

Inspection of Millbrook Primary School

School Lane, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 7LB

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The head of school is Faye Charlton. There is also an executive headteacher, Steven Rose, who is responsible for this school and one other. This school is part of Vale 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, Richards Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beth Taylor.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are united in their view that this is an exciting and happy school. Relationships are warm and respectful. Leaders put the interests of their pupils at the heart of all they do. Disadvantaged pupils consistently benefit from the many opportunities that the school offers.

High expectations permeate this school. This starts first thing in the morning, with the rallying cry of 'believe, achieve, succeed' echoing from hundreds of voices from the playground. This attitude continues all day. The school values of kindness and responsibility are the bedrock of its work. Older pupils act as strong and inspiring role models. The 'kindness crew' look out for issues to solve in the playground. The sports leaders ensure that all feel included.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Classrooms are free of disruption. Pupils are polite and courteous. They show their 'Millbrook manners' consistently well. Pupils love nominating their friends for showing strong learning behaviours, such as collaboration or perseverance in lessons. They are proud of each other's successes.

Parents too are complimentary of the school. One parent wrote, summing up the views of many, 'Millbrook's love and care really makes it like a supportive family that my child goes to every day.'

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

Leaders have transformed this school to one which pupils, parents and the trust are so incredibly proud of. Pupils and staff alike love being part of 'Team Millbrook'. Staff feel valued as professionals. They are deeply committed to the vision and drive for future improvements. Millbrook is a special place to work. Governance too is very effective, sharing the same ethos and high ambition. The trust regularly uses this school as a beacon of excellence to support and coach others trust-wide.

The school prioritises pupils learning to read extremely well. A love of reading and children's literature threads through all aspects of school life. Class story time is a highlight for pupils and staff alike, with pupils hanging off every word. There has been much thought in ensuring pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality and diverse texts. These help to develop pupils' moral and cultural understanding successfully. Since the last inspection, the school has securely embedded their approach to teaching phonics. From the word go in Reception Year, staff teach phonics with expertise and rigour. Pupils who need additional help with their reading receive targeted support to help them keep up.

There is an ambitious curriculum in place. At the core of this curriculum, the school has identified the most important knowledge for each unit of learning: 'the sticky knowledge', and the most important vocabulary to learn: 'the big six'. Pupils'

learning is well sequenced, building carefully on what has come before, from Nursery to Year 6.

Teachers help pupils to remember key content well, such as during the daily 'register and retrieval' sessions. Teachers use the 'sticky knowledge' well to check that pupils have remembered key content. This is particularly successful in those subjects where teachers' subject knowledge is the strongest. The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) carefully. There are clear processes in place to identify the needs of these pupils. Teachers make successful adaptations to their teaching. Pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well.

However, in a few foundation subjects, teachers' subject knowledge and approach to teaching is not quite as secure. Pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as they do in the best. The school has very suitable plans in place to support teachers further in these curriculum areas.

At the time of the inspection, the school had recently moved the Nursery into a different building. It has increased the offer to two-year-olds. This has brought with it some challenges in providing meaningful learning opportunities in the outside area. Children demonstrate that they feel safe. They explore their surroundings confidently, including the two-year-olds. Staff prioritise communication and language development well. The school is seeking to improve the learning experiences on offer for children when learning outside.

Pupils' personal development is of very high quality. They are well prepared to be effective citizens of the future through the 'character and citizenship' award. This bespoke award encourages pupils to challenge themselves by trying new experiences or being responsible and influencing others. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. For example, pupils are planning their annual Christmas Cheer event. They want to say thank you to the local library and local shopkeepers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The aims of the ambitious curriculum are not yet realised fully in a few subjects and in early years. Teachers' subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge is not as strong in some subjects as it is in others. Consequently, sometimes, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue its work to monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that it is highly effective in all subjects.

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	141364
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10268396
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	463
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Beth Taylor
CEO of trust	Richard Evans
Headteacher	Steven Rose (Executive Headteacher) Faye Charlton (Head of School)
Website	www.millbrookschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the current head of school is now full time. Previously, there was a joint head of school structure.
- The school is part of The Vale Academy Trust.
- Since the last inspection, the on-site nursery has moved to another building and grown in size. It now includes provision for two-year-olds. Currently, there are eight two-year-old children 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, other school staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of board of trustees from the Vale Academy Trust and two members of the local governing body, including the chair. She also met with the chief executive officer and the director of education from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. 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. An inspector heard pupils read to adults from the school.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils.
- 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.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and school improvement plan.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day. They spoke to pupils about their views on the school, including behaviour. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors considered how the school is supporting pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, parents' free-text comments. An inspector also spoke with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Vallenge	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Hills	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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