

Mill Field Primary School

Potternewton Mount, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS7 2DR

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are poor across the school. Only a minority of pupils acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding they need for their next steps in education.
- There is a marked difference in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Pupils' early reading skills are not developed sufficiently.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is weak. Leaders do not accurately identify pupils with additional learning needs. The attainment and progress of pupils with SEND is poor.
- Some subject leaders lack the experience or know-how to be able to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their subjects.
- Rates of absence have increased and continue to be much higher than the national average. Although beginning to improve, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is nearly double that of other pupils nationally.
- A minority of pupils find it difficult to behave appropriately in lessons and around school. Too many pupils say that they have seen or experienced bullying.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have an accurate understanding of the views of some staff, pupils and parents in relation to pupils' behaviour and levels of alleged bullying.
- Too many children in the early years are not prepared well for the demands of Year 1, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- There are pockets of some very strong teaching in the school, particularly in Year 6.
- Staff have a thorough understanding relating to safeguarding, particularly the signs that may indicate that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or harm.
- Opportunities for pupils to engage in sports and extra-curricular activities have increased considerably since the previous inspection.
- Support for pupils' emotional needs is strong because staff know pupils and their families extremely well.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, across key stages 1 and 2, in addition to the early years, so that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, make at least good progress, by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide pupils with books to read, both in school and at home, that are closely matched to their phonic knowledge
 - develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of phonics and how pupils learn to read
 - assess pupils accurately, following the school's assessment policy consistently, so that they can plan learning activities that build on what pupils can already do
 - display consistently high expectations of pupils' conduct and standard of written work, intervening promptly when one or both start to deteriorate
 - plan lessons in the foundation subjects that afford pupils opportunities to deepen their understanding and explore new ideas and concepts in detail
 - refine the way that they teach spelling accuracy.
- Improve the quality of leadership and governance swiftly, by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders have the skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to identify and improve weaknesses in their subjects
 - leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND identify pupils' additional learning needs at the earliest point and make effective provision without delay
 - senior leaders' and governors' monitoring activities and evaluations contribute to an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness
 - leaders record instances of inappropriate pupil behaviour accurately and respond in a way that successfully improves pupils' attitudes to learning
 - the views of pupils, parents and staff are collated and addressed effectively.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that leaders and staff:
 - urgently improve rates of attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
 - consistently and effectively demonstrate high expectations of pupils' behaviour
 - reduce instances of bullying or perceived bullying across the school
 - investigate ways to support each other when managing pupils' behaviour.

