

Inspection of Mill Lane Primary School

Wellington Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Teesside TS18 1QX

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where all pupils are welcomed and cared for. Leaders ensure that pupils develop 'leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication' in everything that they do. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils are positive about their learning. They are keen to work hard in lessons.

Pupils start the morning with a free 'Magic Breakfast' in their classrooms. They look after each other and work hard to ensure everyone is treated with respect. This is demonstrated through pupils' good behaviour around the school. 'Playground Friends' support younger pupils in the school to encourage them to try out new play equipment and games. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils are taught about different types of bullying. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They feel confident to tell a member of staff if they are worried about anything. Bullying is rare. Leaders deal with it appropriately. Pupils learn about equality, fairness and the importance of respecting cultural differences. Leaders and staff are determined to prepare pupils to be responsible citizens of the future. Many pupils enjoy taking on the responsibility of being a member of the school council.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils from Nursery to Year 6. For each subject, leaders have made clear the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want pupils to learn. A high number of pupils learn to speak English after they join the school. Many of these pupils have gaps in their subject knowledge. A large proportion of pupils have SEND. Some pupils with SEND, including many with education, health and care plans, benefit from the expertise of staff in Class 7 and Class 8. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. They develop knowledge and understanding over time. This is because leaders make sure that pupils' needs are promptly identified. Pupils receive the support they need to learn the curriculum well from their different starting points.

In most subjects, including mathematics, teachers design activities that build on pupils' knowledge. For example, in Nursery, children learn to pair wellington boots. This helps to prepare children for later work in Year 1 where they count in multiples of two. In physical education (PE), pupils practise important skills. For instance, in tennis, the sports coach challenges older pupils to grip a tennis racquet correctly. This gives pupils the confidence to take part in whole-school sporting events. However, in history, recent changes to the curriculum have not been fully implemented. Some activities do not build well on pupils' prior knowledge.

Reading is a high priority in school. Leaders ensure staff have expert knowledge to teach pupils to read using the school's phonics programme. This includes pupils who do not speak English. Children in Nursery enjoy learning nursery rhymes and listening to stories such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Staff ensure children learn and understand important vocabulary. Children become familiar with letters and the sounds they make. This helps to prepare them for phonics lessons in Reception.

Leaders use assessment extremely well to identify pupils who need extra support in reading. Pupils have extra sessions to ensure they become successful readers. Some of the books provided for older pupils learning to read do not match their phonic knowledge. This means that these pupils do not have enough practice in reading and re-reading books to help them gain confidence.

Leaders make effective use of the resources available in Class 7 and Class 8. For example, they ensure that all staff benefit from specialist training. Leaders arrange for therapists and other experts to provide specialist support for pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt teaching and activities appropriately. Pupils with SEND learn well.

Children follow routines and expectations for behaviour and learning right from the start in Nursery. They develop resilience and independence with support from nurturing staff. High levels of respect ensure pupils behave well. A few pupils do not attend school often enough. Leaders are taking action to improve this.

The curriculum for pupils' character development is helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils with SEND acquire the knowledge they need to understand healthy relationships. Staff with expert knowledge help pupils to understand and manage strong emotions. This helps pupils to access the full curriculum. New pupils are welcomed by all. Pupils celebrate their 'global family'. Pupils have a strong knowledge of equality and different cultures. Leaders make effective links with local businesses. This helps pupils to make connections between the curriculum and future careers. There are a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs to ensure that all pupils develop their physical health and well-being. Activities include basketball and cricket.

Leaders ensure that staff receive training to help build their expertise. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate that leaders take action to support their workload and well-being. Governors show commitment to supporting the school. They challenge leaders to ensure the actions taken benefit all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff know pupils and their families well. This helps staff to be vigilant to concerns. Leaders make sure systems for reporting concerns are clear and thorough. They analyse records and use this information to make changes to

the curriculum. This means that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know how to stay safe online. Leaders work with different external agencies to support pupils and families if they need it.

Leaders make sure that appropriate checks have been made on all adults who work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, including history, the activities that teachers set for pupils do not sufficiently reflect the ambitious content of the intended curriculum. This means that some pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders need to make sure they continue to support teachers to ensure learning activities match the aims of the curriculum.
- Some older pupils at the early stages of learning to read do not read from books that match their phonic knowledge. This means that some pupils do not develop reading fluency and confidence quickly enough. Leaders should make sure that these pupils are given books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. These pupils do not benefit as well as they could from their education. Leaders need to continue to take action to reduce persistent absence.

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	111539
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10255716
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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barbara Peace-Ebanks
Headteacher	Sue Skillcorn
Website	www.milllane.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school hosts a local authority additionally resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. There are three pupils accessing this provision. The provision is led and managed by the special educational needs coordinator. The provision will close at the end of this academic year.
- The school has its own in-house provision called 'Class 7' and 'Class 8' for pupils with SEND.
- The number of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since September 2022.
- The school provides free breakfast for all the pupils on roll.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, senior and subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the vice-chair. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- A range of documents were also scrutinised, including minutes from governors' meetings, attendance information, behaviour logs, leaders' plans to improve the school and the school's website.
- The lead inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewing a range of documents, including the school's single central record. Inspectors spoke with pupils about how they are taught to stay safe.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, along with their written comments. An inspector also talked to pupils about their views on personal development and the wider school curriculum.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views on how leaders support them and took account of their responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cathy Lee	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