

# Millbrook Primary School

Worsley Road, Freshbrook, Swindon, SN5 8NU

**Inspection dates** 24–25 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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	Outstanding		1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The driving force behind the improvements at the school has been the strong leadership of the headteacher. She is supported by experienced senior leaders. Staff morale is high and all are committed to raising standards.
- Governors support and challenge the school in equal measure. They are well informed, knowledgeable, and track the work of the school very closely.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning, and standards in reading and mathematics are rising quickly.
- Teaching is good. Pupils participate readily in lessons and benefit from good quality questioning. Classrooms are attractive with good resources to support pupils in their learning.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Children quickly settle into an extremely engaging and exciting environment. They make an excellent start in their reading, writing and understanding of numbers.
- The Ark (the school's specialist resource provision) is well organised, and the provision for pupils' special educational needs is well managed throughout the school.
- High expectations lead to good behaviour throughout the school. Pupils show respect to each other, and are polite, welcoming and friendly to visitors to the school.
- Effective pastoral care ensures pupils are safe and secure in school. Pupils say they feel safe, and they clearly thrive in this supportive learning environment.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, including the visits and visitors to the school. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wide variety of experiences. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school and very supportive of its work and leadership.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 is not as strong as in mathematics. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by being given more demanding work when they are ready to move on to the next level.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to the suggestions teachers make on how they can improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, several of which were visited jointly with a member of the leadership team. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants.
- Inspectors heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading, and they also held meetings with two groups of pupils, including the school council.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of staff, and seven governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives from The Link Academies Collaborative Trust. In addition, the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school’s data on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documents, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of children. Inspectors scrutinised the school’s arrangements for spending, including the additional funding for sports and the pupil premium.
- The inspectors took into account the 101 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the school’s own survey of parents’ views in March 2015. The inspectors also had informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the staff questionnaire from 37 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Dyer	Additional Inspector
Rowena Green	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The school converted to become an academy in November 2013. When its predecessor school, also called Millbrook Primary School, was last inspected in January 2012, it was judged as satisfactory overall.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. Some pupils speak little or no English when they start school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils are taught in some mixed-age classes in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Early years provision consists of a part-time pre-school for three year olds and two Reception classes which the children attend full time.
- The school includes and manages a local authority eight-place specialist resource provision, referred to as The Ark, for pupils with complex learning needs. There are presently nine pupils on roll.
- Inspectors did not see all Year 6 pupils during the inspection, as they were involved in activities off the school site.
- The school is part of The Link Academies Collaborative Trust, an Umbrella Trust of four primary schools, who work together to help raise standards and improve experiences for pupils. The school also works with the local secondary school, Lydiard Park Academy to help raise standards in mathematics, literacy and physical education.
- The school provides a breakfast club from 7.45am that is managed by the governing body. The school also provides after school care until 6pm and a number of after-school clubs until 6.00pm, which include physical activities and gardening.
- The school holds the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, Primary Science Quality Mark Gold Award and Arts Mark Gold.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - increasing the level of challenge in lessons so that more pupils reach the higher levels in their work of which they are capable
  - ensuring pupils are given sufficient time to respond to their teachers' guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Improve pupils' attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 by:
  - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to practise their writing skills across the range of different subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's clear vision and strong leadership have brought about significant improvement within the school. Her ambition is fully supported by senior leaders, governors and staff to improve the outcomes for pupils. She has established a culture of high expectations in teaching and pupils' achievement. Pupils' achievements are celebrated with attractive displays of their work in classrooms and corridors, which are highly effective and motivating to other pupils.
- The school's own review of its performance has correctly identified areas for improvement and appropriate actions are in place to address these.
- Senior leaders have worked effectively to bring about considerable improvements over the last two years; for example, rigorous monitoring of teaching and effective tracking of pupils' progress to ensure all are successful from their various starting points. Senior leaders do not shy away from making difficult decisions to bring about changes in both teaching and pupils' progress. Middle leaders are effective in ensuring teachers' subject knowledge is up to date. They provide staff with opportunities to effectively share best practice in staff meetings and during teachers' planning time, helping to bring about improvements in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Good arrangements are in place for managing teachers' performance. These appropriately address any underperformance and provide staff with further training to help them improve their teaching and management skills as required.
- Staff benefit from opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools in the Trust to improve their practice. For example, training, checking standards in pupils' work, and devising a new system to rigorously assess pupils to accommodate the new approach to assessment.
- Pupils learn through a range of meaningful themes based on different subjects in the curriculum. The themes are used well to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' learning experiences are considerably enriched by a wide range of visits and interesting visitors to the school.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective, because these are part of pupils' daily experiences. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about different religions and cultures, and engage in community activities such as Lydiard Park Church Flower Festival. They have a good understanding of British values including the voting system, especially when voting for school council representatives.
- The school has good relationships with its many parents. Parents' evenings are held regularly. The annual report to parents gives detailed information on how their child has done during the year. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school; however, a few commented that they would like more notice about some school activities.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well to close the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. For example, funding is used for additional staffing to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils, for subsidising school trips, and to fund the employment of a family support worker.
- The school improvement adviser works regularly with the school to discuss the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school uses the additional sports premium funding effectively to employ a sports coach. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a range of racquet and ball games, both in school and in local competitions. Increasing numbers of pupils are participating in after-school activities and local competitions, for example, cross-country running, football and netball. The funds are also used to train pupils to become 'young sports leaders' to work with younger pupils and further increase the number of pupils participating in sporting activities.
- The Ark is well led and managed and pupils are well integrated into the main school in accordance with the school's overall inclusion policy. The school promotes positive relationships; there is no discrimination in the school as leaders are committed to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Procedures are well established and rigorous to ensure all pupils are safe.
- **The governance of the school:**

