

Millbrook Park Primary School

School House Lane, London NW7 1JF

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

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| 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 | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Parents, pupils and staff are rightly proud of their school. Standards are high, pupils are happy and there is strong sense of teamwork, togetherness and determination shared by all.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have created a school where pupils' learning and well-being are at the heart of all that happens. They are extremely determined and ambitious for all pupils to achieve highly.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers plan activities that are engaging. Pupils make strong progress from their unique starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make good progress. Leaders ensure that these pupils are very well supported in lessons.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. Together with leaders, and representatives from the trust, governors ensure that the quality of education provided is consistently good and continually improves.
- Pupils behave well. Typically, behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils look after their friends, know the importance of good manners and are keen to put the school's values into practice. Pupils are happy, safe and settled.
- Children are safe, settled and happy in the early years. As a result of consistently good teaching, children make strong progress from the time they start and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- The school's values are well understood by pupils. All staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- The teaching of reading is very strong. Pupils learn to use phonics very well. However, some of the strategies leaders use to develop pupils' writing are not fully embedded. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length in a range of contexts, to develop their writing style. Pupils' progress in writing is less strong than in reading and mathematics.
- Middle leaders share the vision and drive to improve the school even further. However, they are new to their roles and the impact of their work is in the early stages of development, particularly in relation to their monitoring of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have worked hard with parents to improve pupils' attendance. Although the levels of absence have improved over time, these continue to remain higher than the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the teaching of writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills in longer pieces of writing
 - the strategies used to enthuse and motivate pupils to write, particularly boys, are fully embedded throughout the school.
- Improve pupils' attendance still further, and reduce levels of persistent absence, so that the former is at least in line with the national average, and the latter the national average at most.
- Further improve the impact of new middle leaders, as the school expands, so that these leaders are fully effective in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their aspects of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher, together with the head of school, has created a school where learning and pupils' well-being are central to all that happens. These leaders have been highly effective at growing a school from scratch, working closely with parents and the community, and ensuring that the quality of education provided is consistently good.
- The head of school is extremely well respected by all staff. She, together with the executive headteacher, has worked closely with teachers to ensure that teaching is consistently strong. Leaders take professional development seriously and use both bespoke and school-wide training to ensure that teaching continues to improve. Teachers continually reflect on their work, discuss pupils' learning and find ways to adapt the curriculum to make learning fun and purposeful for pupils.
- Teachers, including new middle leaders, are excited about the school's developing curriculum. Pupils learn a variety of subjects through well-thought-out themes. Work in pupils' books and on displays around the school demonstrates the many opportunities for pupils to explore scientifically and learn about the world around them. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the way in which teachers use the outdoors to enhance learning across the curriculum, such as going on a treasure hunt in the forest to find clues to solve a secret code. Leaders are always looking for ways to adapt the curriculum so that it is relevant to each cohort of pupils. Consequently, pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of enrichment activities. Pupils speak positively about the different clubs offered to them. Leaders make sure that pupils' physical health is given high priority. They have used the primary physical education and sport funding well to get pupils involved in sports and physical activities throughout the day, including at lunchtimes. Sports coaches work with pupils effectively to raise the profile of exercise and to inspire pupils to improve their skills in sports such as football. Pupils excitedly talk about their daily one-kilometre run and are proud of the staff who join them.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely. The head of school, ably supported by the special educational needs coordinator, makes sure that disadvantaged pupils have what they need to achieve well. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The leadership for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Additional funding is used effectively to ensure that these pupils are well supported. The school's highly inclusive ethos, and the wide range of effective strategies used by leaders to give pupils the very best, mean that these pupils achieve well and make good progress from their starting points.

