

Millbrook C of E Primary School

Blindwell Hill, Millbrook, Torpoint, Cornwall PL10 1BG

Inspection dates

21 to 22 May 2019

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| 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 |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, together with effective support from the trust and governors, have successfully improved the quality of education since the previous inspection.
- The trust has added capacity to leadership at every level. Collectively, leaders are determined to provide pupils with the best possible education. Middle leaders are not yet contributing as much as they might to the drive for improvement.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning activities. It is very well enriched through trips, visitors and clubs. It enables pupils to make strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including outdoor education.
- Leaders have established a culture of high expectations. This means the quality of teaching is good and improving. In the past, pupils' progress was weak. Most pupils now make at least good progress.
- The board of trustees has gained a good understanding of the school and holds leaders to account for their actions. The local governing body is new. Members are aware of the need to extend their knowledge and develop a comprehensive understanding of how actions are bringing about improvements.
- Teachers track pupils' progress rigorously and know the pupils well. Most teachers provide work which meets all pupils' needs.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Staff assess their needs carefully and accurately and support them with effective questioning and suitably challenging work. Sometimes, children need more help when developing their ideas through play.
- New approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are improving pupils' progress. In mathematics, teachers do not routinely provide the most able pupils with sufficient challenge. Consequently, these pupils do not reach their full potential.
- Staff use their good subject knowledge of phonics to ensure pupils make strong progress in this subject.
- The teaching of spelling is improving. However, in key stage 2, pupils' spelling is inaccurate in their independent work.
- Safeguarding is effective, and pupils feel safe.
- Pupils behave well, show good attitudes to learning and enjoy school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors obtain more accurate information from leaders to allow a more precise understanding of the school and ensure that the gains in pupils' outcomes are consolidated
 - developing the impact of middle leaders so that improvements that have been made across the school are sustained.
- Improve the quality of teaching further so that pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils continue to develop their skills in applying their mathematical knowledge when solving problems
 - helping pupils in key stage 2 to improve the accuracy of spelling during independent work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed head of school, well supported by leaders from across the trust, leads this school with determination to ensure the best standards of education for pupils. Leaders have taken effective and decisive action to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning and the progress current pupils make are strong.
- The trust has a strong influence on the work of the school. Since the appointment of the interim executive principal in April 2018, leaders from across the trust have supported those within the school to eliminate pupils' underachievement and accelerate the progress pupils make in their learning. Together, they know the school's strengths and weaknesses and understand which areas need further development.
- The curriculum is a strength of this school. It is broad and includes a range of useful first-hand experiences, such as forest school. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning a range of subjects and make good progress. Pupils and parents welcome the wide range of enrichment activities, which support pupils' learning effectively. The school makes good use of its natural environment to bring learning to life. Staff plan residential visits carefully to provide pupils with a range of experiences locally and nationally, such as visiting Dartmoor and London. These visits support a range of subjects, such as developing poetry in writing or giving all pupils opportunities to take part in adventurous outdoor activity.
- Leaders have developed high-quality systems and processes to record pupils' progress and attainment. Teachers check their judgements of pupils' work with other local schools to ensure that their assessments are accurate. Pupils' books and reports from the moderation process show that pupils' learning improves as a result.
- The trust's mathematics and English leaders have taken a decisive lead in driving improvements in their subjects. They have ensured that staff are trained in how to meet the demands of the curriculum and can clearly demonstrate the strides that have been made in pupils' work. However, the roles of school-based middle leaders have only recently started to develop. This has meant that leadership capacity has been limited while these roles have become established.
- Support from another school, outside of the trust, has been highly effective in supporting teachers to improve their teaching. This is an example of the carefully planned support leaders have created for all staff. As a result, the teaching of phonics is securely good and the progress in key stage 2 has improved this year.
- The school is strongly committed to equality of opportunity. Leaders recognise the barriers to learning that some pupils face and take care to help them overcome such obstacles. High-quality nurture provision has been successful in helping those pupils with particular barriers to relate well with each other, enjoy learning and aim to do their best. They now achieve well.
- The school spends the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Leaders monitor these pupils closely so that additional support can be provided when necessary. Leaders have made determined efforts to ensure that these pupils 'keep up'