External reviews of governance and of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Improvements in the effectiveness of leadership and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been slow to materialise. Too many pupils are not prepared well enough for their next steps in education. For example, three in every four Year 6 pupils left the school in 2018 having not reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Leadership capacity for further improvement is limited.
- Subject leaders are given increasing autonomy to make their own decisions and take responsibility for improving the quality of education pupils receive. Nevertheless, some subject leaders lack the necessary skills to swiftly improve pupils' outcomes. This is because they do not monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently well, or often enough, to be able to formulate an accurate understanding of pupils' experiences in their subjects. Inspectors' joint scrutiny of pupils' work with subject leaders was, in their words, a 'real eye-opener'. For example, some subject leaders expressed concern with the poor quality of pupils' work, much of which they had not seen before.
- The quality and effectiveness of support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Some pupils with SEND are supported well. However, other pupils with SEND struggle to keep up with their learning because teachers do not plan to meet their needs very well. Furthermore, a minority of pupils who experience greater difficulty in learning than their peers have not been assessed and/or identified as having additional learning needs. Consequently, these pupils demonstrate increasingly challenging behaviour because they cannot access a full, broad and balanced curriculum successfully.
- Leaders have an over-generous view of the quality of education pupils receive. Their perception is at odds with the view of some staff, pupils and parents.
- A minority of staff who responded to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire say that leaders do not support staff well in managing behaviour or do all that they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.
- From very low starting points, pupils' attainment is starting to rise. This is, in part, due to the recent actions of senior leaders. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked conscientiously to introduce and refine school systems that are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders know the importance of developing pupils' early reading skills. Leaders have recently invested a significant amount of funding into library resources. They recognise the need to ensure that the books pupils are given to read at home and school are matched consistently well to their phonic knowledge.
- Leaders' use of additional funding to develop school sports and physical activity is effective. Funding has been used to introduce a sports 'app' that teachers use to track and monitor the skills pupils learn. Through this, teachers frequently distribute bronze, silver and gold awards to pupils for successfully demonstrating a range of skills. Pupils who need further support are encouraged to attend the increasing number of extra-curricular sports sessions.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately supported. A wide range of activities take place to support pupils' understanding of what it means to be British while living in a multi-cultural community. Over 42 different languages are spoken by pupils and their parents. To support pupils in this regard, a large number of key stage 2 pupils proudly wear their 'high-viz' vests each day to notify their peers that they are a pupil interpreter and fluent in more than one language. This ensures that pupils always have someone to talk to. It also ensures that the pupils who start school at times other than the normal admission date are swiftly integrated into school life and make friends easily.
- Teachers who are new to the profession say that they receive regular and effective advice and guidance from more experienced colleagues. However, until the overall effectiveness of the school improves, and leaders increase the support they provide to staff in managing behaviour, the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not acted with sufficient urgency to improve the quality of teaching, subject leadership, pupils' behaviour, attendance or outcomes since the last inspection.
- In some instances, governors' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overly generous. Governors do not have an accurate or realistic understanding of the size of the task ahead to improve teaching, learning and attendance.
- Scrutiny of the minutes of governing body meetings demonstrates that governors ask some challenging questions of leaders and that appropriate actions are delegated to staff when required. However, it is not always evident if, or how, leaders follow up on this at subsequent meetings; many of the actions are left 'in limbo'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to recognise their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. For example, staff understand clearly that it is their mandatory duty to report to police any instance where an act of female genital mutilation (FGM) may have been carried out on a pupil. Staff know who to report concerns to, within and beyond the school, should they be alerted to the signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM.
- Senior leaders are clear about procedures where they are concerned about the safety of a pupil. Inspection evidence demonstrates that the most serious concerns are reported to external agencies and the local authority in a swift and timely manner. Investigations are followed through to their conclusion successfully.
- Leaders take the safety of pupils seriously. In most cases, they take effective action to mitigate the risks pupils may face in the future, particularly if those risks relate to the fabric of the building or school site.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Considerable differences exist in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of pupils. The majority of current pupils make poor progress in their learning.
- Pupils' learning in English is inconsistent. Typically, key stages 1 and 2 teachers do not ensure that pupils master the basics of spelling, punctuation and grammar before they use more complicated skills, such as inference or justification. Pupils struggle to learn and their written work is often untidy or incomplete. In many instances, pupils' work is well below the standard expected for their age.
- Notwithstanding the investment in additional library resources, pupils are sometimes given books that are too easy or too challenging for them to read. This does little to develop a love for reading. In some instances, reading becomes a chore for pupils because they find it difficult to blend sounds into words successfully.
- Some teachers and other staff are enthusiastic when they work with pupils to improve their reading skills. However, the teaching of phonics varies across key stage 1. Although improving, the weakest readers do not make the progress that they should from their different starting points. This is because some staff do not provide pupils with sufficient time to reflect on or use their phonic knowledge. During lessons, some pupils become confused and seek additional support to overcome what they believe to be tough questions.
- Teachers' application of the school's assessment policy is inconsistent. When some teachers assess pupils' written work, they do not identify pupils' common misconceptions or address pupils' frequent errors and low expectations. As a consequence, teachers do not address these concerns in their subsequent teaching and pupils' work is slow to improve over time.
- Typically, teachers do not use what they know of pupils' prior attainment to set work which meets their needs. For some pupils, when learning tasks are too difficult, their attention fades and they become restless. When this occurs, disruptions to pupils' learning become more common and the progress pupils make diminishes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the foundation subjects, such as geography, history and religious education (RE), is weak. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils learn a wide range of different subjects across the academic year. However, what pupils are expected to know and understand is unclear. It is often the case that pupils will flit from one subject to the next, rarely spending enough time on each to deepen their understanding or explore new ideas and concepts in detail.
- Some teaching is well planned and takes account of pupils' prior knowledge. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's excellent subject knowledge, coupled with an enthusiasm for literature, ensured that pupils were engrossed in their learning. Pupils were successful in their own writing and learned how to identify and begin to use a wide range of literary devices to build suspense or describe a setting in detail.
- Some teachers have developed effective classroom routines which enable pupils to make the transition between learning activities swiftly and effectively. This ensures that, in these lessons, little learning time is lost, and teachers can ask a broader range of questions to check pupils' understanding.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- 78% of pupils who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire say that bullying occurs at school. Some of these pupils say that teachers are not good at resolving bullying issues.
- The majority of pupils say that they feel safe. They have an appropriate understanding of the risks that they may encounter within and beyond school. Teachers have been trained to identify if a pupil is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or harm. Because of this, teachers regularly discuss, sensitively, the pros and cons of using the internet and peer pressure with pupils. Teachers are alert to the different cultural issues that pupils may encounter as they grow older.
- The proportion of pupils attending sports clubs has increased significantly in the last three years. Over half of the pupils in the school regularly take part in a sport or club.
- The very small number of pupils who attend alternative education provision are supported appropriately. Pupils attend well and, with intensive support, make a smooth transition to secondary school or reintegrate back to primary school when the time is right.
- Staff are working hard to support pupils' emotional needs. Pupils benefit from an increasing range of activities and initiatives that encourage them to 'speak out' if they have a worry or a concern. For example, teachers use the school's 'worry monster' to good effect with pupils. The emotional literacy team frequently support individual pupils or groups of pupils to overcome anxiety or stress-related issues linked to home and school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The proportion of pupils who are absent from school has increased during the last two years. Rates of absence are much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school continues to be approximately double the national average, although some improvements have been made in this regard recently.
- Pupils' behaviour varies considerably. In many lessons, the vast majority of pupils behave well and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. However, a minority of pupils exhibit extremely challenging behaviour, and some others do not appreciate the importance of good conduct throughout the school day. Inspection evidence, including the results from the staff inspection questionnaires, highlights that a minority of staff and pupils do not believe that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Leaders' records and logs of behaviour do not correlate fully with the views of pupils, staff and parents. Leaders' sanctions and responses to more serious incidents of

disruptive behaviour effectively modify the behaviour of some pupils. However, a minority of staff say that more could be done in this regard so that pupils who consistently misbehave are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

