

Millbrook Combined School

Address: Mill End Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 4BA

Unique reference number (URN): 131815

Inspection report: 10 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	     
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have reviewed the school's personal development programme to ensure that links to the relationships and sex education and health education curriculum are clear. As a result, pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They are accepting of differences between themselves and others.

Overall, pupils have a secure knowledge of important aspects of the personal development programme. Pupils treat one another with respect and tolerance. They understand why it is important to learn about these values and the many different beliefs that shape modern Britain. The opportunities that pupils get to experience different religions and cultures are broad. This helps them be equipped to be active and well-informed participants in their communities. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both online and offline.

Pupils take pride in their leadership roles, such as being school councillors and peer mentors. Older pupils help their peers resolve conflicts on the playground. They have also raised awareness of sustainability issues, including by purchasing additional bins to reduce the amount of litter on the site. Leaders broaden pupils' understanding of their local heritage through visits to museums and local places of interest. Whole-school trips to the pantomime, as well as visiting professionals, help to develop pupils' social awareness. For example, local police officers come in and discuss the importance of road safety.

Suitably trained staff work with individual pupils to support their pastoral needs. When pupils are anxious, staff take the time to explore pupils' concerns and help to resolve them. A range of clubs, such as martial arts, swimming and musical theatre, help to broaden pupils' experiences. Leaders track attendance at these activities so that disadvantaged pupils can enjoy wider participation.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

The school's published outcomes are consistently below national averages. The legacy of leadership and staffing changes and the associated inconsistencies in teaching has had an impact on pupils' achievement. However, pupils are now starting to achieve better than they did due to the decisive actions leaders have taken. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils have the widest gaps in their communication skills and the way they form letters and spell words. This means that some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some disadvantaged pupils, cannot successfully access all subjects across the curriculum. In other subjects, such as history and geography, pupils do not remember their prior learning in enough detail. Such gaps hinder pupils' ability to learn the curriculum well and to achieve as well as they should. Consequently, some pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stages in their education.

Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check is usually similar to that of other pupils nationally. Many pupils can use their phonics knowledge to read new words and sounds. Increasingly, more pupils become confident readers by the time that they reach the end of key stage 2.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Too many disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend school as regularly as they should. Attendance rates for these pupils are below the national average. Leaders have reviewed their approaches to supporting families to make improvements. They use knowledge of attendance to identify patterns and trends so they can intervene quickly with the right support. However, these changes are very recent and have not had the desired impact on increasing pupils' levels of attendance.

Pupils enjoy their learning and most sustain focus well. Children begin to develop positive behaviour habits right from the start in the early years. Leaders actively involve staff in devising the school's expectations and approaches to behaviour. Staff apply these consistently, so pupils know what is expected of them and develop responsible attitudes. Staff adapt their approaches appropriately when pupils need help to manage their behaviour or emotions. This leads to respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils learn and play happily with each other. This is because leaders have developed a culture that does not tolerate any discrimination and bullying.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have not developed effective ways to check on pupils' learning across the curriculum. Consequently, teachers do not know where pupils' learning is insecure. This results in staff moving pupils' learning on too quickly, and the gaps in pupils' knowledge are not addressed. This includes gaps in important knowledge to support writing, such as spelling and handwriting. Leaders have made recent changes to the curriculum to address this. For example, during lessons, teachers now revisit previous learning. This is beginning to help pupils remember more.

Typically, the key knowledge and skills that pupils must learn in each subject have been identified. Staff explain and model new concepts clearly. Recent improvements to the classroom environment allow pupils to think about their learning more. Important information from teacher explanations is displayed prominently in all classes. Pupils make effective use of this to help them to complete their work.

Staff have received the training they need to teach phonics and mathematics well. In phonics, this supports staff to make regular and more accurate checks on the sounds that pupils know. This information ensures that pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds and words they have learned. Pupils are still developing their confidence and fluency in their reading and with their number skills.

Early years

Needs attention 

In the early years, children do not benefit from as many opportunities as they could to explore new language and learning. There is inconsistency in the effectiveness of staff's interactions with children. This means that children miss out on practising the skills and vocabulary that they have been taught. Leaders recognise this and have prioritised children's communication and language. Reading is a key focus for the school. Children learn to read letters and sounds, which helps them to read and write words. Leaders have started to provide the support and training required to bring about change. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work, and inconsistencies remain. As a result, some children are not as ready for Year 1 as they should be.

Leaders have created a curriculum that is well sequenced. Expectations for children are clearly identified. Despite this, some of the tasks that children complete do not suitably challenge them. This is because staff do not always check that the tasks are well matched to children's needs.

