

Inspection of Mile Oak Primary School

Graham Avenue, Portslade, Brighton, East Sussex BN41 2WN

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
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 feel happy and safe at this school. They know that staff have high expectations for every one of them. Staff encourage pupils to follow the school's vision and 'Think Big' about what they can achieve in the future.

Pupils are proud to belong to the school. They enjoy the range of experiences on offer. Mental and physical health are strong themes in the school's work to support pupils. The outdoor learning environment, for example, gives pupils a deep appreciation of the natural world. The large vegetable garden, which is situated at the heart of the school, is carefully tended by pupils. In the forest school, pupils have the time and space to explore their relationship with nature, as well as how they work as a team.

Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. They enjoy developing their leadership skills and taking on increasing responsibilities. Playground buddies, for example, help to make sure that playtimes are a happy and fun experience for everyone. Older pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved a lot. They say that there is hardly any bullying. Should an incident occur, staff deal with it well.

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

This is a well-led school. Since the arrival of the new senior leadership team, there have been rapid improvements in all aspects of school life. In most subjects, the curriculum is well designed. Leaders have thought carefully about the important concepts they want pupils to learn. Content is deliberately chosen to interest and inspire pupils. It is well planned to ensure that pupils build their knowledge and skills sequentially from the early years through to Year 6. However, in some foundation subjects, such as art and history, leaders are still refining how they intend pupils to learn key knowledge. This means that sometimes, pupils do not remember information about these subjects as well as they could.

In the Reception Year, staff ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future learning. There is a strong focus on ensuring that children's language and communication skills are well developed. Parents are well supported to be fully involved in their children's learning. There are regular meetings about the curriculum and many helpful resources on the school's website.

Pupils enjoy learning to read. Phonics skills are precisely taught by well-trained staff. Most pupils make quick progress from learning the basics to fluently reading books. Leaders plan carefully to ensure that pupils also develop a wide vocabulary. Pupils have a love of books. Most can talk confidently about their favourite book or author. The school's two libraries are well stocked. They include a range of books that broaden pupils' understanding across many subjects.

Assessment is well used to check how much pupils can remember about their learning. In mathematics, for instance, pupils' knowledge and understanding are checked carefully before moving on to more challenging content.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained to identify the right additional support required. They provide effective help in lessons so that pupils with SEND can successfully learn alongside their peers.

Pupils behave well around the school. In lessons, pupils listen to instructions carefully. Pupils are usually fully engaged in their learning. Around the school, pupils show respect and kindness to one another.

Leaders and staff provide many opportunities for pupils' personal development. A key feature of this is the support provided to pupils to become responsible citizens. Pupils learn the importance of respect, both for themselves and others. Pupils are given a good awareness of issues related to equality. They know that it is wrong to discriminate against people due to their age, gender, disability or sexual orientation. There is a strong focus on showing pupils how to stay healthy by maintaining an active lifestyle. Pupils learn about the importance of eating a balanced diet. They learn to cook healthily.

Staff feel well supported at this school. They say that leaders have made the changes that were needed while being mindful of their everyday workload. All staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were proud to work at this school. They praise the many improvements that have been made and appreciate the opportunities for professional development.

Parents are largely supportive of the school. But some did express concerns about issues such as the pace of the recent changes. Governors are effective in challenging and supporting leaders. They are highly experienced and have the appropriate skills to hold leaders to account. Governors share leaders' high aspirations for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders ensure that pupils' well-being and safety take paramount importance. Staff are well trained to spot any pupil who is potentially at risk, such as through neglect. Those who are responsible for safeguarding meet regularly to discuss pupils' welfare. Strong partnerships are established with families. Leaders help to make sure that families receive the right support from external agencies when needed.

Leaders ensure that pupils take responsibility for their own safety. In Year 2, for example, they learn about keeping safe at home and in the wider community. Pupils learn how to stay safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, such as art and history, the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to know are not always clearly defined. This can act as a barrier to what pupils know and remember in these subjects. Leaders should set out precisely the intended knowledge that pupils are expected to learn across the curriculum.

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	114430
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10211712
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rosalind Turner
Headteacher	Luke Lording
Website	www.mileoakschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The leadership team is new to the school since the last inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders. They met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspectors spoke to representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, art, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met

with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Pupils from different year groups were met with to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school improvement plan, school evaluation, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- Safeguarding was considered through discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff. Inspectors looked at records related to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- There were 121 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 73 free-text comments from parents. Inspectors also took into account 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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