- The school is an extremely positive place for pupils to learn and play. All staff work hard to embed the school's ethos and know the importance of preparing pupils well for the future. The values of courage, respect, kindness and resilience are very well understood by the pupils. Displays in corridors and in classrooms provide effective examples of how pupils demonstrate these values each day. For example, pupils use sticky notes to share moments of kindness and speak with confidence about how they have been resilient in their learning. This, together with the school's very strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, helps pupils to understand British values and the part they play in society.
- Middle leaders are passionate and enthusiastic about developing key aspects of the curriculum. They have made a good start and are very well supported by the executive headteacher and head of school, who provide high-quality leadership mentoring. However, middle leaders are new to their roles and their work is not fully developed. The ways in which they monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in their aspects of the school's work are in the early stages of development.
- The school is at an exciting place on its journey. The executive headteacher, head of school and governors have a clear plan for the future. Senior leaders and governors acknowledge that as the school expands, members of staff who will join the school's leadership team will need to be supported effectively so that their work complements the work of senior leaders and builds on the strengths already achieved.
- Parents' views on the school, particularly on the quality of teaching and leadership, are extremely positive. Those parents who spoke with inspectors had nothing but good things to say about how well their children have settled and the high-quality information they receive about children's learning. Central to the school's successful start has been the relentless, determined and robust leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school. Together, they have driven the school forward and won the full support of parents.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong. Governors have ensured that, right from the start, the quality of education and pupils' achievements are central to their work. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the aspects that could be even better. The governing body supports school leaders very effectively and shares the school's vision for the future.
- Governors bring a range of skills to the school. They use their expertise and knowledge effectively to hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make. Governors are not afraid to ask challenging questions about the quality of teaching or pupils' outcomes. Governors visit the school regularly to find out for themselves how well pupils are achieving. These visits are well planned and purposeful and relate closely to key aspects of the school's development plans.
- The trust provides strong strategic direction for the school. Representatives of the trust have worked very effectively with leaders and teachers to improve specific aspects of teaching and learning throughout the school. The trust checks on the work of the local governing body and school leaders to make sure that standards remain high and that agreed objectives in the school's development plans are achieved.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The procedures for recruiting new staff are robust. Leaders make sure that the checks to ensure staff suitability meet requirements.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding training is up to date and in line with the latest guidance. Safeguarding policies and procedures are clear and members of staff who spoke with inspectors have a secure understanding of how to report their concerns about a child's welfare. Leaders ensure that staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the 'Prevent' duty in order to identify the potential dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation.
- The chair of governors is the link governor for safeguarding and visits the school to ensure that procedures are as they should be. Governors put the highest emphasis on pupils' safety and discuss this at each governing body meeting.
- Leaders work closely with other professionals and parents to ensure pupils' safety. The designated safeguarding leader ensures that all referrals to the local authority are made promptly and checks on these rigorously. Record keeping is robust and child protection information is of high quality. The school's work with vulnerable pupils and their families is a strength of the school. Leaders work with great determination to ensure that these families are very well supported.
- The school's ethos promotes all aspects of safeguarding very well. Visitors, for example, are provided with key information related to keeping pupils safe. Information in classrooms and in staff areas ensures that all adults who work in the school are clear about the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a pupil's welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and leaders consistently reflect on what works well in their classrooms. Leaders ensure that teachers have a range of opportunities to develop their teaching skills and strategies to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Training is used very effectively to support teachers who are new to the profession or those who need to improve their skills further in understanding what constitutes good-quality teaching and learning. Leaders' expectations are very high. The executive headteacher and head of school monitor teaching and learning effectively and provide teachers with incisive and purposeful feedback about how to improve.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. They talk about pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics with leaders and, where necessary, use interventions wisely to help pupils catch up.

- Throughout the school, reading is taught very well. From a young age, pupils learn to read well and use phonics accurately. Small-group teaching ensures that pupils learn phonics systematically. Teachers are skilful at planning opportunities for pupils to use and apply phonics in a range of situations. Pupils read widely and often. They speak confidently about their favourite authors and make good use of the vibrant library at the heart of the school building. Older pupils read fluently and with excellent expression, showing a good understanding of the texts.
- Leaders have worked hard to raise the profile of mathematics throughout the school. Standards in mathematics are high and pupils achieve well in each year group. Teachers provide many opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical skills in a range of contexts, including in other subjects. Pupils are particularly good at arithmetic and using their knowledge of numbers in other aspects of mathematics. The school's recent drive to improve pupils' problem-solving skills is working well. Inspectors saw a range of examples where pupils worked together effectively to solve problems and give reasons for their answers.
- Pupils use their phonics knowledge well to write words and sentences. Teachers use many effective strategies for pupils to talk about their ideas for writing and rehearse new words and sentences. Pupils have a good understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling appropriate for their age and stage of development. Teachers and leaders are aware that pupils require even more opportunities to write at length, to express their imaginative ideas creatively in writing and to develop fluency in their written work in a range of contexts. Leaders and teachers are always looking for ways to motivate pupils to write. The strategies that have recently been introduced to engage pupils in writing, particularly boys, are not yet fully embedded and the progress pupils make in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers plan their classrooms well. Effective use is made of displays to promote pupils' learning and to celebrate their work. Pupils especially like the displays that show how their writing has improved since the start of the year. Learning walls are used effectively by teachers and pupils in lessons. Teachers provide pupils with the resources they need for effective learning. For example, pupils readily refer to table-top phonics charts and word banks to support their writing. In mathematics, pupils have a variety of tools, such as concrete objects and picture representations, to help them solve word problems.
- Classrooms are positive places to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in lessons to ensure that pupils are on track and understand their learning. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in lessons and during social times.
- Teachers provide challenges to extend pupils' learning and deepen their understanding. This is particularly strong in mathematics, where teachers routinely offer individual and small-group challenges that encourage pupils to grapple with more difficult tasks and apply their knowledge and understanding in different ways.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils speak knowledgeably about how to stay safe when using the internet and recall key information from lessons and assemblies that focus on their safety and well-being.
- Pupils' physical health is promoted effectively from a young age. For example, pupils learn how to keep their teeth healthy and readily discuss their 'Stop the rot' display which gives information to others about the importance of clean teeth.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They understand why bullying is wrong and have confidence in their teachers and leaders to sort out problems quickly. Pupils say that the 'worry boxes' are useful to share their concerns and appreciate the kindness all teachers show in keeping them safe and well cared for.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents agree. The extensive outdoor areas are used very well by pupils. Staff are vigilant and ensure that pupils are well supervised at playtimes and lunchtimes so that everyone can play happily and safely.
- Pupils develop an effective and age-appropriate understanding of equalities. They talk confidently about why they should treat others with respect and kindness. Pupils are keen to talk about their own faiths and backgrounds and listen attentively when their friends do the same. Work in pupils' religious education books and around the school demonstrates that pupils are developing a good understanding of the world around them. As one boy said, 'We are all different, but we must be kind to everyone.'
- Leaders have worked exceptionally hard to improve pupils' attendance. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to raise the profile of good attendance. Pupils speak positively about the incentives to raise attendance, such as the 'special suitcase' filled with fun and exciting toys and games for the class with the best attendance. As a result, attendance has improved over the last year and the level of persistent absence has reduced. Although improving over time, pupils' absence is still high and above the national average.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils behave well. They listen carefully to their teachers and want to learn. Pupils respond well to the high expectations set by teachers and leaders and concentrate hard on their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Year 2 pupils are delighted that they were the first pupils of Millbrook Park Primary and see themselves as ambassadors of the school. Pupils delight in showing visitors around the school and talk excitedly about their learning.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and friendly to others. In lessons and during social times, pupils look after their friends. The kindness and sensitivity modelled by all members of staff are replicated in the pupils' consistently good behaviour.

- The school is a calm place for pupils to learn. Pupils move between lessons sensibly and go to and from the playground very well, carefully placing their outdoor 'sounds' in the 'sound bag' to ensure silent staircases.
- Lunchtime in the dining room and playground is a sociable occasion where pupils mix together harmoniously. Any minor disputes are dealt with quickly by adults. Activities such as football and exercise, drawing and reading are used effectively to help pupils develop strong social skills.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved since the school opened. The consistently good teaching in reading, writing and mathematics enables pupils to achieve well and make strong progress from their starting points.
- The head of school monitors pupils' achievements very effectively. Careful analysis of the progress of different groups ensures that appropriate interventions are planned and implemented quickly. Leaders meet teachers regularly to discuss pupils' progress. Consequently, any pupils who are at risk of falling behind are supported effectively.
- Most children join the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age. From these low starting points, children make very strong progress. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children assessed as achieving a good level of development was above average for the last two years.
- Pupils achieve well in Year 1, especially in phonics. The systematic and effective teaching of phonics is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average in 2016. Last year, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard was below the national average. Leaders have worked closely with teachers to ensure that these pupils are now making good progress and achieving well.
- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that pupils make strong progress in mathematics. Teachers ensure that pupils develop strong calculation strategies and use these in a range of contexts. Pupils' problem-solving skills are also good and many pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are developing the ability to check their work, test out solutions and give reasons for their answers. The majority of pupils attain highly.
- As a result of consistently strong teaching and the school's strategies to engage and motivate pupils to read, pupils make good progress in reading in each year group. Leaders and teachers have worked hard to provide pupils with a wide range of high-quality texts that can support their learning and inspire them to read. Pupils develop good skills for reading. They enjoy learning the meanings of new and adventurous words and are keen to use these in their written work. In each year group, pupils' attainment in reading is high.

