



Millthorpe School

Self-evaluation summary

Last updated 06 January 2014

Context

- Millthorpe School is a mid-sized mixed comprehensive with 912 students on roll. The number has been falling in recent years in line with the dip in birth rate across York.
- Millthorpe has more boys than girls (53% to 47% across the school). The difference is more marked in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- The proportion of students eligible for FSM is below the national average, as is the school deprivation indicator.
- The proportion of students with supported with statements of SEN or at School Action Plus is in line with the national average.
- The school currently has 9 looked-after children.
- The school has 9.5% of children from ethnic minority backgrounds, in the middle quintile of all schools, but somewhat below the national average. This is in line with York as a whole.
- The KS2 attainment of students is slightly above national averages but lower in Year 11 and lower still in Year 10 than in previous years.



Executive Summary

- A new headteacher, Trevor Burton, took up post in April 2011, following the long term absence through illness of the previous headteacher.
- Exam results in 2013 were the best ever for the school on all indicators. Key indicators significantly exceed national averages and are at least in the top 20% of similar schools as indicated by Fischer Family Trust estimates
- The school has made a good response to both its previous Ofsted report and to the fall in GCSE English Language results in 2012.
- Teaching quality is good: 86% of the thirty three observations this academic year were good or better. 18% of lessons have been graded at Outstanding.
- We view Millthorpe as Good for Behaviour and Safety. The Introduction of a Positive Achievement System in September 2011 led to significant improvements in both conduct and behaviour for learning.
- Attendance across whole school has increased to 96.3% (Sept 2013 to end Dec 2013) from 94.0% (Raise up to May 2013). The proportion of persistently absent students has reduced greatly in the first term of 2013-14 from 7.2% in RAISE 2012-13 to 3.4%.
- The capacity of the Senior Leadership Team has been increased with the recent appointments of a Business Manager (2012) and an Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for developing middle leadership (2013).
- Middle leadership is strong: 19 out of 25 subjects exceeded their FFT-D estimates for A*-C at GCSE in 2013.
- Communication with parents is very good and Millthorpe has strengthened its position within the local community.
- There is an appropriate School Improvement Plan, shared with governors and monitored by the Governing Body for progress on a termly basis. Leaders have made significant interventions in Year 11 to ensure better progress in 2013 and not only in English and Maths.
- Millthorpe considers it merits a grade 2 (Good) classification with some Outstanding features.



Pupils' achievement - grade: Good (2)

Evidence that supports this judgement

- The 2013 results are the best the school has achieved and on most measures put Millthorpe in at least the top 20% of similar schools:
 - 5A*-C inc EM = 70% (top 20% of similar schools, 17% up on 2012)
 - Expected progress in English = 77% (exceeds national comparators and FFT-D estimates; up from 58% in 2012). Better than expected progress also exceeds comparators at 37%.
 - Expected progress in Maths = 78% (exceeds national comparators and FFT-D estimates; up from 68% in 2012). Better than expected progress also exceeds comparators.
- 2012 results were much lower than they should have been principally because of a clear one year blip in English Language due to the national grading issue. Mathematics improved in 2012 with progress slightly above expected (68% vs 64% national).
- More than just core subjects improved in 2013 – previously weaker subjects such as the Sciences and German improved significantly, and the Humanities remain very strong.
- Performance in the EBacc is very high compared to national medians at 29%, due to high performance in the Humanities and in Modern Languages (both at FFT-D or better for A*-A and A*-C).
- Our observations look closely at the progress students make over time. In the 117 lessons from September 2012 to August 2013, 78% demonstrated that pupils were making good or outstanding progress. This evidence gave us confidence in our predictions and is supported by the achievement of the 2013 cohort.
- Current tracking of both Year 11 and Year 10 shows indicators which are similar or higher than the corresponding tracking of the 2013 cohort, despite the 2014 and 2015 cohorts being of lower attainment on intake.
- Performance of vulnerable groups for Y11 & Y10 is predicted to be closer to that of the non-disadvantaged on almost all key indicators.
- Pupils' achievement in terms other than academic outcomes is good. For example, 30 students in Year 11 are involved in The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme at bronze level (with 60 successfully completing this last year). This makes Millthorpe School the biggest DofE centre in York.
- Students support charity appeals well, having raised £10,000 last year.

Why achievement is not the grade above

- In the good and outstanding lessons there are still opportunities to improve progress through better use of assessment and feedback.
- The achievement of pupil premium students in 2013 was much better than in previous years, but they are still too far away from those without disadvantage, and they are not yet achieving exceptionally well. The current predictions of a narrower gap need to be borne out in results.
- The outstanding achievement of students in 2012-13 must be repeated in 2013-14 to evidence achievement at the grade above.



