

Inspection of Mill Hill Community Primary School

Crosby Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 1AE

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and governors have developed a true 'community school', where parents and pupils feel welcome and valued. Every child joining Mill Hill becomes part of the school family, regardless of their needs. Parents, carers and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and the improvements they have seen. One parent summed up the views of many when saying, 'This is a lovely and caring school. The teachers care so much about the pupils.'

Pupils feel safe and trust the adults in school. They know that staff will deal with any worries that they may have. Bullying is rare, but if it happens, staff sort it out quickly. Pupils show respect towards each other, staff and visitors. In lessons, teachers motivate pupils to learn. Pupils listen carefully, join in and share ideas.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have thought carefully about the knowledge that pupils should learn in key stages 1 and 2. Determined staff are resolute that all pupils will learn to read. Pupils enjoy reading to Jack, the visiting therapy dog. Pupils enjoy their lessons and learn well across the range of subjects. For example, they learn to be confident scientists due to the effective balance of scientific knowledge and investigative skills in the science curriculum.

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

In the early years, children experience a safe, warm and nurturing learning environment. Staff know each child and their individual needs well. Staff help children to settle into school routines quickly. Leaders have clearly identified what children should learn in number and early reading. As a result, children learn to count, enjoy numbers and read well. However, leaders have not clearly defined what children should learn in other areas of the early years curriculum, such as understanding the world and expressive arts and design. Sometimes adults are not clear about what specific knowledge or vocabulary they are trying to develop when working with children in these areas. As a result, children in the early years do not build their knowledge over time as well as they could.

Leaders place a high emphasis on ensuring that pupils learn to read fluently. Every pupil in the Reception Year and key stage 1 reads to an adult every day. All staff are trained to teach the school's chosen phonics programme. They deliver lessons confidently and, as a result, pupils achieve well. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are supported through high-quality daily catch-up sessions. Pupils say that 'reading is the key to everything'. Teachers work hard to try and instil a love of reading so that pupils read at home, as well as at school.

Across key stages 1 and 2, pupils achieve well. They learn the planned curriculum and enjoy their lessons. Leaders' ambitions for pupils' mathematics learning are high. Pupils develop a strong understanding of number and can use their previous learning to tackle new mathematics concepts. Pupils develop into capable mathematicians and readers because the curriculum is carefully mapped out and

teaching activities meet the needs of all pupils.

Leaders have improved the curriculum in subjects such as science, geography and history greatly. They have developed a curriculum which exposes pupils to a growing body of knowledge and vocabulary over time. However, sometimes pupils forget important knowledge because teachers do not revisit content frequently enough or check that pupils have remembered what they have been taught.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. They access lessons with their friends and are fully included in school life. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with staff and professionals to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. Parents value this support highly. Pupils who join the school with behavioural needs are expertly supported to become happy, settled and successful learners.

Leaders value the personal development of pupils highly. They have developed an exciting 'imagination' programme. When following the programme, pupils learn to develop their creativity through working with artists, local businesses and members of the community such as care home residents and the local youth centre. Pupils learn to debate and disagree with each other respectfully. Pupils also support charities and have forged a link with a school in Uganda. Mill Hill brings the wider world to the daily classroom.

Pupils enjoy social time together. Playtime, lunchtime and breakfast club are calm and harmonious. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils. For example, at lunchtime, on mixed-age tables, older pupils take the lead to make sure that everyone has a happy and successful time together.

Attendance is high because pupils want to be in school. Leaders are relentless in tackling the reasons behind pupil absence. The committed governing body makes regular checks on absence levels and other aspects of school life. They gain valuable first-hand information about the offer for pupils so they can support leaders to keep improving the school.

Staff value the 'family first' ethos that leaders have instilled. They feel well supported and enjoy working as part of an appreciated and committed school team, where their workload and well-being is important to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders care deeply about the families in the community. They go the extra mile to ensure that pupils and their parents have access to the services and the help that they need. For example, the school is open for several days during the summer holidays for families to access advice and support should they require it.

All staff are highly vigilant and can quickly spot when a child or family may need

additional help. This is because training for staff is thorough and regularly revisited. Leaders check everyone understands the systems to keep pupils safe.

Governors regularly make checks on safeguarding practices. They check first hand that pupils feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not revisit or check the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This makes it difficult for pupils to remember important content. Leaders should work with teachers so that they help pupils to remember the most important knowledge, particularly in subjects in the wider curriculum.
- Leaders have not identified the knowledge and vocabulary that they want children to learn in some areas of the early years curriculum. This limits the knowledge and skills that children build in some areas. Leaders should ensure that staff help children to build knowledge and vocabulary well across all areas of the early years 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.

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	121330
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10255734
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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sheila Sutton
Headteacher	Rebecca Bainbridge
Website	www.millhill.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a governor-led Nursery has been opened. It has places for 24 children.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education provisions.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and art and design. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.

- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the SENCo, the early years lead, members of the governing body, the school business manager and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and spoke to leaders, staff, governing body members, the local authority representative and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at lunchtime, at playtime and during a visit to the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being. No responses were received to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mark Dent, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Zoe Carr

Ofsted Inspector

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