

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Milton Court Primary Academy

Brewery Road, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 2EE

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

Outcome

Milton Court Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Gadsdon. The school is part of REAch2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert.

What is it like to attend this school?

Milton Court is a welcoming, nurturing school where pupils thrive and flourish. One parent expressed the views of many parents and carers, saying, 'It is much more than just a school; it is a strong, happy community.' There is an inclusive, positive culture that supports pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils who are disadvantaged.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve, whatever their starting points. As a result, pupils build their knowledge securely over time and have positive attitudes to learning. The school's values of aspiration, collaboration and excellence are threaded throughout the curriculum and all that the school does. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others. Children settle extremely well in Nursery and Reception and quickly learn to share and play happily together.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Their well-being is at the core of the school's work. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and a strong voice in the school. They feel safe and happy. They are proud of their school and their achievements. There are positive, trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and in the playground.

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

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum. This is equally ambitious for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND as it is for all others. The essential skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn are clearly identified and sequenced from the early years to Year 6. Staff are very knowledgeable about the development needs of the two-year-olds in Nursery. By the end of Reception, children are ready to continue learning in Year 1. There is a strong focus on developing speech, language and communication skills, including enriching pupils' vocabulary. The environment inside and outside successfully supports children's early reading, writing and number skills as well as inspiring curiosity and imagination.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present information clearly so pupils can relate new learning to what they already know. Pupils revisit key knowledge in lessons and learn new vocabulary. Teachers deliver interesting lessons, and pupils are always excited and engaged in their learning. Appropriate adaptations and skilled support in lessons ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn. The school's work has already had a positive impact on raising standards, as seen in pupils' current work. The school is correctly aware that there is scope for further improvement in pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. The school library is a welcoming and inspiring space which promotes the importance and enjoyment of reading. From the start, children enjoy lots of rhymes and songs, as well as learning to love books and stories. Children rapidly learn the sounds that letters make. They use these phonics skills well in their early reading and writing. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Those who are struggling are given effective additional support to catch up. Pupils are introduced to a carefully chosen wide range of high-quality texts. They are encouraged to read widely and often. Pupils can talk with confidence about their favourite authors and the reasons for their book choices.

Improving pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. The school works with steely determination to identify and address barriers to pupils' attendance and provide support to pupils and their families. These actions have resulted in some improvements. However, there are still too many pupils who do not attend regularly. This means they miss out on vital learning as well as other opportunities and experiences that the school provides.

A range of trips, visitors to school, clubs and events help bring learning to life and expand pupils' cultural experiences. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, pupils act as 'squad leaders' and members of the school council. They develop confidence and personal skills, such as independence and resilience, which prepare them very well for later life. Pupils are respectful, kind and caring. Pupils work and play exceptionally well together.

A skilled, enthusiastic and dedicated staff team ensures a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork at the school. Staff appreciate the consideration given to their workload and well-being. Trustees and members of the local governing board have a

perceptive understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They work purposefully with the school. All decisions taken are very clearly in the best interests of the pupils. The impact of the school's work is crucial in improving lives for pupils. There is no complacency. The school has the capacity and resolve to forge further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss out on important learning and the opportunities that the school offers. The school should continue to implement its strategies to work with families to further improve attendance.
- Outcomes for some pupils are not always as strong as they could be. The school should continue with its successful work to adapt teaching effectively in order to ensure that pupils reach the highest possible outcomes and more pupils meet national expectations by the end of key stage 2.

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 was, before September 2024, judged to be good 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 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	139397
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341737
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
CEO of the trust	Cathie Paine
Headteacher	Sarah Gadsdon
Website	www.milton-court.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust.
- The headteacher took up post in 2023.
- The school has a nursery, which includes provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- 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.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and other staff.
- The inspector met with the trust's deputy director of education, who works with the school, a representative of the board of trustees and the chair and vice-chair of the local governing board.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including its own evaluation of its performance and its development plan.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the staff and pupil surveys, as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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