

Inspection of a good school: Mill Lodge Primary School

Aqueduct Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 1BT

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Mill Lodge Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this vibrant and inclusive school. Staff know their pupils well and have high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils live up to these. They try their best in lessons, have positive attitudes to learning and will ask for help when they need it. When pupils' behaviour falls below the standard expected, staff remind pupils of expectations and they respond positively.

Outdoor play and learning are particular favourites of pupils. The adventure-style playground includes activities that range from tree climbing, a mud kitchen, digging area and cycling. Older pupils develop their team-building skills by teaching younger children how to use the equipment. This increases all pupils' confidence.

Learning is linked to the 'six rights' that all pupils have. These rights are: to be healthy, learn, to be safe, to friendship, to play, and to their own beliefs. These are lived out by pupils throughout their time at the school.

The school offers a wide range of activities for pupils to take part in, including martial arts, tennis club and dance. Many pupils attend clubs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum for its pupils. The knowledge that pupils are expected to learn is organised logically from early years to Year 6. Teachers break down learning into small and manageable chunks for pupils to master. They know their pupils well and adapt the learning so that all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well. However, at times, some pupils find their work too easy. This is because the learning activities are not matched to what pupils already know and can do. As a result, these pupils miss out on opportunities to deepen their knowledge.

The provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. The school accurately identifies and assesses the needs of these pupils. They benefit from the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils in the Additional Resource Provision have their complex needs met well. They follow an appropriate curriculum that is matched to their cognitive ability. They are given the support they need to become more independent.

The school has prioritised reading and ensures that younger pupils and those who are at the early stages of reading get the phonic knowledge they need to be successful. Any pupils who fall behind with their reading receive extra support to help them catch up. As a result, these pupils read with fluency and with increasing accuracy. Pupils have many opportunities to read for pleasure. The book corners in classrooms and the library are used weekly by all pupils. The 'recommended reads' are also used to teach pupils about respecting different cultures, families and faiths. As a result, pupils respect the differences that exist outside of their school community.

Pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is integrated well into school life. It focuses on promoting equalities and diversity effectively. Pupils learn PSHE as soon as they start school in the early years. In computing, pupils learn about how to stay safe online and the possible dangers associated with this. Through assemblies, pupils learn to behave responsibly and respectfully. In religious education, pupils learn to understand the different beliefs that exist, and the importance of respecting these differences in today's society. PSHE topics are well matched to pupils' age and understanding. In Nursery, children learn what is right and wrong through story time, and in Year 6 pupils are taught to challenge stereotypes. They know that it is wrong to treat others unfairly because of certain characteristics, including their gender, age and race. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

The school has ensured that pupils' interests are at the heart of all that it does. Staff report high levels of support and enjoy working at the school. The school communicates and engages effectively with parents. Leaders are always thriving to be better. They know what their school does well and what it needs to do to be even better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, pupils find their work too easy. This is because some of the learning activities are not well matched to build on what pupils already know and can do. This means some pupils do not gain a deeper understanding of key knowledge. The school should ensure that staff use information about pupils' different starting points to provide pupils with appropriate work that helps them to progress well and gain a good depth of knowledge.

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 school to be good in July 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	104057
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10294505
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	240
Appropriate authority	Board of governors
Chair of governing body	Katie Andrews
Headteacher	Joanne Challender
Website	www.mill-lodge.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND who have an autism spectrum disorder. There are nine pupils who attend the provision aged five to 11.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the teacher in charge at the Additional Resource Provision, the designated safeguarding lead and governors.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also visited lessons in English and in the Additional Resource Provision.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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