- Although pupils achieve well overall in writing, rates of pupils' progress and the standards of attainment are weaker than in reading and mathematics, particularly for boys. Leaders monitor pupils' work closely and have rightly identified that pupils, particularly the oldest pupils, are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length. For some pupils, this holds back their ability to write fluently and develop their writing skills in a range of contexts.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. These pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group. The special educational needs coordinator knows pupils exceptionally well and ensures that pupils receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs. Teaching assistants are skilled at providing specific support to individual pupils during lessons and in small-group interventions.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment information shows that these pupils sometimes make rapid progress and any differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others are diminishing. These pupils have benefited extremely well from the small-group teaching in phonics.
- The most able pupils are well supported in lessons to achieve highly. Teachers provide work that is sufficiently challenging and that deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the most able pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders check pupils' achievement in science and other curriculum subjects effectively. Work in books demonstrates that pupils benefit from a range of science activities and investigations that motivate them to ask and answer questions. Pupils' work in other subjects, such as religious education, is good. Overall, leaders plan and evaluate the curriculum effectively to meet pupils' needs and ensure that pupils make good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Teachers' assessments of children's starting points indicate that most children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. As a result of consistently strong teaching through Nursery and Reception, children make very good progress and are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- Although children's attainment has been above the national average for the previous two years, boys did not achieve as well as girls in 2016 and an attainment gap emerged. Leaders and the early years team have worked effectively to address this. Teachers design activities that are well suited to the individual cohorts of children and focus strongly on the boys' current needs and interests. This is working well. Boys currently in the early years are making equally good progress as girls.
- The learning environment in the early years is fun and exciting. Leaders have invested in high-quality resources and equipment for children to enjoy. The outdoor learning environment is well planned and provides a range of opportunities for children to extend their skills. Staff promote children's physical development well.

- Children explore the different areas with confidence. They work together with their friends sensibly and enjoy conversations about their learning. Children enjoy stories and use small-world toys and building blocks to bring stories to life. Staff promote children's imagination skills well. There are many opportunities for children to be creative and express themselves through drama, arts and music.
- Work in children's special books and in their writing books celebrates how well children acquire the early reading, writing and mathematical skills from the very beginning. Teachers assess children's understanding closely and use photographs and other observations to show the progress children make. Staff use this information effectively to address the next steps in children's learning.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is good. Children follow instructions well and learn the importance of good manners. Children gently remind their friends when they forget to say 'please' or 'thank you'. Children collaborated well during group activities, for example, to create a potion in the mud kitchen that would make everyone as tall as giants.
- Teachers use themes well to bring areas of learning together. For example, children are currently enjoying the 'talent show' theme. Through this, children become judges as they write evaluations of their friends' acts, while others become designers as they create posters inviting their parents to the show.
- Teachers and teaching assistants promote children's language and communication skills effectively. For example, as children create models, teachers describe what children are doing, ask questions, wonder aloud and help children find solutions to the problems that arise. Children display strong levels of resilience and determination as they play.
- Children are motivated and keen to learn. They readily ask visitors questions and want to talk about themselves and their friends. Children display high levels of self-esteem and respond well to the adults' expectations of good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents praise the good communication between school and home and the opportunities they have to share in their children's learning, for example, in 'share our learning days'. Work in children's special books shows that parents contribute suggestions and ideas so that there is an effective, shared approach to children's development.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140601 |
| Local authority | Barnet |
| Inspection number | 10031663 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy special sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 195 |
| Appropriate authority | Academy trust |
| Chair | Jennifer Crane |
| Headteacher | Nicola Dudley (head of school) Anthony David (executive headteacher) |
| Telephone number | 020 3137 5924 |
| Website | www.millbrookparkschool.lidsact.org |
| Email address | admin@millbrookparkschool.lidsact.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Millbrook Park Primary School opened in September 2014. It is part of the London Diocese Board for Schools Academies Trust. When full, the school will have three forms of entry to Year 6. Currently, the school has pupils up to Year 2.
- Most children in the Nursery attend either the morning or afternoon session. Children in Reception attend on a full-time basis.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have worked at Millbrook Park since it opened.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to a variety of lessons in all classrooms. The executive headteacher and head of school accompanied inspectors on some of these visits.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, representatives from the governing body, middle leaders and teachers. The lead inspector made two telephone calls to representatives from the trust. A representative from the local authority also met with inspectors.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised by inspectors. Information related to safeguarding, pupils' achievement and leaders' monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment was considered.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books during visits to lessons and in a focused work scrutiny session. Pupils took the lead inspector on a tour of their school to discuss their learning and the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 reading. The lead inspector met formally with a group of Year 2 pupils. Inspectors observed playtimes and lunchtimes and spoke with pupils informally in lessons and outside.
- At the start of the inspection, inspectors met with parents in the playground. Inspectors took into account the 48 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. The school's own pupil, staff and parent surveys were also considered by inspectors.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Bryant

Ofsted Inspector

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