite children's often low starting points.
- The staff team knows the children incredibly well. This enables staff to adapt the provision to meet the needs and interests of individuals effectively. From the very beginning of Reception, children get off to a flying start. High expectations and effective assessments of what children know and can do make sure that children quickly make strong progress.
- Leaders are aware of any aspects of children's learning that are less developed than would be expected when they start school. A focus on these essential skills begins straight away to prevent them becoming a barrier to children's learning. For example, leaders make sure there is a firm focus on children's language acquisition. Staff use their interactions with children to carefully target specific language they have identified.
- Children are immersed in rhymes and stories and begin to develop a love of reading and a growing understanding of language. This means that once they have secured some initial phonics knowledge, they are keen to put this into practice. Carefully chosen activities enable children to use and apply the skills they are learning independently. For example, the cafe menus in the role-play area are adapted to children's phonics knowledge so they can practise reading as part of their play.
- The early years leader has made sure that parents are well prepared to support their child's reading at home. Once children begin blending, they take sound cards home to practise with. The books that children take home to read are well matched to their developing phonics knowledge and do not contain words that are not phonically decodable. Parents welcome the school's support and say they are really pleased with the way their children have been helped to settle into school and with the progress they are making.
- Children make strong progress with their early reading as a result of the effective phonics teaching they receive. A high proportion of children exceeded the early learning goal for reading in 2018. Current Reception children are demonstrating equally strong performance in their reading.
- Both indoors and in the outdoor area, staff set up enticing activities for children that provide meaningful contexts for their learning. For example, a group of children were re-telling the story of 'The Gingerbread Man', ably supported by a member of support

staff, while another group of children were reading instructions to help them plant some seeds.

- Staff have positive and caring relationships with the children. They value and praise children's effort and learning behaviours. This is helping children to share, take turns, listen to each other and take pride in their work.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff show children how to assess and manage risks, such as when handling the roses with their thorns. Leaders make sure that the legal welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	121330
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10088995

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Sutton
Headteacher	Mrs Rebecca Bainbridge
Telephone number	01609 772382
Website	www.millhill.n-yorks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@millhill.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2015

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. The previous co-headteachers and several teachers left the school in 2017. The current headteacher and assistant headteacher took up post in January 2018, following a period of time with no substantive headteacher. New arrangements are now in place for the leadership of English and mathematics.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school is designated as an enhanced mainstream school (EMS) for communication and interaction. This means that it acts as a host school for the local authority and provides specialist support for schools in the local area.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Several of the observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. The inspector listened to some pupils read and talked to several pupils about their experience of school.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was held with several members of the governing body, including the chair. A meeting also took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of pupils' work in books, along with the school's information on pupils' achievement, to determine the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and minutes from governing body meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- The inspector spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. The 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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