

Inspection of a good school: Mortimer St Mary's C.E. Junior School

The Street, Mortimer, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3PB

Inspection dates:

16–17 November 2021

Outcome

Mortimer St Mary's C.E. Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Mortimer St Mary's Junior School is a very friendly, calm and nurturing school. Pupils enjoy attending school. Staff want the very best for pupils. Adults support pupils who need help with their work, emotions or behaviour in a kind and caring manner. Pupils say that bullying rarely occurs. If it happens, teachers and other staff deal with it.

The school's Christian values of 'service, hope and courage' can be seen in the way staff, governors and pupils work together. Pupils behave well and listen carefully to each other. Pupils are proud of their school, describing it as 'fantastic', 'fun' and 'friendly'.

Staff morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork that permeates the school. They provide a broad range of activities for pupils. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about trips to the local church, visiting the Houses of Parliament and the Roman museum they created.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. One parent said, 'The staff demonstrate passion for what they do and genuinely care about the pupils'.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have looked carefully at the curriculum to make sure that it engages pupils' curiosity and interest. Subject leaders have identified the knowledge and skills that pupils' need to learn. Teachers check that pupils have a clear understanding of what they are learning and why, for example when understanding the importance of place value in multiplication.

However, this is not yet consistently the case. Leaders want to ensure the curriculum is exceptional. Leaders are identifying even more precise key points that they want pupils to know by the end of the year. They are finding more ways to help pupils remember their learning so they know more and can do more.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the revised curriculum. Staff training has been effective. Pupils told me they love to read and read regularly with adults. Teachers keep a close eye on pupils' progress in reading. Pupils who have not learned how to read well enough receive extra support to help them catch up quickly. One pupil said that her favourite lesson was comprehension saying, 'I just love it'. Pupils enjoy the teachers reading them stories. These books have been carefully selected and are often linked to learning in other subjects, such as history.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. Leaders and teachers have planned the curriculum so that pupils can build on what they have learned before. Pupils enjoy working together on practical tasks and investigations. They are keen to challenge themselves and explain their thinking. Year 5 pupils were keen to show how many different ways they could explain their problem solving skills in mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early and receive the support they need. Staff provide high-quality support in lessons so that all pupils can join in. Consequently, SEND pupils learn successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils' education goes beyond curriculum subjects. Pupils visit a range of places, such as the Science Museum and Silchester Village. This helps to bring their learning to life. Pupils also enjoy a range of sports like tennis and gymnastics. They take on positions of responsibility within the school, such as worship leaders and eco leaders. These activities because it helps them contribute to their school community.

Leaders and governors work well together. The new executive headteacher has a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and what could be better. All staff who responded to the online survey agree the school is well led and managed and that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. One member of staff said, 'it is a very happy place to work'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place the highest priority on keeping pupils safe. Staff and governors are all aware that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns or worries about pupils' welfare. Training for all staff is up to date.

Pupils are safe and know how to stay safe. They understand how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Staff work with a number of external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This extra support helps pupils' well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum intent is very clear. It is not yet being consistently implemented exactly as leaders intend across all subjects. Leaders should continue their work to raise the

implementation of the curriculum to an exceptional level. Pupils should be helped to remember more of what they have been taught so they know more and are able to do more.

Background

When we have judged 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

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.

If you are the school 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	109977
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10200428
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Craig Hassey
Executive Headteacher	Clare Beswick
Website	https://www.mortimerschools.org/
Date of previous inspection	6 January 2017

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school with two classes in each year group.
- The school is part of the Mortimer Federation of St. John's and St. Mary's. The schools federated in June 2019. The executive headteacher is responsible for both schools.
- There have been leadership changes since the last inspection with the appointment of a new executive headteacher and new chair of governors.
- This school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the diocese of Oxford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, members of the local governing body, the local authority and representatives from the diocese.
- The inspector did deep dive in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning

and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- The inspector considered 39 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 30 free-text responses, 24 responses to the pupil online survey and 22 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector looked at the school's training records, spoke with pupils and checked staff's safeguarding knowledge to ensure that pupils are safe. Meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead and the school's special educational needs coordinator.

Inspection team

David Harris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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