

Inspection of Millthorpe School

Nunthorpe Avenue, York, North Yorkshire YO23 1WF

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Gemma Greenhalgh. This school is part of South Bank Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Hassack, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Wiggins.

What is it like to attend this school?

Millthorpe School is an inclusive community. Pupils value difference and diversity. They understand the importance of tolerance and respect. As such, relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. Most pupils behave well and focus on their learning. Some pupils do not attend school often enough. This means that they miss out on valuable learning.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that is taught well by teachers with secure subject knowledge. Teachers ensure that the new content that pupils learn builds on what they have been taught previously. Over time, the school has not identified and supported pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly enough. Leaders, including those from the multi-academy trust, have made changes to the approach to SEND. This has improved the support for many pupils with SEND.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' wider personal development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain through a carefully considered form time programme, assemblies and the taught curriculum. The school offers an array of extra-curricular opportunities that pupils make good use of. This includes clubs such as Dungeons and Dragons, choir, debate club and various sporting activities.

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

The school's curriculum helps pupils to learn the important content that leaders have identified in each subject. Pupils use this knowledge to complete the challenging work that teachers set. During their time in school, pupils become more confident in using specialised vocabulary in both their verbal and written responses. Previously, some disadvantaged pupils have not performed as well as their peers in national assessments. However, disadvantaged pupils currently in school are making better progress through the curriculum.

The school has prioritised improving the provision for pupils with SEND. There is a specific SEND action plan that is checked by leaders regularly. The implementation of this plan has led to improvements in school systems, staff training and the ways in which pupils are supported in lessons. Staff know pupils well. They receive information on how to help pupils with SEND access their learning. However, for some pupils with SEND, this support did not come quickly enough. For these pupils, and their parents and carers frustrations remain.

Leaders are successfully developing a culture of reading across the school. The library is a hive of activity for many pupils during social times. Pupils who need extra help to become confident and fluent readers are supported by well-trained staff.

Most pupils behave well. They understand the school's behaviour and rewards system. Although some pupils display challenging behaviour, it does not disrupt the daily life of the school. Bullying and the use of derogatory language are not common

at Millthorpe School. Pupils understand the importance of being inclusive and respectful to all members of the school community.

Some pupils do not attend school often enough. This includes disadvantaged pupils and some pupils with SEND. The school has prioritised pupils' regular attendance. It adopts a tenacious approach to tackling poor attendance. Leaders' high expectations have resulted in an improvement in overall attendance across the school. Although the number of pupils persistently absent from school has decreased, there are still some pupils with very low attendance.

The school has designed a new and detailed curriculum for personal development. Pupils learn important information about, for example, online safety, financial management and respectful relationships. The form time 'culture curriculum' consolidates what pupils learn through the taught curriculum. This means pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils benefit from an effective careers programme. They make informed decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment.

Leaders, including those from the multi-academy trust, have an ambitious vision for Millthorpe School. Their actions have improved the school. This is recognised by most parents, staff and pupils. Staff are proud to work at the school. However, a small number of parents feel disconnected from the changes that the school has made. These include some parents of pupils with SEND. Leaders are implementing plans to strengthen the school's relationship with its stakeholders. Trustees and governors closely monitor the impact of this work. They are well informed and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are absent from school too often. These pupils miss out on learning and have gaps in their knowledge. The school should continue to understand the causes of poor attendance and be even more robust in its approach to securing improved attendance across the school.
- Some pupils with SEND have previously not received the support that they need quickly enough. This has led to frustration for some parents and has meant that pupils with SEND have not been consistently well supported. The school should embed recent improvements to ensure pupils with SEND receive the support that they need promptly.
- Some parents feel disconnected from the changes happening at the school. This has led to the school's relationship with some stakeholders not being as strong as

they could be. The school should continue to engage with the views of parents and build stronger relationships with all members of the school community.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142648
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10290306
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1078
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Wiggins
Headteacher	Gemma Greenhalgh
Website	http://www.millthorpeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of six in the South Bank Multi Academy Trust.
- The school uses three unregistered providers of education. Several pupils with SEND attend the unregistered providers. The school uses two registered providers of education and one provision that is part of the South Bank Multi Academy Trust. Inspectors visited this provider and spoke to staff and pupils as part of this inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, design and technology, drama, languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They reviewed pupils' education, health and care plans. Inspectors visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- The team scrutinised the school's records of bullying and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on external and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer, representatives from the local governing body and board of trustees.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Melanie Kane	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Hemming	Ofsted Inspector
John Morrison	Ofsted Inspector

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