with others and target support quickly to stop gaps in learning emerging. As a result, such pupils are now making expected or better progress.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well provided for because leaders make sure that they spend additional funding appropriately. Leaders seek advice and training to help them plan effective support. They make thorough checks to ensure that the support is meeting pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils with SEND make good progress. A number of parents commented positively on the care and support that leaders provide for pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and the importance of showing respect to those who are different from themselves. When asked about this, one pupil commented that teachers 'teach us how to be a better citizen'.
- The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. One said: 'I feel very lucky as a parent to have my children attend such a lovely school.' Parents feel that staff form good relationships with their children, with another describing the school as 'brilliant'. While parents are very supportive of the school and its head, many feel that the trust could improve its communication about the work it does and why they do what they do.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school has strengthened since the last inspection. Governors, at all levels, are reflective and constantly seeking to improve. The board of trustees has been effective in considering how to support the school. Working alongside the new trust leaders, they have endeavoured to provide stability and consistency for the pupils. As a result, they successfully improved the standards of teaching and leadership in the school.
- The board of trustees has developed systems of reporting and accountability. It ensures that additional funding for physical education and disadvantaged pupils is well spent and it monitors the effect this has on the progress of pupils.
- The recently formed local governing body is beginning to continue the strong work that the trustees have started. Members are aware of their roles and expectations. Leaders do not produce information for governors with enough precision, which means that governors do not use this information as well as they could.
- The trust, governors and leaders have invested a significant amount of time and have successfully steered the school through some challenging times. They recognise the importance of further developing the capacity of middle leaders to ensure this improvement will be sustained.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that the culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff. There are clear systems and regular training for all staff. Detailed records are kept for all aspects of safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff.

- Staff say that the school is a safe place for pupils. All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, said that their children feel safe and well cared for at the school.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe. They speak with confidence about how to use computers safely, including the importance of not sharing personal information. They are confident that there is someone in school to talk to should they have any safeguarding concerns.
- The school works effectively with external agencies to provide timely support for pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders place high importance on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Improvements have come about through a strong commitment to training teachers and offering them professional development opportunities. This is enthusing teachers and helping them to make improvements in their practice. This means teachers now meet most pupils' needs well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils skilfully, using approaches and strategies that effectively encourage pupils to think, deepen learning and correct misconceptions. Positive relationships between pupils and teachers help pupils to be confident learners who are keen to undertake challenging tasks.
- Teachers share good practice and learn from one another. They assess pupils' work carefully and identify appropriate next steps in their learning. However, at times, teachers do not challenge the most able pupils enough in mathematics, particularly when asking them to solve problems.
- A whole-school approach to teaching mathematics is developing pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially. Teachers have developed the 'strategy poster' approach to help pupils understand the new work they are presented with. Teachers provide precise support in class to ensure most pupils make progress in each lesson. The tasks that are given mean that the majority of pupils have their needs met and are making strong progress.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. The approach to teaching phonics is systematic and encourages pupils to apply what they have learned to read unfamiliar words and spell phonetically decodable words. Pupils are confident when reading. Pupils who read to the inspector did so with enjoyment, enthusiasm and fluency.
- Teachers use strong subject knowledge to plan lessons that interest the pupils and encourage them to make good progress in reading and writing. The promotion of pupils' vocabulary and oracy skills is a key characteristic in many lessons. Teachers use a variety of approaches to help pupils improve their writing and provide pupils with clear examples of how to do this. One pupil, while acknowledging that these strategies help, commented: 'We can't just copy it.'
- Teachers develop pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar well. They teach these skills systematically and give clear guidance so that pupils know exactly which areas to improve. However, pupils in key stage 2 are not consistently challenged to apply this knowledge to a wide range of writing opportunities. Consequently, pupils do not make

as much progress in their spelling, or when writing independently, as they do in other areas of English.

- Teachers set homework in line with school policy, including spellings, mathematics and reading. Homework supports pupils' learning successfully and there were many examples of pupils creating some varied examples of topic homework, from researching a famous person, to making models of the solar system.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils in all year groups show consistently positive attitudes to learning. This is having a positive impact on their academic progress, which is now typically good.
- The school's values are at the core of the curriculum. Adults encourage pupils to understand what these values look like in practice through assemblies, the curriculum and enrichment activities.
- This is a caring school. Many parents commented that the staff form positive relationships with their children. This means that staff respond quickly to pupils' needs, offering academic and pastoral support. The school's nurture provision is valued highly. As a result, pupils are well supported in school. One pupil commented that, 'Our school is a happy place and our friends are always there to help.'
- The wide range of sporting and physical activities on offer help to promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils understand that eating well will keep them healthy. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sports they can experience, and older pupils were excited by their first surfing lesson that took place during the inspection.
- Pupils have a strong voice in the school. They are proud of their school council and feel that leaders listen to them. They are particularly proud of the playground improvements that had been instigated at their request. Through elections for the school council, pupils are beginning to understand the democratic process and the rule of law.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Incidents of poor behaviour are isolated to a very small number of pupils and staff deal with them quickly.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly, displaying good manners at all times.
- Pupils show adults and other pupils respect, which has helped all groups of pupils to feel confident to give their views and to do well in their learning. These good attitudes to learning are an important factor behind pupils' improving rates of progress.
- Leaders make determined efforts to promote the importance of regular attendance to parents and pupils. Systems to monitor attendance are effective. The majority of pupils attend school regularly. Where pupils have higher rates of absence, the school works

