

Millhouse Primary School

Tavistock Road, Laindon, Basildon, Essex SS15 5QF

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, have successfully overseen the merger of the infant and junior schools. They have established a happy and inclusive school which provides a good quality of education.
- The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is needed. Governors use this knowledge to provide effective challenge and support to leaders.
- Subject leaders are effective in their work and they are clear about their purpose in developing the curriculum. A few are new to post and it is too early to judge the impact of their work.
- Pupils behave well. They are eager to learn and respond quickly to instructions. Their positive behaviour reflects the school's six star values.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils and their parents recognise the value of good attendance. However, a few pupils do not attend school as often as they should.
- The youngest children make a very good start to their education because the early years provision is well led. Children make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders make skilful use of additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not yet having the same impact.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that enthuses and inspires pupils. They enjoy a broad range of activities that develop their academic skills as well as preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Leaders place a strong emphasis on fostering good mental health in adults and children.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. Where practice over time is strong, for example in English and mathematics, teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils make good progress.
- In 2018, pupils made progress in reading, writing and mathematics that was in line with other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2. Current pupils are making good progress in these subjects.
- Pupils make good or improving progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. In some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects, such as history and geography, are not high enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers have equally high expectations of pupils across the full range of subjects.
- Improve attendance, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are clearly focused on improving teaching and learning to raise standards in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, together with other leaders, has been effective in creating a happy and successful learning environment through the merging of the infant and junior schools. The school's vision 'inspiring tomorrow's generation, today' is clearly articulated throughout the school, and pupils' and staff morale is high.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this information to provide teachers with an appropriate balance of challenge and support to bring about improvements in their practice. Teachers speak highly of the guidance they receive from school leaders that helps them gain in confidence and develop their teaching.
- Leaders have established productive working relationships with local schools. Recent close collaboration has made a positive impact on the teaching of English and mathematics. Leaders from other schools have also engaged in reviewing the quality of education.
- Subject leaders are effective and enthusiastic in their work. Where their practice is strongest, leaders review and amend the quality of education in their subject area. For example, in mathematics and in phonics, teaching over time is consistent and pupils make strong progress. A few subject leaders are new to post and have not had time to make a similar impact.
- Leaders have created a curriculum that is broad, topic-based and designed to inspire a love of learning. Having established that pupils begin their education with a wide range of ability in speech and language, leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides many rich opportunities for pupils to increase their vocabulary. It is also designed to encourage pupils to think about the wider world.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' needs and use this knowledge to ensure that the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is spent effectively. Expert sports coaches come into school to lead lessons and clubs which result in increased confidence among the pupils. The coaches also model lessons and provide quality training for staff.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is extremely well led. Pupils' needs are quickly identified, and well-judged support put in place. Leaders adjust the type and level of support to make sure it has the maximum impact. Consequently, pupils with SEND make good or better progress, socially and academically.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context and use this knowledge to ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively. The pastoral team is instrumental in supporting pupils who are struggling emotionally. As a result of the care and well-judged support shown to pupils by all adults in the school, those who are disadvantaged make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders are aware that attendance is not as good as it should be, especially for disadvantaged pupils, and are rightly working diligently to rectify this.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have a high priority. Adults model the six star values and pupils' individual achievements,

both in and out of school, are celebrated. Pupils described the many opportunities they have to learn about, for example, different faiths, democracy and the rule of law. The impact of these varied activities is evident in pupils' good behaviour, sense of responsibility and pride in themselves and their school.

- Most parents are supportive of the school's work. The headteacher and other leaders ensure that they are visible and approachable and work diligently to keep parents informed about their children's learning. However, a small number of parents would welcome more timely information and responses to queries about their children's education.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governing body includes former governors of both the infant and junior school. They have worked effectively with school leaders in amalgamating two schools and ensuring that the good quality of education has been maintained.
- The governing body works constructively with leaders to ensure that governors receive the information they need to monitor the quality of education. Governors use this information to ask pertinent questions and hold leaders clearly to account.
- Governors are thorough in making sure additional funding to support pupils with SEND has the impact it should. They are rightly acting to make sure that funding for disadvantaged pupils has a similar impact.

