

Inspection of a good school: Mexborough St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Sedgefield Way, Mexborough, South Yorkshire S64 0BE

Inspection dates:

2–3 October 2019

Outcome

Mexborough St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that school is fun. They are happy and engaged in lessons. They speak with enthusiasm about how they learn from visits, visitors and clubs. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy playing brass instruments. Many pupils benefit from being able to engage with Luna, the school dog. They say she helps them to feel calm and that they love reading to her.

Pupils are safe and well behaved. Most pupils say they have no experience of bullying. School records show that it is extremely rare. Pupils are confident that if they have a problem, adults are on hand to help them to sort it out.

Staff have very positive relationships with pupils and their families. Parents and carers say that the school really values their opinions. They say that if an issue is reported, it is dealt with promptly.

Leaders make sure that Christian values are at the heart of everything that happens in school. All staff have high expectations for every pupil. They are keen to identify and meet the needs of each individual. This is so they can make sure that each pupil achieves as much as they can. This is summed up in the school motto, 'Together we believe, together we succeed.'

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

The curriculum is well designed to help pupils to become effective learners. Leaders have carefully sequenced work in each subject. It is clear what needs to be taught in each year group. Plans include lists of the words that pupils need to learn so that they can do their work. Teachers are able to make sure that pupils build their understanding, year on year. The role of the subject leader in some subjects is not fully developed. However, subject leaders are developing the necessary skills to help to improve teaching.

Lessons are not disturbed by poor behaviour. Pupils cooperate well together to share equipment and to complete joint tasks. They are confident and resilient. They are not put off when they find their work hard. Other work on personal development is helping pupils to find out what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Leaders are effective in their work to further improve the school. They are constantly searching for ways to further improve the teaching of reading. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained. They make sure that most pupils rapidly learn the skills they need to read fluently. Pupils that are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and supported. Leaders foster a love of reading in many ways. For example, pupils in Year 6 explained how they have chosen the first book, 'Sherlock Holmes', for their new book club. Improvements in the teaching of reading have led to improvements in writing.

Teachers create tasks to help pupils to remember previous work. They call this 'sticky learning'. They regularly check the work that pupils are doing in lessons. This means that they are able to spot errors and misunderstanding quickly. They can then adapt their teaching to give pupils the support they need to succeed. This is done especially effectively in mathematics. Work is generally pitched at the right level in all subjects. However, in some classes, the most able pupils are given work that is too easy on too many occasions.

Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. The early years curriculum is carefully adapted to meet the needs and interests of the children. There is a clear focus on vocabulary development. Staff help parents to support this work. For example, in Nursery, they send home a carefully chosen question and a short list of words each week. The classrooms and outdoor areas are well organised. Staff encourage children to select and tidy away equipment independently. They provide children with lots of opportunities to investigate and explore.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive very effective support. Their needs are identified at an early stage. Support is then put in place to ensure that they are able to learn effectively alongside their peers.

Leaders consider the best interests of their pupils in all their decisions. Staff say that they are proud to be part of 'Team MSJ'. They know that they are expected to work hard. However, they feel valued and know that leaders are mindful of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are thoroughly vetted to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Leaders keep an accurate and up-to-date record of these checks. Staff are well trained. They know the signs that may suggest that children are not safe and look out for them. They are confident to report any concerns, no matter how small. Leaders keep clear records of all concerns. These records show that, when necessary, appropriate actions are taken immediately. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The role of the subject leader in some subjects is not fully developed. All subject leaders need to have opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and to keep up to date with new developments. They need to have regular opportunities to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They then need to use this knowledge to offer appropriate challenge and support to their colleagues so that academic standards continue to rise.
- Leaders need to make sure that more pupils exceed the expected standard at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are not always challenged well enough. Sometimes the tasks they are given are too easy. Leaders should support teachers to use information about what pupils already know and can do to plan activities. They should ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to work on demanding tasks, so they are able to learn more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Mexborough St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School, to be good on 26 March 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143581
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10110698
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Ian Hutchinson
Headteacher	Adam Minor
Website	www.mexboroughstjohn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined James Montgomery Academy Trust in December 2016. A new headteacher was appointed in 2018.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the four members of the senior leadership team and some subject leaders.
- I met with the chief executive officer of the trust, a representative from the diocese and the chair of the governing body.
- The subjects considered as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics and history. I carried out deep dives in these subjects. This entailed meeting with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, looking at curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to pupils about their learning, and scrutinising pupils' work. I also listened to pupils read and observed staff listening to pupils read.
- The arrangements for safeguarding were checked. This included checks on the single central record, staff training and safeguarding records.
- I looked at the school's records of pupils who have left the school.
- I looked at the school's self-evaluation document and plans for improvement.

- I looked at curriculum planning for a wide range of subjects.
- I talked informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. I also took account of the six responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- I talked to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I also took account of the 48 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View.
- I met with a number of staff and took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Chris Cook, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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