Leaders have prioritised creating an engaging learning environment. Recent developments to the outside learning area have created a space where children can explore and enjoy their learning. Children are well cared for and happy. Staff nurture their independence and help them learn important social skills, such as taking turns and beginning to understand different emotions. Staff now work with parents and carers more effectively to deepen their knowledge of how to support their children's learning.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Over time, support to address pupils' barriers to learning has not been effective enough. The local authority has worked with the school to review and improve the support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive. Consequently, barriers that pupils may face are now better understood by staff. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. However, staff are not fully equipped to adapt the curriculum well enough for pupils with SEND. This hinders the progress that some pupils with SEND make. They do not consistently secure the important knowledge and skills that they need. The school's processes to identify pupils' additional needs are now robust. This has resulted in pupils with SEND getting the help and guidance they need, though this is in an early stage of development.

Leaders have an effective strategy that accurately identifies barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. This includes difficulties that these pupils may have with communication, language and limited life experiences. Pupils who struggle socially and emotionally benefit from the nurturing support that staff provide. This has led to these pupils attending school more regularly than they did.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Some of the improvements that leaders have introduced are very recent. As a result, they have not made a measurable difference to the quality of the school's curriculum and teaching. This is especially true in writing. There have been changes in leadership. Leaders

and governors now have an accurate view of the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and take decisions that are in the best interests of all pupils.

Leaders' plans focus on the right priorities. They include developing staff expertise and building stronger relationships with parents. Governors have strengthened their own expertise to better hold leaders to account. They have a clear plan for delivering sustained improvement. The actions of leaders and governors are starting to gain traction and make a difference to pupils' learning.

Time is protected for professional learning. Staff access appropriate professional development. This helps them to deliver an improving quality of provision. The impact of this training is evident, for example in understanding the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff appreciate leaders' focus on their workload and wellbeing. Teachers value recent opportunities to develop their expertise in line with the school's priorities. Parents and carers also appreciate the improved communication and the school's efforts to work in partnership with them.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy coming to this vibrant community school. They are greeted warmly by staff at the start of each day with a smile. Pupils' wellbeing is a high priority. This gives pupils a sense of belonging. Pupils share their worries with teachers freely. They know that all staff will do what they can to help them.

Incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying, are rare. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Over a sustained period of time, pupils have not come to school regularly enough. Leaders have started to take action to improve pupils' attendance levels. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

While pupils work hard and show an interest in their learning, some do not achieve as well as they should. Staff do not identify gaps or misunderstandings in pupils' knowledge accurately. Consequently, these gaps persist and hinder some pupils in securing important knowledge. In addition, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not consistently get the support that they need to progress well.

In the early years, children's communication and language are prioritised. Adult interactions with children are celebratory and encouraging. However, children experience an inconsistent approach to how staff model new vocabulary for them. Opportunities for children to practise their communication and language skills are not regular enough to be fully effective.

Pupils benefit from varied opportunities to explore and learn beyond the classroom. They enjoy visits to museums and annual residential trips. These experiences, alongside visitors in to school, enrich the curriculum that pupils learn. Pupils celebrate world festivals and events. Their understanding of the many different faiths and world views that exist in modern

Britain is well developed. Pupils have an appropriate awareness of fundamental British values, and this prepares them well for life beyond school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff check on pupils' understanding so that gaps in their knowledge and misconceptions are addressed and pupils build knowledge well.
 - Leaders should continue to ensure that learning is adapted effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should make sure that the school's approach to early language and writing development, starting in the early years, is developed effectively so pupils' knowledge is developed rapidly.
 - Leaders should further develop and embed changes they have made to ensure pupils attend school far more regularly than they currently do.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Marc Henrickse.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and staff. They also spoke with the school's improvement partner from the local authority. The lead inspector met with 4 members of the governing board, including the chair.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

The headteacher took up post in September 2024.

Headteacher: Ian Newton

Lead inspector:

Neil Pilsworth, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Alan McDougall, Ofsted Inspector

Trudi Sammons, Ofsted Inspector

Anneka Fisher, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

690

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

696

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

30.36%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.17%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

24.20%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	42%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	42%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	63%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	58%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	62%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	26%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	23%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	19%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	53%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	37%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	40%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	37%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	44%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	40%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	26%	68%	-42 pp
2024/25 (revised)	23%	69%	-46 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	19%	66%	-47 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	80%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	53%	81%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	37%	78%	-41 pp
2024/25 (revised)	40%	78%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	37%	78%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	35%	77%	-43 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	44%	80%	-36 pp
2024/25 (revised)	40%	81%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-36 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.1%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	26.0%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	27.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	27.7%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright