

Inspection of Milwards Primary School and Nursery

Paringdon Road, Harlow, Essex CM19 4QX

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Milwards Primary School and Nursery are polite, respectful and keen to learn. Pupils participate in a range of opportunities that are available to them. Pupils enjoy activities such as tending to the beehives and performing at the Royal Albert Hall. Pupils have a good understanding of British values such as mutual respect.

Pupils enjoy attending school. The school vision, 'Everybody is equal, and everybody is accepting,' is lived out daily and is evident in the way pupils behave towards each other. Pupils said, 'there is no bullying in this school'. Pupils are taught how to be good friends. Breaktimes are a valuable social time when pupils play cooperatively together.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that prepares pupils socially and emotionally for their next stages of learning and adult life. Pupils have additional opportunities to links with outside organisations. This includes, for example, engineering links with the local college.

Staff know families well and have built strong relationships within the community. Parents and carers are typically positive about leaders' work. However, leaders know that there is still work to do in improving the content and detail of the curriculum in all subject areas.

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

The newly appointed senior leaders and the staff want the best for all pupils. Leaders know where the curriculum needs to improve. Some subjects, such as history, have new curriculum plans in place. However, the review of the curriculum is recent work. Therefore, it is too early to see the impact of the plans on how well pupils achieve.

There are curriculum plans in place for some subject areas that are more developed. Where this is the case, in subjects such as mathematics and science, leaders have planned the key concepts and vocabulary they want pupils to learn. Consequently, teachers are teaching the knowledge and skills pupils need in these curriculum areas to ensure that pupils know and remember more.

There is not a clear strategy for the teaching of reading. There is not a phonics programme in place for teaching sounds and early reading to the youngest children. Books are not routinely well matched to the sounds that pupils know. Adults are not using consistent approaches to help pupils become successful readers. Leaders have not been monitoring the quality of the early reading curriculum well enough. This results in some pupils struggling to become fluent readers.

Younger pupils enjoy being read to. Teachers focus on important vocabulary. For older pupils, the choice of texts is ambitious, and pupils are enthusiastic about what they are reading.

The curriculum in early years does not set out clearly what content children need to learn and why. Staff do not always have a clear view of what they want children to know and remember. Teachers have not received enough training on the revised early years curriculum. The youngest children display high levels of independence and are kind to each other. Adults support children by providing reassurance and praise.

Staff know pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well, including in the resource provision for pupils with SEND. All staff have received effective training to support pupils' specific needs. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with professionals and external agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils. Teachers adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND are able to achieve.

All staff have very high expectations of pupils. The well-considered behaviour policy is consistently applied. Where necessary, the behaviour policy is adapted for pupils with specific needs. Pupils respond well because they understand what is expected of them. Staff seek to understand the reasons behind pupils' negative behaviour and provide ways for pupils to calm down and think about situations.

Leaders take many opportunities to provide for pupils' personal development exceptionally well. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are supported to participate in a range of clubs and additional experiences. Pupils are developing a sense of right and wrong and have a secure understanding of British values. Pupils have the chance to apply for roles such as being a 'computer technician' or an 'eco-warrior'.

Both the local governing body and the board of trustees understand and carry out their statutory responsibilities. Governors check information provided by leaders during visits and meetings. Trustees ensure that governors do not shy away from holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the school. Governors have challenged leaders to prioritise staff well-being because of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

Staff feel valued and well supported by leaders. They are proud to be part of the 'Milwards family'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know pupils well and understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Concerns are logged by staff and monitored by leaders. Leaders ensure that pupils and families receive the help they need quickly. When necessary, cases are referred to local authority agencies and support services.

Leaders are regularly trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including being able to check that adults are suitable to work with pupils. Leaders ensure that the

curriculum plans support teachers to teach pupils about keeping themselves safe and ensure that pupils are aware of risks and know what to do if they are feeling unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not have a well-sequenced reading curriculum that includes a systematic phonics scheme. Pupils are not routinely reading books that closely match the sounds they are learning. This means that pupils are not getting off to a good start with their reading. Leaders need to plan and implement a reading curriculum that is well thought through and is started from when children first start school. Leaders need to train staff to deliver the chosen phonics scheme and reading curriculum. This needs to be closely monitored by leaders to ensure consistency throughout the school, to make sure that the youngest children have the best chance to become fluent readers from an early age.
- The curriculum plans in early years are not clear enough about what children need to learn. Children in early years do not always have the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for their next stage of learning. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans in early years are clearer about what leaders want children to learn. These plans need to specify what children must or need to know across all the different areas of learning. Leaders need to ensure that staff are trained to use these plans effectively so that children are well prepared for Year 1.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	144631
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10200552
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	202
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Cairns
Headteacher	Michael Doughty
Website	www.milwards.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Milwards Primary School and Nursery became a sponsored academy school in July 2017.
- Since 2017, the school has had significant changes to leadership and staffing. The current headteacher and assistant headteacher took up post in September 2021. The SENCo joined the school in April 2021.
- The separate Nursery and Reception classes merged to become an early years unit in January 2020.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. It provides education for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. This provision has been undergoing closure procedures and will officially close on 31 December 2021.
- The school uses one alternative provider based at the Cooks Spinney Academy.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the SENCo. Meetings were held with the chair of the local governing body (by telephone) and two members of the board of trustees. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about personal, social and health education, looked at a sample of pupils' writing and visited some art lessons. Inspectors spoke to a sample of parents and to pupils in the breakfast club and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and spoke to staff and pupils. They looked at a range of safeguarding records, behaviour logs and case files to evaluate safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school information, including documents on the school's website, leaders' improvement plans, and minutes of governing body and board of trustees meetings. They also reviewed the school's curriculum plans.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, from this academic year, and 21 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. There were no responses to the staff survey or the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Hannah Stoten

Her Majesty's Inspector

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