

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Millgate School

18a Scott Street, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 6DW

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

Outcome

Millgate School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sara Marsh. This school is part of Discovery Schools Academies Trust Ltd, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Stone, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Bettsworth.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school continues to provide high-quality education and care for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have a united passion for pupils to achieve their highest potential.

Staff know and understand the pupils very well. Pupils develop strong working relationships with staff. Pupils know they can achieve here and respond well to the high expectations set for them. They feel happy and cared for. They engage with learning tasks with increasing resilience. Pupils recognise the positive changes in themselves since joining the school.

Staff support pupils to understand and manage their emotions. They help pupils to adapt to change and interact positively with each other. They also help pupils to understand their own needs and those of others. Pupils are polite and considerate and are welcoming to visitors. Almost all pupils see marked improvements in their attendance and behaviour over time.

The personal development of pupils is excellent. The school provides them with a vast range of experiences that prepare them well for their next steps. As one pupil stated, 'I have become a better version of myself academically and most of all socially, and I am ready to start at college.'

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

The school's work to promote pupils' broader development is impressive. The highly effective 'pillars' curriculum and six 'learning characters' ensure that pupils have high aspirations as to where their learning can take them. Pupils benefit from a strong careers programme. They know how to make well-informed choices and are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils 'give back' to the local community through volunteering opportunities. They support each other through respecting their differences and celebrating everyone's 'peaks' achievements. Learning is not limited to the classroom. Pupils develop valuable caring responsibilities as they look after the school's many animals, including several pupils' favourite goats, Mini and Tina. Pupils engage in a vast array of visits, some of which include local places of worship and places of interest that build their cultural awareness. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school has an ambitious vision to ensure that all pupils become successful learners. Staff foster a readiness in pupils to learn with the resilience they need to achieve. Pupils access subjects from the national curriculum at a level that is appropriate for them. They develop their understanding of English and mathematics through a well-structured curriculum. Older pupils benefit from vocational experiences and courses in animal care, sports leadership, catering, and hair and beauty.

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to present information clearly and to engage pupils in interesting learning activities. They are skilled in using questioning and encouragement to motivate and help pupils learn. Teachers make precise checks on what pupils know and need to learn next. They provide work for pupils that builds on their previous learning. This allows pupils to deepen their knowledge of the topics they are studying.

Reading has been prioritised for all pupils. The school's reading programme engages pupils who have previously been disinterested in reading with carefully chosen texts that feed their imaginations. Pupils who are at the earlier stages of learning to read benefit from a programme that systematically builds their phonics knowledge. The scheme is carefully delivered by well-trained staff. This support is helping many pupils to become more accurate and fluent readers.

Staff support pupils with their social, emotional and mental health difficulties. They are experts at providing the pastoral support pupils need to feel safe and ready to learn. Staff know the things that might upset or 'trigger' pupils. Pupils try hard to manage their emotions and regulate their behaviour. A significant number of pupils find it difficult to attend the school due to their complex anxieties. A team of dedicated staff goes above and beyond to support families to ensure that all pupils' attendance improves.

Staff feel well supported. They appreciate the effort made to reduce their workload and improve their well-being. The actions of school and trust leaders to continually improve the school are highly effective. The trust and the school's advisory board provide appropriate checks to ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school's predecessor was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 predecessor school, Millgate School, to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in December 2019.

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	148165
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10324216
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Bettsworth
CEO of the trust	Paul Stone
Headteacher	Sara Marsh
Website	www.millgateschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Millgate School is a special school for pupils with a range of additional needs but predominantly social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils are supported by an education, health and care plan.
- Millgate School converted to become an academy in September 2021. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of seven unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO of the multi-academy trust, members of the school's advisory board, including the chair, and representatives of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Laming

Ofsted Inspector

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