Safeguarding

- Leaders have made sure that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will look after them. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, express confidence that the school keeps their children safe.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to gain an age-appropriate understanding of how to stay safe, including online.
- Leaders make appropriate checks prior to the appointment of anyone who works in the school. These checks ensure that statutory requirements are met and that all adults are suitable to work with children.
- Staff receive suitable safeguarding training and updates from school leaders. Leaders' well-maintained records prove that they take the correct action when a pupil needs additional support. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge in many subjects across the curriculum. They use this knowledge to plan and implement learning activities that enable pupils to make good progress in most subjects. For example, the teacher's use of specific vocabulary about rocks in a Year 3 lesson about the Stone Age moved the pupils' learning on very effectively.

- Teachers and assistants are skilled at creating positive working relationships in most classrooms. This enables pupils to become increasingly self-assured and resilient in their learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher encouraged and praised pupils who were then more confident in explaining their answers to complex calculations.
- Reading is taught well. Consequently, pupils develop confidence in reading more challenging texts. Teachers ask questions that make pupils think and develop their skills of inference. Pupils apply their phonic knowledge well and this has a positive impact on both their reading and spelling.
- Teachers consistently apply the school's preferred approach to feedback and pupils respond well. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils have many opportunities to edit and improve their writing. Evidence in pupils' English books shows that teachers are consistent in their expectations and that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers are confident and skilled in the teaching of mathematics because they receive good-quality training. Pupils told inspectors that they have the opportunity to consolidate knowledge and skills before moving on to new ideas. Teachers use subject-specific vocabulary and encourage pupils to discuss their learning. Teachers' effective use of talk ensures that all pupils are actively engaged in lessons and the adults can move their learning on effectively.
- Learning support assistants play their full part in helping pupils who need more support to make good progress. These adults know the pupils well and use this knowledge to provide well-judged help. As a result, pupils become more resilient and independent and make good progress over time.
- In a few classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects other than English or mathematics are too uneven. For example, pupils' misconceptions in subjects such as history and geography are not always addressed, and their work is untidy and lacks the high standards seen elsewhere.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Parents value the support their children receive, identifying that staff listen and are approachable, and that they 'put the children first'.
- Adults model the six star values of respect, creativity, independence, resilience, perseverance and self-belief. Pupils respond admirably and enthusiastically explained how these values fit into their lives and their learning.
- Leaders see their role as providing a 'sanctuary and haven' for pupils and promoting good mental health for staff and pupils. The pastoral team, including a learning mentor and behaviour coach, works closely with class teachers to provide effective help for pupils who may be struggling emotionally.
- Staff are astute at recognising when pupils are facing challenges in their lives and take effective action to support them. Very positive relationships exist between staff and this contributes to pupils' demonstrably good attitudes to learning.

- Pupils are given many different opportunities to develop the six star values by taking responsibility in school. They are visibly proud to be chosen to 'meet and greet' visitors to the classrooms. Pupils can take up leadership positions, for example, as play leaders, the school council and reading mentors. As a result, they develop their understanding of decision-making and taking responsibility for helping others.
- Pupils have a good grasp of what bullying is. They say that there is little bullying at the school. Pupils respect one another and trust school staff to act if they have any concerns.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is rich in opportunities to develop the pupils' confidence, self-esteem and awareness of life in the United Kingdom and in the wider world. The annual careers week enables pupils throughout the school to think beyond the confines of school and to have high aspirations for their future lives.
- Transition to secondary school is as smooth as possible because leaders give exceptional support to all pupils throughout their time at the school. They ensure that pupils' next schools are aware of their needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and they respond well to school routines for lining up, moving around school and entering and leaving the site.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are supportive of each other and keen to do their best. Learning in lessons flows smoothly as there is almost no disruption.
- Pupils value and enjoy their education. They are conscious of, and try to live by, the school's six star values. Parents are supportive of the school and feel that their children are safe, happy and well behaved.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities and equipment on the playground. Boys and girls use all the equipment and play happily together.
- Records prove that incidents of poor behaviour are declining and few in number. When pupils do not behave as they should, teachers make consistent use of the effective procedures for managing this.
- Attendance is not as high as it should be and in 2018 it was below the national average. A minority of pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, do not attend school as often as they should. A few pupils do not arrive at school in time for the beginning of lessons. Leaders are rightly seeking to rectify this, for example by working diligently to engage with families.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 was too low in 2017. However, their progress improved in 2018 and was broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally. All groups of pupils currently in school are making good and improving progress in reading.
- Having made progress in line with other pupils nationally in 2018, pupils' progress in

mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has continued to improve and is good. More pupils in key stage 1 and 2 are working at greater depth in mathematics than previously.

