

Inspection of Millbrook Primary School

School Lane, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 7LB

Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Millbrook Primary School. They take pride in their achievements and rise to the high expectations of leaders, behaving well and working hard. They appreciate the improvements that leaders have made. Pupils learn increasingly well for example in phonics and mathematics. However, some subjects, such as reading, are still improving across the school.

The vast majority of pupils feel safe at the school. A handful are worried about bullying. This relates to incidents some years ago. When talking about the school now, pupils have confidence that staff take them seriously and sort out any worries, including about bullying or unkind behaviour. Some pupils are trained anti-bullying ambassadors. They lead assemblies and support others well.

Pupils like the new behaviour reward system. They are keen to show their 'Millbrook Manners' through thoughtful and courteous behaviour.

Pupils also enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. These help pupils to develop their confidence and communication skills. The opportunities start from Nursery, when children regularly visit a local care home. They continue for all pupils and include a sports leader award and a 'junior citizens' scheme.

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

Senior leaders have high ambition for the school. Since taking post in September 2019, they have been systematically evaluating and improving the curriculum. They have prioritised this work to make sure that changes in each subject are secure before moving on to the next. As a consequence, phonics and mathematics are taught well and pupils' achievement is improving. In these subjects, learning is carefully sequenced. It is demanding and matches what pupils need to know next. Staff quickly identify any pupils who need extra help or are at risk of falling behind. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps all pupils to develop secure knowledge and skills in these subjects, catching up if needed. Subjects that senior leaders have not yet addressed, such as science, are not taught in such a rigorous or logical way.

The work to improve the reading curriculum was started more recently. As with phonics and mathematics, leaders have a well-considered plan. They have invested in high-quality reading books for all year groups. These are matched to pupils' reading levels and enrich their learning. Leaders are training staff to make sure that learning is sequenced in a way that will enable pupils to build their knowledge well. Currently, this is not the case across the school. Where staff have been trained, the improvements are promising. Leaders had scheduled this training for the days of the inspection.

Senior leaders are developing other leaders across the school. Until recently, improvements have been driven by senior leaders or colleagues from the Vale Academy Trust (VAT) multi-academy trust. The trust provides useful and effective support for staff at all levels. Staff feel very positive about the improvements over the past year. They feel valued and appreciate the opportunities afforded by being part of VAT. The support for physical education (PE) has been particularly effective.

Alongside strengthening academic subjects, leaders have improved the wider curriculum. Citizenship is a key focus for the school. Leaders have forged strong links with the local community. Pupils make the most of the vibrant school library and also enjoy their visits to the community library. As a result of this work, many pupils now hold their own borrower cards and visit regularly.

Leaders have also promoted pupils' cultural development. For example, pupils enjoyed learning songs from a range of different cultures in their music lessons. Reception children and pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 sang these with relish during assembly.

Early years is a strength of the school. Children benefit from carefully designed activities. These build on what children can already do. Consequently, children acquire more skills and knowledge, including with phonics and mathematics. Staff are knowledgeable about what to teach and how best to teach it. They make sure that children, including those with SEND, receive support that helps them to learn well.

Leaders have worked hard to engage parents and carers. This has been particularly effective for parents of children in early years. This group are very positive about the school. However, parents of pupils who have been at the school for longer have seen much change. Some find this disconcerting and others are worried that the poor behaviour of the past will return. Inspectors saw no signs of these previous behaviours. Indeed, they saw pupils behaving well and displaying positive attitudes to school and learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff have a detailed understanding of safeguarding issues and processes. Consequently, all at the school play their part in keeping pupils safe. As part of this, staff teach pupils how to recognise risk and keep themselves safe, including when online.

Records are kept well. Those in the inclusion team scrutinise these to spot any patterns or indications that action might be needed. They take appropriate and timely action. They make good use of external support and make sure that information is shared with those who need to have it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where senior leaders have addressed deficiencies in the curriculum, they have made improvements. They are working systematically through curriculum design and delivery, ensuring that each part is securely improved before moving on. Leaders need to build quickly on this improvement work so that each subject is sequenced coherently, builds pupils' knowledge and raises their attainment.
- Much of the improvement work has been led by senior leaders and the trust. The development of leadership at all levels in the school needs to continue so that improvement accelerates.
- Leaders are working hard to develop an effective relationship with parents. This is not yet as strong as either group would like. Leaders need to make sure that communication with parents is effective so that parents understand the journey the school is on and how they can best support it.

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 the school and 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	141364
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10111421
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joe Pillman
Headteacher	Steve Rose (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.millbrookschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been many changes to staffing since the last inspection. The previous headteacher left at Easter 2019. The trust provided an acting headteacher until September 2019 when a substantive executive headteacher started. A new deputy headteacher joined in September 2019. They are supported by leaders from the trust. Approximately 40% of the staff have joined the school in the last two years.
- The local governing body has also changed, with most members starting their terms of office in September 2019.
- The school joined VAT in December 2014.
- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, the inclusion team and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body. She also met with the chief executive officer and director of learning from the trust.
- We spoke to pupils from every year group about the school.
- We took account of the 69 responses by parents to Ofsted’s Parent View, including 40 written responses.
- We considered the views of staff from conversations and the 37 responses to Ofsted’s online staff survey.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing knowledge, recording and actions of staff and leaders. We did this through conversations, looking at documentation and sampling case files. An inspector also looked at the school’s single central record. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and the inclusion team. We also spoke with pupils, staff and governors about this aspect of their work.
- We did deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, PE and history. These involved discussions with the leaders of each of these subjects, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils’ work and discussions with pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the subjects. We also looked at leaders’ plans and pupils’ books from writing.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

Charlotte Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020