The quality of teaching - grade: Good (2)

Evidence that supports this judgement

- In our most recent round of lesson observations beginning in September 2013 the numbers observed at each grade so far:
 - Grade 1 = 5 (18%)
 - Grade 2 = 19 (68%) (86% grade 2 or better)
 - Grade 3 = 4 (14%)
 - Grade 4 = 0 (0%)
- In 2012-13 over 83 observations, the proportion of lessons observed at grade 2 or better was 87%. These observations were undertaken only by trained senior leaders. The judgement of the observers has been checked by a trained Ofsted Additional Inspector. As well as the overall proportion of each grade observed, there were certain features observed across the school which were guided our school improvement planning:
 - Good use of behaviour management and excellent behaviour for learning in some classes.
 - Excellent use of assessment to support learning in some classes.
 - Excellent subject knowledge used to engage students.
- Areas for improvement include:
 - Too much teaching where independent learning is insufficiently developed, particularly through the effective use of homework to consolidate and extend learning.
 - Insufficient use of assessment to support learning within lessons.
 - Insufficient opportunities for a significant minority of pupils to develop independence and resilience.
- Two teachers who taught inadequate lessons have been on capability procedures: one informal, one formal. One has improved to good and one has agreed to early retirement in August while being supported by a Lead Teacher.

Why teaching is not the grade above

- In 2013-14 we need to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve any teaching which is less than good.
- Teachers should develop more independent work, including homework, to promote pupil progress.
- Marking and feedback to pupils is not yet of a consistently high quality.
- There are some issues with insufficient challenge in lessons, though this was observed as a strength in many lessons too.



Behaviour and safety - grade: Good (2)

Evidence that supports this judgement

- Parents have expressed positive views about the school. Our February 2013 survey using the Ofsted questions showed that 94% of parents agreed that their child is happy, feels safe and makes good progress at Millthorpe.
- Attendance across the whole school during the Autumn term 2013 was 96.3%, its best ever and up dramatically on the RAISE 2012-13 figure of 94.0%.
- A re-timetabling of Year 11 throughout their exam period ensured that lessons remained relevant and maintained a high level of attendance up to their last exam (90.1%).
- Improved support and higher accountabilities for students at risk of persistent absenteeism have had impressive results: in 2012-13 PA reduced from 8.7% (2011-12 RAISE) to 5.5% by May 2013. During the Autumn term 2013 it has reduced further to 3.4%.
- There have not been any permanent exclusions in three years. The fixed term exclusion rate is well below national averages both overall and for the overwhelming majority of vulnerable groups.
- Behaviour for Learning has shown improvement. Low-level disruption is uncommon. Observations show us how resilience and independence are improving in classrooms, but it is not yet common in all classrooms.
- The new pastoral structure introduced in September 2012 has provided more capacity for dealing with challenging students with complex behaviour and has been successful in linking improvement in behaviours to achievement, particularly in Year 11.
- Our behaviour records show a significant improvement in behaviour from 2011-12 to 2012-13, particular in the latter half of 2012-13. We have continuously refined our systems for managing behaviour since a major change in September 2011.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust and working effectively. They have been internally audited this year.

Why behaviour and safety are not the grade above

- The recent dramatic improvements in attendance and persistence need to be sustained.
- Despite improvements in general behaviour, there is still a very small minority of students who do not rise to challenge and whose attitudes to learning are not consistently good.



Leadership and management - grade: Good (2)

Evidence that supports this judgement

- The school has made a strong response to both its previous Ofsted report and to the fall in GCSE English Language results in 2012.
- Of the four key actions from the previous Ofsted, three have been accomplished:
 - 25 hours per week provision;
 - engaging parents more (parent forums, better communication, re-introduction of an active PTA);
 - encouraging healthy lifestyles (two hours of PE per week).
- The other (embed good assessment for learning in classroom practice) is becoming a stronger feature in lessons.
- There is an appropriate School Improvement Plan, shared with governors, and monitored by the Governing Body for progress on a termly basis.
- Leaders have made significant interventions in Year 11 to ensure better progress in 2012-13 and not only in English and Maths. Student achievement is closely monitored.
- The Leadership of Teaching & Learning has been strengthened by recent appointments of a new AHT and a team of Lead Teachers. The quality of middle leadership is being improved through the appointment of another new AHT.
- Strengths and weaknesses are known at a whole school and department level and actions are taken to improve the quality of teaching at all levels. We have an effective model of professional development for teachers to help all teachers improve particularly those not yet good.
- Middle leaders self-evaluate their departments rigorously and have improvement plans scrutinised and monitored by senior leaders.
- Governors have new and clear procedures for finding out how well the school is performing.
- Governors regularly meet with senior leaders and hold the school to account through committees and other meetings. All Governor visits, and reasons for their visits, are recorded in a central register.

Why leadership and management are not the grade above

- Development for teaching staff needs to be more personalised and focused on classroom practice in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding. This is being addressed with new professional development procedures in 2013-14 which are more strongly linked to Performance Management.
- The monitoring of progress in KS3 does not yet match the high rigour of KS4 – new procedures introduced this academic year will achieve this.
- Middle leadership is not yet sufficiently independent of senior leadership.