

Inspection of a good school: Milking Bank Primary School

Milking Bank Primary School, Aintree Way, Milking Bank, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 2SL

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Outcome

Milking Bank Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know what is expected at Milking Bank Primary School. They are confident that the adults in school will always help them, and know that it is important to treat others with respect. In class and on the playground, they behave well. Disruption of any sort is rare.

Staff teach pupils how to spot bullying and report any concerns. Unkind or rough behaviour is rare. If it happens, staff are quick to intervene. Pupils feel very safe in school. They enjoy learning and playing with their friends.

Pupils take pride in their work and do their best. They have a strong voice in many aspects of school life. As part of the school's rights respecting work, pupils and staff have worked together to draw up agreements for how all should behave. Some pupils carry out leadership roles and act as positive role models for others to follow. Pupils of all ages know what it means to be a good friend.

Reading is taught well. Staff help pupils to develop a broad knowledge of books and language. There are strengths in other subjects too, but also some aspects that could be improved.

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

Milking Bank Primary is a friendly welcoming place in which to work and learn. Pupils, parents and staff speak positively about school life. They say that the school's 'charters' and expectations are fair and that pupils are well behaved in lessons. Inspection evidence supports these views. The school is a calm and orderly place. Classrooms are full of engaging displays of pupils' work that celebrate achievement and support learning. Disruption is rare, and pupils work hard. There is always a lot going on.

The headteacher and her senior team are very supportive to all in the school community. Staff morale is high. Teachers enjoy working at the school and say that leaders are

mindful of their workload and well-being. The high priority given to welfare matters has been recognised by a national award.

Reading is taught well. Leaders have adopted a phonics scheme that starts in the early years and continues through key stage 1, and further for those who need it. Once pupils have learned to read, staff continue to promote reading, both for pleasure and across the curriculum. They provide lots of books in class and regularly read stories and poems aloud for pupils' enjoyment. In addition, staff check carefully on pupils' progress and organise extra reading sessions for those who need a boost to keep up. Looking ahead, leaders plan to increase the stock of phonically decodable reading books for pupils to take home.

There are strengths in other subjects too. In all subjects, curriculum guidance covers a lot of ground and staff work hard to record the activities that pupils complete. In many areas of the curriculum, teachers plan exciting activities and take pupils out and about on trips. However, in some subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the crucial knowledge that all pupils need to know. Teachers provide lots of work for pupils, but do not emphasise the key things pupils need to embed in their long-term memories. Consequently, pupils complete tasks but do not necessarily remember the right things. It also means that teachers are not sure what to check when they assess pupils' progress. That said, leaders are strengthening practice in certain areas. For instance, recent staff training about fieldwork in geography has raised expectations.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders ensure that extra support is in place and take regular advice from other professionals.

In the early years, staff treat children kindly and support them to settle into school life. Along with early reading, number work is a daily routine. Staff provide lots of well-organised activities and children respond well. However, guidance about correct pencil grip and good posture when children first start to write is inconsistent. At times, this leads to some unhelpful early writing habits that staff then 'iron out' later on.

Beyond lessons, pupils can take on leadership roles, such as play leaders or ambassadors for the curriculum, well-being and other aspects. Pupils participate in a junior award scheme that is designed to build confidence. In addition, there are after-school clubs, day trips and special events that enrich learning and fuel pupils' interests. For example, during the inspection, key stage 2 pupils attended a very worthwhile Young Voices concert.

Governance is strong. Governors are informed about their responsibilities and are committed to supporting the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are up to date with safeguarding requirements and know a lot about local risks. They produce a weekly safeguarding newsletter for staff and governors. This keeps everyone informed about relevant matters and what to do in different situations.

Whenever staff have any safeguarding concerns, leaders follow these up properly and make sure the right things are done.

Staff teach pupils about healthy, safe relationships and how to manage everyday risks. Pupil anti-bullying and safeguarding ambassadors also help to share safety messages.

The school site is secure. All the correct checks on staff and visitors are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the crucial knowledge that all pupils need to learn, so as to help them with future learning. This means that teachers are not sure what all pupils need to know and remember to make meaningful progress. Leaders should continue to revise curriculum guidance and make sure that this is then put into practice to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn all that they should.
- The teaching of transcription in the early part of the school is inconsistent. This means that pupils do not get the best possible start with their letter formation and early writing. Leaders should review the approach to early writing so that all pupils are taught effective habits from the start.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 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.

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	103834
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10256988
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matt Cox
Headteacher	Karen Brass
Website	www.milking.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before and after-school childcare. Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and geography. In these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at the curriculum in other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught. She also observed some pupils reading.
- The inspector looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the

curriculum, extra-curricular activities and school improvement planning. She checked the school's website.

- The inspector asked school leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. She examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff and parents' views. She visited the after-school childcare club.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, school staff, pupils and a local authority representative.

Inspection team

Diane Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023