The Chair of the Governing Body provides effective leadership to the governing body in both challenging and supporting school leaders well. Governors take regular opportunities throughout the year to meet and review the performance of the school and are actively involved in the evaluation of the school's work and in development planning. They receive regular updates on the quality of teaching and consequently ensure good teaching is rewarded and any underperformance is addressed. They have a good

understanding of the progress pupils make. They make sure that funds are spent wisely, including pupil premium and the additional sports funding. Governors ensure their training is up to date, having attended training organised by the local authority such as in analysing data, safer recruitment, the use of pupil premium funding and the new curriculum. Governors make sure that statutory responsibilities are met, and that safeguarding requirements are in place and effective.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to their learning. Where the teaching is strongest pupils display a love of learning and desire to improve.
- There are robust systems for monitoring pupils' behaviour. School records indicate that the senior leaders' drive to improve behaviour across the school has been effective. A minority of pupils, including some from The Ark, find it difficult to manage their behaviour at times. However, any incidents are managed well, and this is helped by the very calm atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example, members of the school council spoke about the opportunities they have to share ideas on how to further improve the school. Older pupils help younger pupils to engage in activities at lunchtime.
- Attendance is now broadly average. The school has worked effectively with parents to improve pupils' attendance. Good attendance is rewarded and pupils understand the importance of coming to school.
- There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents who spoke to inspectors and responded to the on-line survey agree that their child feels safe at school.
- The good pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school's work. There are highly effective systems for putting in place appropriate support for pupils depending on their individual needs.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying such as name calling and cyber bullying. They say that occasionally there is a little bullying, however they are confident that it is dealt with quickly by adults. A few parents say the school's response to any such incidents is variable in how quickly staff respond.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. Older pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe when working on-line, saying they are given clear instructions by adults including a talk from the community police officer.
- The school provides a good level of care for pupils before and after school. Pupils take advantage of the breakfast club which provides a safe and engaging way to start the school day. Pupils can also take part in a good range of clubs after school finishes.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of teaching is good. The leadership team has ensured an improvement in the quality of teaching through rigorous monitoring and support. This has helped to develop teachers' skills to ensure pupils make good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together in the support they give to pupils, this includes pupils from The Ark who are regularly included in many whole-school classes throughout the day. Pupils appreciate this support, reporting that teachers are friendly and that 'they make lessons fun'. Parents feel that their children are taught well and appreciate the school's 'open door' policy through which they can seek help if they have any concerns.
- High-level questioning by adults develops pupils' understanding well. Pupils are now beginning to ask more searching questions to deepen their knowledge and understanding. This was seen in a Years 1 and 2 class based on their topic 'Here comes the circus'. Pupils enjoyed asking pre-prepared questions of the teacher, in role as the ringmaster, as part of their research. They asked sensible and pertinent questions, gaining useful insights to the role of the ringmaster in a circus.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour in their classes and they manage groups well. This creates an environment that is good for learning with pupils wanting to work hard and achieve well. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about learning and wanting to be successful.

