

Millbrook Community Primary School

Kirkby Row, Westvale, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L32 0TG

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a good and improving school which is exceptionally well led and managed by an ambitious senior leadership team and a well-organised and effective governing body.
- Senior leaders and staff at all levels have worked together to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has improved, and that the school has transformed since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are exceptionally well behaved. They are proud of their school, very respectful towards each other, teachers and visitors and rise to the challenge when asked to take on responsibilities.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and work well together to ensure that pupils are always interested and engaged in their learning.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They benefit from good teaching and make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and sounds) is good.
- Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has continually improved over the last three years. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 in writing by the time they left school at the end of Year 6 was above average in 2014.
- The progress of most pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils is good because of the care and good quality support that they receive from well-trained staff.
- Parents are very complimentary about the school. They are highly appreciative of the direct communication that they have with senior leaders and teachers, and inspectors agree with parents' views that their children are happy, safe, well looked after and making good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' work is occasionally not set at the right level, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Marking is not always of the highest possible quality. The good practice and high standards demonstrated by some teachers are yet to be emulated by all.
- The physical appearance and the quality of resources in the early years are not always as stimulating as they should be and therefore do not encourage outstanding learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views. A meeting took place with parents. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 22 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority. A meeting was held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. As well as school leaders responsible for English, mathematics, special educational needs and early years.
- A range of school documents was examined. These included the school's review of its own performance, various improvement plans and external evaluations of the school's work, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, external data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mark Williams	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an above average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is almost twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average; few speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years attend nursery provision on a full or part-time basis. Reception provision is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, several new members of staff have been appointed, including three newly qualified teachers. The governing body has been reorganised, and a new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed.
- Pre-school and after-school services operate from the site; these are subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is never less than good, and in so doing further raise achievement across the school by:
 - making sure that the work for pupils is always set at just the right level to ensure that it finely matches their various skills and abilities, particularly those of the most able pupils
 - making sure that marking is always of the highest possible quality, and that all teachers emulate the high standards and good practice that can be seen in the school.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years, especially indoor learning and playing areas by ensuring that the physical appearance of rooms and the quality to resources available to children are always as stimulating as they should be and are therefore more conducive to outstanding learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by a very able senior leadership team, governors and all staff is highly organised and determined to ensure that pupils enjoy school and achieve well. Together they have taken decisive action to eradicate any teaching that was not good enough, and effectively managed a high turnover of staff in a short space of time. All new teachers, including those new to the profession, are well supported, mentored and monitored by experienced senior staff. These actions have helped to ensure that teaching, and pupils' overall achievement, has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Middle leaders responsible for English and mathematics are highly-skilled teachers who know exactly what needs to be done to raise standards. They have stepped up their work in assessing the quality of teachers' marking, observing teaching practice and supporting new teachers.
- All teachers and teaching assistants are accountable for pupils' progress and have challenging targets to meet. The regular meetings that they have with senior leaders, including governors, help to ensure that any pupils at risk of falling behind their peers are quickly identified and supported through various reading, writing and mathematics 'booster' groups. School evidence shows that these groups are having a dramatic impact on improving pupils' progress.
- Pupil premium funding is managed effectively by senior leaders. This helps to ensure that eligible pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and that the attainment gap between them and their peers in school is rapidly narrowing.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. This helps to ensure that they have a good understanding of world faiths, a high level of respect for each other and adults and a keen sense of moral and social responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves in the local community and further afield.
- Pupils know about life in modern Britain and the rule of law and democracy. This is shown in their work displayed around the school and demonstrated through discussions with pupils who say that Millbrook is a school where 'we can have our say, and know that we are listened to'.
- Pupils benefit from a new curriculum which they find exciting and engaging. It provides many opportunities for them to practise their writing skills across all subjects. Fewer opportunities are available to practise their reading and mathematics skills, but this is being quickly remedied through the overhaul of library resources and the competitive and challenging approach taken to mathematics teaching.
- Regular visits to museums, galleries and to the theatre help to develop pupils' cultural understanding as do the opportunities that they have to study Spanish and participate in the school choir. All pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including gymnastics, fencing, table tennis and cycling.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that the primary school sports premium is well spent. For example, staff training delivered by a physical education specialist from the local high school has helped to develop their confidence in teaching dance. New resources and equipment, and extra tuition in swimming and canoeing have helped to develop the health and well-being of pupils.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and challenge discrimination is good. This ensures that all pupils, irrespective of their circumstances, have access to all aspects of school life, including all visits and residential opportunities. This helps to ensure that any gaps between the levels of attainment of different groups of pupils are very small and continually narrowing.
- The school works very closely with the local authority, which has provided a wide range of support since the previous inspection and helped the school to improve. Most recently, the school improvement service conducted a full review of teaching and learning.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding pupils and children in the early years. All statutory requirements in this respect are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been reformed and reconstituted, with new committees and a new chair of the governing body at the helm. The school's recently commissioned review of governance, and the wide range of training that governors have benefited from, have helped to ensure that they know exactly how well the school is performing. Governors have a thorough understanding of data and know exactly how the school's tracking system works. They use this information to hold each teacher to account for the performance of pupils.
 - Governors know that teaching is good and have taken a number of hard decisions to ensure that this is the case. They are prepared to reward teachers for their hard work, but do not accept the

