

Inspection of a good school: The Mill Academy

Lobwood, Worsbrough Bridge, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 5EP

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

The Mill Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils uphold the academy's expectations for behaviour. There are three rights in the behaviour policy: the right to learn, to be safe and to be treated with respect. Staff consistently apply these rights to ensure that the academy is a happy and safe environment for pupils. Pupils know there are consequences if they do not uphold the three rights. They agree that the consequences are fair. For example, if they do not complete a directed task, they miss some of their playtime. Pupils who display challenging behaviour receive the right support from leaders, the pastoral adviser and external agencies to be successful.

Children in early years respond swiftly to adult instruction. This is because routines are well established.

Pupils know what bullying is. They are confident that if it happened, an adult would sort it out.

Leaders have created a life-skills curriculum to support pupils' personal development. The curriculum lists events that leaders want pupils to experience by the end of each year. These are skills linked to cooking, communicating, outdoor learning and travel. For example, by the end of Year 4, pupils will use utensils such as sieves and graters to make a simple meal.

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

Pupils in early years and key stage 1 receive daily phonics teaching. They learn a new sound every day. Adults consistently use the language associated with the programme so that clear routines are established. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to read new words. Adults support effectively; they encourage and help pupils re-read words that are tricky. Adults check what sounds pupils remember during the phonics session. This enables teachers to move pupils into a different group without waiting for the six-week checkpoint. Pupils who need extra

phonics support receive one-to-one tutoring every afternoon. This ensures that pupils keep up with the pace of the programme.

Teachers ably adapt the mathematics programme so that the curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have mathematics support that is specific to their need. They have access to adult support or to concrete and pictorial representations. Lessons start with five minutes of fast recall with an arithmetic focus. Teachers base questions on misconceptions or areas that pupils are finding difficult to recall. This helps to ensure that pupils are continually exposed to these mathematical concepts. Staff have developed a mathematics fluency grid that indicates the maths facts they want the pupils to remember, without the need for working out. This helps to develop pupils' automaticity.

Leaders have developed progression documents based on the national curriculum expectations for each aspect of the wider curriculum. There are three drivers that underpin the academy's curriculum. These are: to have the courage to be creative, the strength to be resilient and the knowledge to be world-wise. Subject ambassadors are responsible for leading the planning and reviewing the quality of a subject. They have identified the vocabulary and end points for units of work. However, some subject ambassadors have not sufficiently identified the small steps of learning to meet the end points. This means teachers do not have the detail to support them to implement these plans effectively.

Leaders recognise that checking what pupils know in the wider curriculum is still in development. Leaders and teachers discuss pupil progress but do not evidence it. Leaders plan to use quizzes to analyse what pupils have learned and remembered.

The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator has identified two areas of high need within the academy. These are speech and language development and social, emotional and mental health needs. As a result, they have invested in a language programme to support speech, language and communication and attended training on supporting emotional well-being.

Leaders have a relationships, sex and health education curriculum that builds from early years to Year 6. Leaders ensure that there are high-quality resources and books available to support these lessons. Leaders celebrate events such as Mental Health Day, Anti-Bullying Week and Black History Month to raise pupil awareness. A mental health champion works with pupils who need extra support with their well-being. They support pupils to find ways to manage their emotions.

The trust and local governing body have a good understanding of the strengths and the next steps for the academy. This means they can offer the right support and challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there are several designated safeguarding leads in the academy to meet the needs of the pupils. Leaders access regular training to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information to cascade to staff. Leaders share a key safeguarding question at the weekly staff meeting. This checks that adults are retaining essential safeguarding knowledge.

Leaders use a tiered approach to involving external agencies. Leaders look at the pupil's need and then apply the tiered approach. They determine whether to offer a package of academy support or to refer to an external agency. Pupils report any worries or concerns to an adult. Pupils know how to stay safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects in the wider curriculum are not sufficiently planned. Some subjects do not identify the small steps of learning pupils need to meet the end point. Without these small steps, pupils do not build their knowledge over time. Leaders should assure themselves that knowledge and skills build over time to meet the identified end points.
- Leaders do not have a procedure for checking what pupils know and remember across the wider curriculum. They use discussions between subject ambassadors and staff to exchange information. This does not give specific information on pupils' progress. Leaders should continue to develop the checks on pupils' knowledge to help influence future wider curriculum thinking.

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. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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.

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	141097
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10240458
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	220
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Cook
Headteacher	Rachel Chambers
Website	https://themill.stmarysacademytrust.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Mill Academy joined St Mary's Academy Trust in 2014.
- This is an average-sized primary academy.
- There is a higher than national percentage of pupils who receive pupil premium funding.
- The academy does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the academy received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the academy.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. Meetings were also held with representatives from the multi-academy trust and the local governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with the subject ambassador, spoke to pupils and teachers, visited lessons and looked at their work. The inspector heard pupils read.
- The inspector examined safeguarding records, attendance figures, curriculum plans and policies.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers from the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The views of staff were considered from meeting with them and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The views of pupils were considered from meetings with them and from Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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