

Inspection of Mill Lane Primary School

Mill Lane, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 6EG

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Adults at Mill Lane Primary School are caring, vigilant and nurturing. Pupils know they can turn to staff whenever they need help. The pastoral support that pupils receive is strong. Because of this, pupils feel well supported and safe.

The atmosphere in school is calm and welcoming. Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times of the school day. They say that bullying and the use of discriminatory language are rare. Pupils agree that when either happen, leaders take swift and effective action.

Pupils have opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities. Older pupils are proud to be peer mediators and school councillors. They know that these are very important roles. Pupils have an opportunity to take part in clubs during and after school.

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils, but not all of these are realised. Pupils learn well in some areas of the curriculum, such as reading. However, not all subjects are planned and taught effectively. As a result, some pupils do not achieve across the whole curriculum as they should.

Leaders work tirelessly to support and monitor the attendance of those pupils who are frequently absent. These pupils miss out on too many valuable learning opportunities.

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

Governors, leaders and staff have an ambitious vision and want the best for pupils. However, this vision is yet to be realised. In some subjects, curriculum plans are not well developed. They do not show how pupils' new learning builds on what they already know. Furthermore, leaders have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum are being taught. Subjects such as geography are taught infrequently in some year groups.

In some areas of the curriculum, such as reading, teachers check that pupils know more and remember more. However, in other subjects, such as geography and physical education (PE), assessment strategies need further thought and development so that teachers are clear what pupils have learned and are then able to build upon this.

This academic year, leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme. Teachers have been provided with training and use this scheme consistently. Pupils read books that help them practise the sounds they have learned. Pupils who start to fall behind are provided with effective support the very same day. Because of this, they catch up quickly. Leaders have chosen high-quality books for pupils to read. Pupils have the

opportunity to read such books every day. During the inspection, pupils discussed their favourite authors, including Michael Morpurgo and Alice Oseman.

Leaders are quick to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and provide them with support. Adults provide extra guidance and additional resources to remove barriers to learning, which helps these pupils do well. However, in some curriculum subjects, there are not enough opportunities for these pupils to practise and firmly embed what they have learned.

Pupils are very respectful and tolerant of others. They celebrate one another's differences. One pupil stated, 'Inclusivity is needed for individual liberty'. Pupils have a very good understanding of our country's values and relate these to what happens in their school, for example through the elections of school councillors. Pupils learn how to keep healthy and look after their own and others' well-being. They have an opportunity to walk or run a mile every day. Pupils enjoy a range of activities, including a choir, archery sessions and a craft club. Many of these are new and valuable experiences for pupils.

Leaders are determined to develop pupils' resilience, independence and ability to resolve problems. In lessons and clubs and during breaktimes, pupils are frequently reminded about the importance of these traits. One pupil, reflecting the views of others, stated, 'A positive mindset and the determination not to give in goes a long way'.

Pupils behave well in lessons and focus on their learning. Skilled adults use consistent approaches for those pupils who sometimes need extra support and guidance. Leaders' actions focus on supporting pupils to attend regularly. However, there are a significant number of pupils who regularly miss school.

Staff in the early years are both caring and supportive. They help develop clear routines for, and expectations of, children. Because of this, children settle quickly when they start school. They take care of the classroom and of one another. Staff plan activities which provide children with many opportunities to practise and learn new skills and knowledge. Children talk about their learning and can concentrate for sustained periods of time. Adults work hard to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning through workshops and many other opportunities to come into school.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued. Staff recognise that leaders are considerate of their workload. Leaders and staff are focused on making the curriculum better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a culture where safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff. There are efficient and effective systems in place to enable leaders to support

pupils and their families quickly. Leaders work relentlessly to access the support families need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in varying situations, including when they are online. They also have the opportunity to learn about basic first aid.

Leaders carry out the required checks before staff start working at the school. In addition, governors visit the school, check the robustness of safeguarding records and systems, and talk to pupils to ensure they feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made sure the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. Pupils, including those with SEND, do not have the opportunity to acquire knowledge as well as they should in all subjects. Leaders should ensure the whole curriculum is well planned to enable pupils to build effectively on what they already know.
- Leaders have not checked the whole curriculum is being implemented. Because of this, some pupils have not been taught the full programme of study in some subjects. Leaders need to monitor the curriculum more rigorously to ensure the whole curriculum is consistently taught well.
- In some subjects, assessment systems are still in varying stages of development. Some subject leaders do not have a clear picture of what pupils do well and what they need to improve. Leaders need to ensure assessment procedures identify what pupils have remembered and highlight gaps in pupils' learning.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	107639
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10227201
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda Kilroy
Headteacher	Christine Barlow
Website	www.mill-lane.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke via telephone to a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at a range of plans, spoke to teachers, visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Documentation was scrutinised as to how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.
- An inspector checked the school's single central record to make sure all staff had the appropriate checks to work with children.
- The views of staff and pupils were considered from conversations and through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- An inspector spoke to parents during the inspection. In addition, a number of written responses were taken into account.

Inspection team

Andy Taylor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gill Holland

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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