- The number of days lost due to fixed-period exclusions has increased this academic year and continues to be above the national average. No pupils have been permanently excluded in the last three years.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Variability in the quality of teaching and high rates of absence have contributed to pupils' attainment remaining well below average across key stages 1 and 2.
- Although the reading progress of Year 6 pupils in 2018 was above average, less than half of the pupils reached the standards expected for their age in the reading assessment at the end of key stage 2. Teachers use a well-established programme to assess pupils' reading comprehension. However, pupils say that teachers do not listen to them read aloud regularly. Pupils' reading fluency is not as developed as it should be. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 only occasionally receive guidance and support from staff that is tailored to their needs. As a result of this, too few pupils are successfully improving the way they blend sounds into words or use punctuation for effect when reading.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is not used effectively. Over time, the reading, writing and mathematics results at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have been below the national average for approximately two in every three disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils begin each year on the back foot because they do not understand fully the content from the previous year before moving on to learn new topics. Consequently, the difference between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and other pupils nationally is wide. Pupils with SEND do not make strong progress when set against their targets and support plans. Inspection evidence demonstrates that this weak progress shows no sign of abating with current pupils.
- Pupils' spelling accuracy is a common weakness across the school. A large proportion of pupils do not apply spelling rules effectively and continue to make basic spelling errors. Teachers sometimes ask pupils to make spelling corrections. However, this is few and far between. The school's approach to spelling does little to develop pupils' understanding of common exception words (words that do not always follow normal spelling rules) or the words that pupils use more often (high frequency words).
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check increased in 2018. The school's own assessment information highlights that current Year 1 pupils, who completed the phonics screening check recently, have improved on the outcomes of previous cohorts. Notwithstanding this, pupils do not build effectively upon these gains in their reading skills beyond Year 1.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported to be able to access the curriculum. Learning activities are often adapted. Pupils who speak very little English attend additional intervention sessions to work with staff on their speaking and listening skills. The school's own information demonstrates that these pupils do as well as, or better than, other pupil groups across the school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of the early years provision is over-generous. Children, the vast majority of whom are disadvantaged, do not make enough progress from their starting points. Although the proportion is increasing over time, too few children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. As a result, too many children are not prepared well for the demands of Year 1, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Across the early years, adults' assessments of children's skills and abilities are not used incisively to plan activities for different groups of children. Some adults do not have high enough expectations of their very language-literate children.
- Children's letter formation, at this late stage of the academic year, is poor. Too few children use their knowledge of phonics to spell simple words correctly. Children's very basic skills are not embedded. For example, not enough children leave spaces in between the words they write. The early years leader has introduced special books in which children record their written work in phonics. This very recent innovation is helping teachers identify weaknesses in children's letter formation and spelling.
- Although high priority is given to early reading, leaders have not ensured that the books that children read contain the sounds they have been taught. This affects the children's reading fluency and confidence, which hinders their progress.
- Children with SEND do not make good progress because of a slow response to diagnosing and meeting their educational needs. For example, a group of children were taught the phase 1 sounds from the school's phonics programme during the inspection; these sounds should be taught and mastered in the first six weeks of the autumn term.
- The leader makes sure that the welfare and safeguarding requirements of the early years are met well. Children feel safe in the well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments. They are relaxed, inquisitive and friendly.
- Leaders have recognised that increasing engagement with parents who speak English as an additional language is an important area for development. To this end, they are advocating the use of applications that can be accessed by mobile technology. Parents who talked to inspectors during the inspection were satisfied with the provision in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	135162
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10088919

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Keefe
Headteacher	Jo Heggie
Telephone number	01132 620 021
Website	www.millfield.leeds.sch.uk/
Email address	office@mfprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	31 March–1 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- A larger-than-average number of pupils join the school at times other than the usual admission date. At the time of the inspection, approximately 25% of current pupils had joined the school after Reception or following long periods out of education.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium fund is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average.
- Children attend full- and part-time early years provision in the Nursery and Reception.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited most classes across the school. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the SENCo, subject leaders, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with subject leaders in English, mathematics and the foundation subjects. In addition, inspectors, including the lead inspector, scrutinised a large sample of learning journals belonging to children in Nursery and Reception.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with a member of staff from the alternative education provider and the lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the school's previous and current school improvement partners from the local authority.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed reading interventions.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, analysis of performance information, action plans and evaluations, attendance records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks, referrals to the local authority designated officer, headteacher reports and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the responses from the 30 members of staff and 98 pupils who completed Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Ashworth	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	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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