

Inspection of a good school: Millbrook Combined School

Mill End Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 4BA

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Millbrook feel happy and safe. Pupils are proud to attend school. They describe the school as 'amazing', 'fantastic' and 'caring'. Pupils value the warm and caring relationships that they have with staff.

Pupils are polite and welcoming and have lovely manners. They follow the 'Millbrook Message', treating everyone with friendliness and care. Pupils know about the different types of bullying. Staff encourage pupils to talk about how they are feeling. They say that bullying can happen, but teachers and other staff deal with it.

There are many opportunities on offer inside and outside the classroom. Pupils enjoy swimming, learning a musical instrument and trips that help deepen their learning. Opportunities such as the recent performance at the Royal Albert Hall help pupils acquire new skills as well as creating fond memories. Pupils appreciate that these activities help to develop their different talents.

The school has grown in size, yet staff and pupils continue to see the school as a close-knit community. This helps pupils develop a strong understanding of their community and the different faiths and cultures within it.

Leaders have high expectations and recognise that further improvements are needed to ensure that all pupils achieve highly across the school, including making sure that all pupils can read confidently and fluently.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils and want the best for every child. In many subjects, such as mathematics and physical education (PE), leaders have

thought carefully about what pupils will learn. For example, children in the early years are taught about the importance of physical activity. As they move up the school, they learn different sporting skills. Staff support pupils well to help them build on previous learning and improve their understanding of the importance of staying healthy and active. Curriculum plans clearly lay out the PE knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn. Pupils enjoy PE and older pupils spoke about how it keeps them 'emotionally healthy' and supports their mental health.

The mathematics curriculum is a strength. Teachers follow a well-structured curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. They have been well trained and are supported well by leaders. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) early, which ensures that learning can be adapted effectively. There is a strong focus on the teaching of early mathematics and key vocabulary to support pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, children in the early years could describe the patterns they were creating. In year 5, pupils were learning about fractions and could describe their calculations using the correct language.

Pupils enjoy reading. Leaders have thought carefully about the books that they want the children to enjoy and listen to. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their class novels they have read. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start Nursery. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge to recognise and read words. In reading lessons, teachers support pupils to understand texts. That said, there is not a consistent approach to the teaching of reading because staff teach phonics in different ways. This means that the approaches taken by teachers to help pupils read, including pupils with SEND, vary in quality. Some pupils also do not get enough practice because the books they read are not well matched to the sounds they know.

Personal development at the school has many strengths. There is a wide choice in what pupils can experience beyond the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective in the Millbrook Faith Garden. When the children arrive in the early years, staff model the school values of respect and tolerance. Children respond well and this helps them get along happily in learning and in play.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the wider world. The children visit places of worship and raise money for charities. Pupils learn to respect people's differences and diversity well. One pupil said: 'It's amazing to be at a school with so many different languages.'

Pupils' behaviour is very good. Staff know and use the school's approach to behaviour management. Pupils cooperate well in lessons and socialise well at breaktimes and in the dining hall. They take on positions of responsibility within the school, such as play leaders and house captains.

The headteacher supports staff well. Staff value the training they receive and agree that leaders consider their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at Millbrook.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the teaching of phonics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know they can speak to a trusted adult if they have any worries. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Staff understand the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. All staff receive detailed and regular training. Strong communication between members of the safeguarding team ensures that they all understand the needs of their pupils and families well. Staff work well with outside agencies to help and support pupils' well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that there is a coherent curriculum for teaching phonics. Teachers do not make sure that pupils practise reading from books that match sounds they know. This means that not all pupils read as confidently and as accurately as they should. Leaders need to carefully monitor the implementation of the new reading curriculum. This includes providing further training and support so that all staff have the expertise they need to help all pupils read fluently.

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/outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on March 2013.

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	131815
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10211240
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	692
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Montague
Headteacher	Debra Mansfield
Website	www.millbrookcombinedschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with three classes in each year group. The school has increased in size since the last inspection.
- There have been leadership changes since the last inspection, with the appointment of new assistant headteachers and a new chair of governors.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the governing body. The lead inspector had a phone call with the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the 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. The inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects in the curriculum.

- The inspectors considered 10 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including nine free-text responses. They also considered 177 responses to Ofsted's confidential pupil online survey and 38 responses to the staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors looked at the school's training records, spoke with pupils and checked staff's safeguarding knowledge to ensure that pupils are safe. Meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead and the school's special educational needs coordinator.

Inspection team

David Harris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kimberley Kemp

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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