

Inspection of Millbrook Primary School

Bank Road, Off Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 3JX

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since 12 May 2009.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school fully embody the school's values of being respectful, resilient and collaborative. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), relish every opportunity to learn. Pupils, and children in the early years, told inspectors that they feel happy in school.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending school and they shine in all that they do. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 rise to the school's exceptionally high expectations for their learning and achievement. They excel. Children in the early years are also achieving increasingly well.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary around the school. Pupils are equally attentive in lessons. From the early years to year 6, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere that enables pupils to focus exceptionally well on their learning.

Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 take pride in their learning. This is reflected in the outstanding quality of work that they produce. Pupils are able to recall a considerable amount of prior learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils take full advantage of the vast array of enrichment activities that the school provides for them beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils benefit from exciting outdoor lessons. The school recently invited representatives of different professions to talk to pupils about a range of careers.

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

The school is extremely ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. In key stages 1 and 2, the school has carefully mapped out the key knowledge that pupils will learn at each stage in each subject. In key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is expertly designed. It is inspirational.

Subject leaders receive first-class ongoing training that enables them to craft the curriculum content. In turn, they deliver high-quality training to staff to ensure that the curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6 is delivered exactly as intended. This ongoing training means that staff are expertly equipped to design learning activities that enable pupils to thrive.

Staff are adept at identifying pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings swiftly. They use the school's assessment systems well to identify where pupils may have gaps in their knowledge and to shape their future learning. Over time, pupils develop a deep body of knowledge that interconnects between subjects. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in all subjects in key stages 1 and 2.

In the main, the curriculum in the early years is also effective. However, some aspects of the curriculum in the Nursery class and in the Reception class are not as

well thought out as they could be. As a result of this, some children do not learn and develop new knowledge and skills to the depth that they could.

The school places reading at the heart of all learning. Developing pupils' reading knowledge is carefully woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils, and children in the early years, read widely and often. Reading ambassadors proudly promote a diverse range of texts in their 'reading shed'. Staff carefully and systematically check that pupils can remember previously learned sounds. The school expertly helps those pupils who may be struggling to keep up with the phonics programme. As a result, pupils are extremely confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school has highly effective systems in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff work relentlessly with parents and carers, the local authority, and other external agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils. A strength of this school is the highly effective way in which staff are skilled at adapting the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Staff also enable these pupils to develop their independence. The school ensures that pupils with SEND progress extremely well through the curriculum.

Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. They are polite, friendly and eager to converse with adults. Pupils' rates of attendance are high.

The way that the school goes about developing pupils' character is praiseworthy. For example, the school maximises opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures. Pupils have a deep-rooted knowledge of fundamental British values and people's differences. Recently, pupils welcomed visitors from other faiths into school as part of a diversity event. Pupils pride themselves on making everyone feel welcome in their school.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and how to look after their physical and mental health. Staff ensure that all pupils benefit from the vast array of clubs on offer, such as sign language, art and football.

Governors understand their statutory duties and they fulfil their responsibilities extremely well. They have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They challenge the leadership team and hold them fully to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from leaders to manage their workload and to protect their well-being. For example, they appreciate having training sessions in the school's forest on mental health awareness. This is so that staff can then promote pupils' mental health and well-being even more effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of learning, some aspects of the early years' curriculum are not as well designed as they could be. As a result, some children do not develop the depth of knowledge and skills that they could. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in the early years by identifying the individual steps of learning that children should acquire in the Nursery and Reception classes.

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with 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	106195
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10216616
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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Sara Barton Mike Robinson
Headteacher	Elizabeth Turner
Website	www.millbrook.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 May 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- This was the first routine inspection that 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of parents while pupils were arriving at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Farrimond

Ofsted Inspector

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