headteacher's recommendations for promotion until they have scrutinised performance data and looked at the quality of pupils' work.

- Governors know that the extra staff, additional resources and tailored teaching activities available to pupils eligible to support through the pupil premium are helping to raise their levels of attainment across all subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very polite and welcoming towards visitors. They are proud of their school and enjoy talking about their work and sharing it with others.
- Their good behaviour in class and ability to listen carefully and follow instructions contributes well to their good progress.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time, and say that it is not good all of the time because people sometimes 'slip up'. All parents who completed the online questionnaire Parent View, as well as those who spoke to inspectors and completed the school's own survey of parents' views, are of the opinion that behaviour is good. Inspection evidence, including a scrutiny of the school's records of behaviour over time and the views of staff, indicates that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils behave very sensibly around the school. This includes when moving around corridors, playing outside during break times and when in the dining hall. Pupils enjoy coming together during whole-school assemblies where their behaviour is exemplary. This was demonstrated during a singing assembly at the time of the inspection.
- Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities, which they take on in earnest and are very mature in their roles as play leaders, digital leaders and members of the school council.
- Pupils' attendance, although just below average, is rapidly improving. This is because the school works closely with parents to explain the link between attendance and achievement, and because good attendance is celebrated whenever possible.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school's work with visitors from the police, fire and various children's services helps pupils to have a good understanding of safe and unsafe situations as well as the dangers and risks of, for example, being out late at night and joining gangs.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online because of the high profile that the school gives to e-safety. They know never to give out personal information to people that they do not know over the internet and to only visit websites suitable for their age.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cyber-bullying, which they say can happen when someone constantly sends 'mean messages' through, for example, a social networking site, mobile phone, or hand-held game. They know how to avoid this and are confident that they can talk to any adult in school if they have any concerns about their safety.
- Older pupils know that discriminatory behaviour is wrong and say that it never happens in school. Assemblies and workshops help pupils to understand that everybody should be respected for their differences and treated equally.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. Senior leaders have put into place an effective and well-thought-out programme of training, support and mentoring for teachers and teaching assistants new to the school. The challenging targets set for teachers, and their good teaching, have helped to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching takes place in orderly and calm classrooms where pupils know the importance of good behaviour and how it contributes to their learning. Pupils are encouraged to work together. They use various classroom resources, such as computer tablets, to help them with their writing and problem-solving. They also utilise the information available on classroom walls to help them to, for example, improve their vocabulary through using 'interesting adjectives'.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. They teach mathematics with a great sense

of urgency, which generates in pupils a sense of excitement and an eagerness to learn. This was the case in a mixed Years 4/5 class where pupils were engaged in their daily 'maths challenge' in the form of a 'countdown' number game against the clock. Within 30 seconds most were able to come within one or two numbers of the target number 989 after multiplying, adding and subtracting the numbers 25, 50, 100, 5, 10 and 9.

- Pupils work exceptionally well together in class and are confident in sharing their ideas. Teachers ensure that they are highly skilled at scanning books to obtain factual information and using the internet to research topics of interest. This was evident in a mixed Year 5/6 class where pupils quickly identified, and rephrased text to put into a presentation that they were preparing for pupils in Key Stage 1 on how to correctly wash hands and avoid spreading germs.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully about their use of language, and ensure that they have a good understanding of different styles of writing as soon as they start in Key Stage 1. This was demonstrated in a mixed Year 2 class where pupils were writing factual reports on different types of animals and their habitats. The teacher's careful questioning, high expectations of pupils and insistence that they always have their 'listening ears' open helped them to understand what a good piece of written work looks like, and to produce good-quality written work of their own.
- In the best marking, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6 teachers are very careful to indicate to pupils how they can improve their work. They check to see that their advice is taken, and that pupils improve their work as a result of it. However, marking of this quality is sometimes not evident in pupils' books and is yet to be fully shared across the school.
- Although standards are rapidly improving across the school, inspection evidence, including discussions with pupils about their work and observations of teaching, indicates that occasionally the tasks and activities in class are not set at the right level to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, are fully challenged.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, though still below average, improved in 2014. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was the best that it has been for the last three years. Their attainment in writing was above average and especially good at Level 5. Although these pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics had improved significantly it was still below average. The school's decisive action and determination to eradicate all poor teaching has helped to ensure that almost all pupils are now making good and sometimes outstanding progress throughout the school.
- Most children start nursery with weak skills in all areas of learning. However, they get off to a good start due to the good care and support they receive from well-qualified adults. An average proportion entered Key Stage 1 in 2014 with the skills and abilities necessary for the next stage of their learning.
- The most able pupils usually make good progress. School data shows that there is already a much higher proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics, for example, in Years 2 and 6 than at the same time last year. A small group of pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are currently working at the highest possible Level 6 in mathematics with specialist teachers at the local high school. However, while pupils are more challenged than previously, their work is occasionally not set at the right level and does not always make the most able pupils think hard.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. This is because strategies to improve their progress in this subject are working. Pupils can say exactly what they need to do to get better in mathematics and know that they are improving because they study their regular test results.
- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress in writing. In 2014, pupils made outstanding progress in writing in Year 6. Where past progress has not been good enough, pupils have been exceptionally well supported and are now making rapid progress.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils across the school enjoy reading an increasingly wide range of books in different styles and from various authors. Those who read for inspectors said that they read every day in school. The less able readers said that the help that they get when reading in small groups has made reading more fun and easier.
- It is not possible to make any meaningful comparisons between the performance of those groups of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or those who speak English as an additional language and that of their peers nationally, due to the small numbers in each group. However, the progress of pupils in these groups across the school in reading, writing and mathematics is at least as good as their peers.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are well cared for by skilled teachers and teaching

assistants. This helps to ensure that they make good progress in most year groups. In 2014, their attainment in all subjects at the end of Year 6 was higher than for similar groups of pupils nationally.

- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was better than that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in mathematics, broadly the same in reading, and almost two terms behind in writing. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics was about one term behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, approximately two terms behind in reading, and less than half a term behind in writing. Gaps between these pupils' attainment and others in the school are closing further. Currently disadvantaged pupils are making the same good progress as other groups of pupils in the school and their progress is at least in line with that of disadvantaged pupils nationally.

The early years provision

is good

- Caring and well-trained teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities and the most able, benefit from good teaching, make good progress and enjoy their learning. Good leadership and management have helped to ensure that early years provision has improved since the previous inspection.
- Most children start nursery with weak skills and abilities in all areas of learning, including speaking, listening and personal and social development. By the time they left Reception in 2014, an average proportion of children entered Year 1 well prepared with good skills and abilities in most areas of learning.
- Children in Nursery and Reception classes behave well and display very positive attitudes to their learning. They work harmoniously together and enjoy exploring, learning and playing in safe and secure indoor and outdoor areas. They access a good balance of activities, some of which they select themselves, such as playing in the 'mud kitchen', mark making, counting, using tablets and computers and climbing and construction, while others are organised and selected by adults.
- Children enjoy expressing themselves through movement and dance, and joining in with singing activities. This was the case in Nursery when on hearing the 'silly soup' song, children moved to the beat and sang out the names of a range of objects, such as a bat, hat, car and star before adding to them to the 'silly soup' cauldron.
- Staff work well in partnership with parents through home visits, sharing information on children's development and providing education workshops. Staff also work closely with the on-site preschool service. These good and effective relationships help to ensure that children's transition from home into nursery is smooth, and that early years staff has a good understanding of each child's developmental needs.
- Parents are very appreciative of the opportunities that they have to participate in school life. They are very satisfied that their children are happy, safe and well looked after, and inspection evidence supports this view. However, the physical appearance of rooms and the quality of resources available to children are not always as stimulating as they should be and are therefore not conducive to outstanding learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104432
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	453837

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Seddon
Headteacher	Jane Maloney
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2013
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