- The teaching of reading skills is good. Well-structured phonics lessons based on the understanding of letters and the sounds they make, give pupils the knowledge they need when reading more difficult texts. Pupils respond well to encouragement to read books daily, and benefit from using different media such as electronic tablets when completing research.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils benefit from practical activities to help them with their learning. Pupils have access to a good range of practical equipment to support practical tasks.
- The teaching of writing is improving, leading to higher standards of writing across the board. However, it is less strong in Key Stage 1 as pupils are not always challenged or given enough opportunities to practise their writing in different subjects.
- The rate of progress pupils make slows down on the occasions when they are not given sufficiently demanding work to move them on to the next stage of their learning.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and provide pupils with what they need to do to further improve their work and develop their learning. However, pupils do not routinely have time to respond to the suggestions that have been made.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Children enter early years with knowledge, skills and understanding below those typical for their age.
- In the national tests, pupils in Year 6 achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. The outcomes in 2014 continued to show an improvement. Evidence in pupils' books and convincing data from teachers' assessments indicate that this upward trend is continuing for 2015.
- The most-able pupils have benefited from the additional mathematics support they have received from a secondary school teacher, and some are on track to achieve the highest levels in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in writing at Key Stage 1 is slower than in reading and mathematics, with not enough pupils reaching the higher levels in their work because some of the tasks they are given are not challenging enough, particularly for the most able.
- The proportion of pupils that reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) check in 2014 was below the national average. The school has addressed this with rigour over the last year. For example, the teacher leading on phonics is working closely with Year 1 teachers to provide daily phonic sessions which are helping pupils to improve.
- Pupils generally read well, with some clearly displaying their knowledge of phonics when reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including pupils in The Ark, make good progress from their different starting points. Good support and a nurturing environment provided by class teachers and teaching assistants ensure the work set is at the right level for them to make progress alongside other pupils in the class.
- Disadvantaged pupils attained less well than other pupils in the school last year. In the 2014 tests the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school was four terms behind in writing and mathematics, and three terms behind other pupils in reading. Compared to pupils nationally the gap was about two terms for reading and mathematics and four terms for writing. Current school data, and evidence from pupils' workbooks, indicate that pupils are now making faster progress since the start of the school year, and gaps are closing.

### **The early years provision** is outstanding

- The organisation and management of the early years is outstanding. Staff have high expectations and an excellent knowledge of how children learn. Staff constantly monitor and assess children's progress. They regularly meet to discuss how well children are doing, and plan to develop children's experiences in all areas of learning.
- Before children join Millbrook School staff visit them in their pre-school settings and homes to ensure they can plan for individual needs. There is a very good relationship between staff and parents to ensure children quickly settle into the routines in both pre-school and Reception.
- Children in pre-school and Reception have excellent opportunities to work alongside each other using both the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Staff are highly skilled at helping children to become confident in their learning. This supports children when they move on to the next stage of their education.
- There are robust systems to track children's progress that ensure any barriers to learning are addressed and support is put into place to meet individual children's needs. Children make outstanding progress

from their individual starting points, with an ever-increasing proportion reaching a good level of development. There is evidence that the outcomes in 2015 will further exceed those in 2014. They are very well prepared for joining Year 1.

- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress in line with their classmates. Their needs are quickly identified and they receive extremely well-targeted support within the main classroom setting.
- Children make excellent use of the range of different equipment to help develop their skills in the different areas of learning. Children have opportunities to use their skills to solve problems and practise their writing as well as developing their personal and social skills. The behaviour of children is outstanding. They play together well alongside each other and understand the importance of sharing and taking turns.
- The learning environment is very well resourced and ideas excite and capture the children's interest. Children greatly enjoyed reading the story *Open very carefully* about a crocodile that escapes. During the inspection, children received a letter from *Mr Crocodile* who had escaped from the local wildlife park. The children had great fun writing letters and designing traps to try and capture *Mr Crocodile*. Children were delighted to keep inspectors informed throughout the inspection on the whereabouts of the crocodile. The activity provided many opportunities for children to practise their writing, speaking and listening skills.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Children are supported extremely well in their early stages of learning to read. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics very well to support and build confidence in children to read new words.
- Parents like the opportunity to see and contribute to their child's progress in their 'learning journeys'. Parents appreciate the opportunity to 'stay and play' with children. One parent commented, 'It was nice to see my child happy and confident with her friends.'
- Safeguarding is very effective, with risk assessments in place to ensure children are safe at all times.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140284
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	450337

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	315
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Troy Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Pyman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 872800
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