- In 2018, pupils' progress in writing by the end of key stage 2, and the proportion of pupils working at greater depth, was in line with that of other pupils nationally. All groups of pupils currently in school are making good and improving progress in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils made progress in line with other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics in 2018 by the end of key stage 2. This was not the case in reading, where they did not make the progress they should have. As a result of leaders' effective action, disadvantaged pupils currently in school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stage 2 classes.
- Pupils with SEND make good and sometimes better progress in many subjects across each key stage. This is because of the good-quality teaching and precise, well-informed support they receive.
- Many pupils start school with speech and language that are not typically well developed. They make strong progress and achieve above the national standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and their attainment is in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.
- The most able pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because of their exposure to challenging texts and activities and high-quality teaching. Some more able pupils who are disadvantaged are not making the strong progress of which they are capable due to their relatively poor attendance.
- In areas of the curriculum other than English and mathematics, teachers in a few classes do not have the same high expectations of their pupils. In these classes, in some subjects, pupils' misconceptions are not addressed, presentation is inconsistent, and progress is not as good as it should be.
- Leaders' focus on providing good-quality teaching, which is underpinned by the six star values, means that pupils are confident and well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is well led. The Nursery and Reception classes are well organised and attractive places to learn. The leader provides good guidance to staff so that all adults have an accurate understanding of the children's needs. This means that the very youngest children make a successful start to their education.
- Leaders ensure that there is consistency in planning, curriculum and expectations between all of the classes. The teachers provide activities that are designed to appeal to the children, with emphasis given to developing their vocabulary, mathematical and creative skills.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about what needs to be done to improve the provision, and they give effective support and training to staff. They monitor the impact of any training and ensure that teachers and assistants continue to improve their practice.
- The six star values are taught to the children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Children's behaviour is good. They concentrate and listen well to their classmates and adults. They are also considerate of each other, taking turns and moving in an orderly way inside and outside the classroom.

- Children in the Reception classes demonstrate increasing resilience and determination in their learning. In one class children were involved in some challenging addition and subtraction sums. They were keen to persevere and complete their work. In another, children were confidently using drama to show their understanding of positional language.
- Leaders check the progress of the youngest children through a digital platform through which they encourage parents to become involved in their child's education. Staff take rapid action if a child's progress is causing concern.
- Children make good progress from their starting points and their transition to Year 1 is smooth. Phonics teaching is a strength. Sometimes the more able children are not involved in activities that are sufficiently challenging.
- Adults are quick to identify children with SEND. These children are given effective support and typically make good progress from their starting points. Leaders work well with outside agencies when a child needs additional support.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves in the outdoor area and to take part in a wide range of activities designed to develop their academic and physical skills. Leaders have recently reviewed clear routines in place for keeping the children safe when moving around the school and entering and leaving the site. These routines are fit for purpose.

School details

Unique reference number	114912
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10057802

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	640
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Smith
Headteacher	Mr Gareth Allen
Telephone number	01268 543584
Website	www.millhouse.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@millhouse.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average primary school. Formerly a junior and separate infant school, the school opened in January 2016.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs, which were included in the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 38 lessons. Most of these observations took place with members of the school's leadership team. Inspectors observed pupils learning in small groups around the school site. An inspector also visited an act of collective worship.
- All inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground over the two days of the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and in the many displays. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject and middle leaders, teachers, learning support assistants, pupils, office staff, the chair of the governing body and the chair of the finance committee. The lead inspector had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The lead inspector also considered the views expressed in one letter and two emails to Ofsted. The lead inspector took into account views expressed by parents spoken with at the start of the inspection and those expressed in one telephone call with a parent.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's documentation including that relating to: the curriculum; safeguarding and child protection; pupils' achievement; attendance and behaviour; school development and improvement plans; leaders' self-evaluation; the allocation of pupil premium funding; and leaders' plans and evaluation of the PE and sport premium funding.

Inspection team

Victoria Penty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Walker	Ofsted Inspector
John Daniell	Ofsted Inspector
Nathan Lowe	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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