

Inspection of a good school: Moorlands Infant School

Moorfields Road, Bath, Somerset BA2 2DQ

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

Outcome

Moorlands Infant School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They say that their classmates and teachers are 'fun and very kind'. Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils are encouraged to share their views. Pupils feel safe and say that staff care about them a lot. Pupils say that there is no bullying. They say that on the rare occasions when children are unkind, it is sorted out quickly.

Pupils behave well. They show an eagerness to learn and concentrate well in lessons. Teachers make sure that pupils become confident and self-reliant learners. However, pupils have gaps in their learning. They do not learn well in all subjects.

Parents and carers value the support their children receive. A few are unsettled by a lot of staff changes that have happened. Parents would appreciate better communication. Nonetheless, parents are overwhelmingly positive about teaching. They praise the enthusiasm, energy and commitment of staff and leaders.

Parents and pupils value the range of activities the school offers. They particularly appreciate the outdoor activities and days for families, such as the annual camp on the school's 10-acre site.

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

Following the previous inspection in 2014, the quality of education and pupils' behaviour declined. There have been wholesale staff changes, including at leadership level. Trust leaders have now stabilised the school. New curriculum leaders are receiving well-targeted support to strengthen the school's work. Leaders are capable and honest. They know that some unavoidable changes have been unsettling for the school community.

The school is in a period of transition. Most of the teaching staff are new this year. There is a united spirit among the staff. Staff value leadership support. Leaders make sure that

teachers, including those who are new to the profession, receive high-quality training and support. As a result, staff have made a good start on the school's journey of improvement and recovery. However, many changes are recent and yet to be fully embedded.

The school's curriculum is not well planned. Pupils' learning is disjointed in some subjects. This makes it difficult for pupils to know and remember more. For example, pupils have gaps in their understanding in mathematics. The curriculum does not support children in the gradual steps needed to strengthen and secure their mathematical knowledge. Although leaders have begun to implement changes, these are not fully addressing the weaknesses that exist. Similarly, in physical education (PE), leaders are not making sure that the curriculum is followed. The good start children make in Reception is not followed through.

Leaders have successfully prioritised reading and writing. Phonics is taught well. Children's reading gets off to a flourishing start in early years. Following a dip in reading standards at the end of Year 2, leaders prioritised the way comprehension skills are taught. Teachers now plan with precision. Teaching inspires a love of reading. Books are matched well to pupils' reading abilities. Leaders act quickly to ensure that pupils in danger of falling behind do not do so. Pupils delight in talking about the books they have read. Storytime is a valued and special time of the day for pupils.

Pupils now write regularly. Leaders have carefully designed a curriculum that helps pupils to remember and apply what they already know. For example, pupils apply their strong phonics knowledge well when writing, and so spell well. Pupils enjoy writing and are proud of their achievements. However, the previously weaker curriculum has resulted in gaps in pupils' learning. For some pupils, particularly in Year 2, weaknesses in their writing remain.

Leaders' new behaviour policy has established consistent expectations. Pupils listen attentively and participate enthusiastically in their learning. The school provides regular times for pupils to reflect on values such as kindness and respect. Activities such as the on-site forest school sessions provide rich experiences and help pupils to gain a sense of teamwork and develop their social skills.

Teachers ensure that there is a wide range of help in place so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well. However, leaders are increasingly working with external agencies to gain a better understanding of how to identify and better support those pupils with complex needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at the school. Leaders have built a strong safeguarding team. They know their pupils and the risks they may face. Leaders provide effective training so that staff are well equipped to focus on pupils' safety. Leaders are meticulous in following up any concerns over pupils' safety. The safeguarding team works effectively with other professionals to support pupils' welfare.

Leaders make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe through the many workshops and visitors they invite into school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for many subjects is not planned well enough. This hinders pupils' learning. Curriculum leaders need to develop their plans so that pupils' learning is coherently developed and sequenced in all subjects.
- Previous weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching have led to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to check how well the curriculum is helping pupils to know and remember more so that they can share good practice and tackle weaknesses swiftly.

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, Moorlands Infant School, to be good in October 2014.

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 the provider and 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	142715
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10122361
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Jones
Headteacher	Georgina Scott
Website	www.moorlands-school.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Moorlands Infant School is federated with Moorlands Junior School. The schools opened in May 2017. The schools are part of the Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils about their work and school life. I held a meeting with three members of the local governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer from The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust and met with the chair of the trust. I held meetings with the learning partner and senior leaders. I also met with members of the teaching staff.
- I reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding information.
- I considered 72 responses to Parent View, and accompanying free-text comments, and 15 responses from the online staff survey.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, mathematics and PE. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of children's work, discussions with teachers, discussions with children, and listening to children read.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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