closely with families to offer support. Overall, rates of absence have declined.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils make rapid and sustained progress. From their starting points, pupils are on track to meet or exceed expectations. Work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data show clearly that in key stages 1 and 2 current pupils are making strong progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress has improved significantly this academic year as new approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics become embedded.
- Leaders' records on the progress of current cohorts show that the strategies to improve pupils' outcomes are effective. The results of recent assessments, as well as the work in their books, provide evidence that the vast majority of pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. Where any pupils are making less progress, leaders act swiftly to give them support to help them catch up rapidly.
- Good teaching of writing enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils are taught to use a wide range of vocabulary. They are developing their knowledge about spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not consistently apply their knowledge of spelling in all their writing.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been at or above average for the past two years. This stems from very precise phonics teaching that means pupils get off to a good start in learning to read and write.
- This is a smaller-than-average sized school. Sometimes, the number of pupils with additional needs or those entitled to pupil premium funding can represent a very small cohort. Because of this, it is often difficult to identify trends in outcomes for particular groups of pupils. Detailed scrutiny of current pupils' work across a range of subjects shows that, overall, pupils typically make good progress in key stages 1 and 2. This is because the teaching has been strengthened.
- Pupils' work shows improving standards in a range of subjects, including science and religious education. Pupils have a wide variety of motivating opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. In science, pupils have a strong understanding of how to conduct a fair test. They are able to draw conclusions about what they have found out and use appropriate mathematical skills to present their results.
- In the past, pupils have made inconsistent progress across key stage 2, with progress in mathematics being well below average. The outcomes of current pupils are strong, with most now making good progress. While some gaps still exist, these are closing quickly.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective actions taken by leaders have successfully strengthened the quality of learning in the early years. The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are strong. As a result, all groups of children make good progress from their varied starting points.

- Staff have sharpened assessment systems. Teachers check the accuracy of their judgements on pupils' progress with colleagues across the trust. There is a consistent approach to observing the children at work and at play. Staff use questions carefully to challenge children appropriately. The children's books show they make good progress.
- Statutory requirements for early years are met and specific funds are used correctly. For example, funding to support disadvantaged children is used effectively and these children make strong progress from their starting points.
- The development of children's language skills is a high priority. There are many opportunities for children to talk with adults, and these adults develop their vocabulary effectively. The teacher plans activities carefully to teach the children new vocabulary. When exploring a range of water activities, children were able to explain how the water would 'overflow' or that adding a coloured dye would make the water 'darker'.
- Children learn to read with increasing confidence. They are able to use their knowledge of phonics to attempt to read unfamiliar words. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics well.
- Children are keen to participate in the various activities that are available to them. They are enthusiastic to explore their world and take notice of the things around them. They are keen to use the skills they learn when working with an adult in their independent play. For example, the inspector observed a group of boys, who were playing with large toy insects, create a story using the language they had explored during the previous day.
- Children behave well both in the classroom and the outside area. They cooperate well with their peers. Children are able to work independently when learning through play, although there are occasions when children spend too long on an activity because adults do not always direct their play enough.
- Parents receive useful information about the transition into school. Parents report that the staff are approachable and their children are well cared for. One parent stated that they 'were glad to have chosen Millbrook School'.
- Children are safe. Adults have paediatric first aid qualifications to help them meet the children's medical needs.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140334 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 10088324 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 103 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Mark Lees |
| Head of school | Peter Bell |
| Telephone number | 01752 822 471 |
| Website | www.millbrook.cornwall.sch.uk |
| Email address | millbrook@stbarnabasmat.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 31 January to 1 February 2017 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in four classes.
- The head of school started in post in September 2018.
- The school is part of the St Barnabus Multi-Academy Trust. The interim executive principal took up post in April 2018. A board of directors provides the governance for the schools in the trust. A local governing body was created in 2018.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below that found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the head of school. The inspector also observed the pupils' conduct at playtimes.
- The inspector reviewed an extensive range of pupils' work in books and on display and listened to pupils read. Assessment information in relation to the progress and standards achieved by current pupils was also considered.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and their plans for improvement. The inspector examined information about safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector held meetings with the head of school, executive headteacher and the leader responsible for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with three governors, including the chair of trustees. Meetings were also held with the interim executive principal of St Barnabus Multi-Academy Trust and other middle leaders from across the trust.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 to discuss their opinions about the school and their learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers during the inspection and considered written information from those unable to come to the school. He also considered the 40 responses to the Ofsted online parents' questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and considered the 9 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Paul Walker, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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