

Inspection of Millbrook School

Gews Corner, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 9BX

Inspection dates:

3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Millbrook School is welcoming and inviting. This is a multicultural school where pupils speak many different languages. Pupils learn about each other's cultures and backgrounds. They are keen to learn Mandarin, the school's chosen modern foreign language.

The school has been through a period of staff changes. Children make a good start and learn well in early years. However, pupils in key stage 1 are having to work hard to make up for gaps because of previous weaker or disrupted teaching. Pupils in key stage 1 do not achieve as well as they should, especially in writing.

Behaviour has improved as pupils understand the rules. Most pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy learning. Sometimes poor behaviour disrupts learning in lessons. When pupils' behaviour is not good, adults support pupils in making the right choices.

Pupils have written an anti-bullying charter, as they believe that every child has the right to feel happy and safe in school. Pupils understand that bullying is wrong. If they have any worries pupils say that they can speak to an adult or add a note to the 'chill and chat' box. They know that adults will listen to concerns and quickly sort them out.

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

The newly appointed headteacher is determined and ambitious for pupils through the school's vision 'believe and achieve'. He has quickly gained an understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to improve.

Leaders have organised the curriculum in a way that helps pupils to build their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Exciting visits bring the curriculum alive and expand pupils' knowledge of the world around them.

Many subject leaders are new to their roles. They are learning from each other and from support provided by the local authority. However, they are not rigorous enough in checking that the school's curriculum plans are being implemented consistently in all subjects and all year groups. Teachers do not always check for any gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on to the next task, so pupils do not always build on their learning in lessons.

Leaders give reading a high priority. Pupils say they enjoy reading. They were excited to read in the school's Harry Potter-themed library. Adults carefully plan and structure phonics sessions so that pupils build up their knowledge of phonics. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding of texts and new vocabulary. Pupils share high-quality texts, often linked to their topic themes. For

example, Year 6 pupils read 'Explorers', which stimulated them to write about rain forests. Older pupils produce high-quality writing. In contrast, younger pupils have gaps in their grasp of basic skills and are still catching up. Historically, expectations in key stage 1 have not been high enough.

In mathematics and science, the curriculum is well planned and ordered logically. This means that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding. They increasingly use what they know to solve problems and carry out investigations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now have their needs identified. The curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' specific needs. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides effective support to ensure that teachers know how to help pupils. Pupils with more complex needs access a nurture group, which supports them in settling more quickly to learning in the classroom.

Early years is an exciting and stimulating place to learn. Children are encouraged to investigate and explore their environment. Adults plan activities that develop early writing, reading and mathematics. Adults use questioning well to extend play. Children show good concentration to see activities through. After reading the book 'The Way Back Home' children created shopping lists for making a jam sandwich for a character who was stuck on the moon. They then posted their writing into their home-made rocket. Children are quick to follow clearly established routines. Children choose their learning and resources. They select the things they want to use and tidy them away when they have finished.

Attendance has been too low in the past. Pupils know that they are expected to be in school 'every day and on time'. Attendance is improving as a result.

Pupils' personal development is good. As members of the Junior School Council, pupils discuss and debate issues that interest them and make a difference to improving their school. Pupils learn about staying healthy and looking after themselves, both mentally and physically, in personal, social and health education lessons. They enjoy taking part in an increasing range of sports.

Governors and leaders care about staff workload and well-being. Staff feel supported and valued by leaders as part of the Millbrook team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. The right checks are completed on staff before they start to work at the school. Staff know the pupils well and this, along with regular safeguarding updates, enables them to be vigilant in identifying and reporting concerns.

Records are well organised. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are quick to act on concerns. They work with outside agencies, so that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different ways, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have outlined their intent for the curriculum clearly. However, there are variations in the implementation of the curriculum in some subjects and some year groups. Leaders need to ensure that their intended curriculum is being implemented consistently in all year groups and subjects when designing the learning. Teachers need to consistently check what pupils already know and understand when planning work. They should address where pupils have gaps in their learning so that all pupils can catch up quickly.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as it should be in key stage 1. Pupils do not apply the skills they have learned independently when writing. Teachers should ensure that pupils are fluent with basic skills, such as grammar, punctuation and spelling by the end of key stage 1.
- Subject leaders' work supports senior leaders' ambitious intentions for the curriculum. However, subject leaders are new to their leadership roles. Senior leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders have the knowledge and skills to check the quality of education and identify areas for improvement precisely.

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	117379
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10121356
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Veronica Westell
Headteacher	Peter Hilton
Website	www.millbrook.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up the post in April 2019. There have been changes within the leadership team, which now includes the deputy headteacher and a new assistant headteacher. The SENCo took up the post in January 2020. A high number of teachers have left or joined the school.
- This is a multicultural school, where the proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is higher than in other schools nationally.
- The school runs a breakfast club and several after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the learning support mentor and teachers. We met several groups of pupils to talk about behaviour, safety and their learning across the curriculum. We also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and looked at minutes of governing body meetings. We held a telephone conversation with the SENCo and a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate safeguarding, we held meetings with the designated safeguarding leader, and spoke with pupils, staff and governors to check safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also checked the school's processes for checking the suitability of adults who work with pupils and who visit the school.
- To gather their views, we talked to staff about their workload and about the quality of the training and support they receive.
- We considered the 15 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online and free-text survey. We also spoke with parents on the playground at the beginning of the day.
- We undertook 'deep dives' into the following subjects: reading, writing, mathematics and science. We spoke to leaders of the subjects, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, and looked at pupils' work in order to understand the quality of education. We also took a broad overview of pupils' work in subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Pauline MacMillan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector

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