

Inspection of a good school: Millfield Primary School

Catshill Road, Brownhills, Walsall, West Midlands WS8 6BN

Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

Outcome

Millfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school gives pupils a wide variety of experiences, both in and out of school. Rarely does a day go by when a visit or learning in the outdoor environment is not happening. Wellingtons, waterproof suits and walking boots are as much a part of what pupils need for learning as paper and pencils are.

'Possibilities' is a key word at Millfield. Leaders look for ways to help staff and pupils to do even better. Pupils learn about the world beyond Brownhills. Parents and carers value the outdoor learning. They say this makes Millfield stand out for them.

Adults care for pupils and each other well, so everyone feels valued and is able to learn. Pupils respond to this care by behaving well and following the rules with respect. Unkind behaviour does not happen often but, if it occurs, adults deal with it. Whether on a computer, in a canoe or out on camp, pupils are safe and happy and enjoy school.

Leaders think carefully about how to help pupils to learn. Teachers teach lessons that help pupils know more and remember more over time. School leaders set high standards and staff say they feel valued for the hard work they do.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In Nursery and Reception, there is plenty do, touch, discover, look at and talk about. Nursery staff focus on helping pupils to speak well and to learn new words. Reception staff extend this further with subject-specific vocabulary, for example 'We are measuring.' Staff help children to be able to do things on their own. Children are safe, busy and happy. They are at home learning in the classroom and outside in the well-kept grounds. They are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

From the start of Reception, teachers give expert teaching of phonics. They make sure that the books that pupils read match the letters and sounds that pupils know. Teachers track pupils' reading. Teachers provide extra support that helps pupils who struggle with

reading to catch up. Reading is a thread that runs through every aspect of the day. Teachers believe that pupils should know what it feels like to 'lose yourself in a good book'. Pupils say, 'Teachers take you there with them' as they share stories at the end of the day.

All pupils study a broad range of subjects. Leaders have recently reviewed the way subjects are taught. They now structure learning in subjects through the theme 'revise, revisit, remember'. Leaders know this approach is working. They also know they need to keep checking and refining their approach. Pupils know this as 'do it, leave it, come back to it'. Pupils are knowing more and remembering more over time. Year 2 pupils told the inspector about their learning in mathematics in Year 1. They explained what is different about this learning now that they are in Year 2.

Teachers know their subjects well. They work together and support each other in areas where they are less confident. Leaders and teachers work with staff from other schools to grow their own teaching and leadership skills. Teachers are strong in their praise of and respect for leaders of the school and the federation.

Sometimes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able pupils do not get the right help they need to make good progress. Teachers' planning does not take enough account of what these pupils need. Leaders have already begun to address this issue.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils beyond the subjects they study. The school has adopted a stretch of the local canal. Pupils take responsibility for looking after this stretch of the canal. Pupils enthusiastically take part in many before- and after-school clubs. Here, they learn to sing, play sports and code. Indeed, such is the enthusiasm of many staff and pupils, they turn up for swimming and football at 7.30am in the morning. The girls' football team has played football in Spain. Many pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy the annual outdoor camps. Together, these experiences provide well for pupils' learning and broader development.

Good teaching, interesting topics and the amount of time spent widening pupils' learning outside keep poor behaviour to a minimum. Pupils are kind and considerate. Bullying is rare.

Parents say good things about the school. They report that they are pleased with their children's education, especially the outdoor learning programmes. One parent said: 'In a world where children playing outdoors is diminishing, Millfield is encouraging this, allowing children to be children, while still learning.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know their area and families well. They train staff well and regularly. This allows staff to know how to recognise if something is not quite right for a child and what to do about it. If a pupil does not turn up for school, staff find out why.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. There is a strong focus on every child being able to swim and having water safety and rescue skills because of the canal running through the local area.

Leaders and governors make sure that required pre-employment checks are in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils with SEND and the most able pupils do not get the right help they need to make good progress. Staff need to identify and seize opportunities to support and extend higher-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND so that they learn as well as they should.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum to build learning around revising, revisiting and remembering. Leaders need to continue to evaluate the changes made in the curriculum so that they can further refine the impact on children's ability to learn more and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8 March 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104203
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10111749
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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ross Doodson
Headteacher	Michelle Sheehy
Website	www.millfieldschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Cadmus Family of Schools Federation, which comprises four primary schools and two junior schools. It joined the federation in September 2017.
- Millfield Primary School and Alumwell Junior School share an executive headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Subjects considered as part of this inspection were reading, history and mathematics. The inspector carried out lesson visits to see these subjects being taught and looked at pupils' work. The inspector talked to pupils about their work. She spoke to teachers who taught these subjects and held discussions with subject leaders. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, head of school, deputy head of school, school business manager, chair of governors and subject leaders. The inspector also met with the chief operating officer of Cadmus Federation and the school improvement partner.
- The inspector explored safeguarding arrangements by reviewing safeguarding records, checking how risks are managed, talking to staff and pupils about how they keep safe and checking the school's single central record. She met with the school's designated

safeguarding lead and other staff from the safeguarding team.

- The inspector considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to pupils with SEND, pupil premium funding, safeguarding and child protection. The school's website was also checked.
- The inspector considered 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 20 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The inspector talked to pupils to gather their views about the school, behaviour, their safety and learning.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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