

Inspection of a good school: Mount Wise Community Primary School

James Street, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon PL1 4LA

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 April 2022

Outcome

Mount Wise Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Mount Wise are happy and polite. They show a real interest in their learning and enjoy a rich curriculum, including visits to Dartmoor and opportunities to speak to famous artists.

Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and other adults in school. When pupils make poor choices about their behaviour, adults quickly pick up on it and remind pupils about the school's high expectations. Pupils respond well. Pupils comment that some pupils can be unkind from time to time but when they talk about it, this stops. There is very little bullying and adults work well with pupils to bring it to an end. All pupils who spoke to the inspector talked about the good friendships they have in school.

Over the last two years, leaders have introduced a new, ambitious curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are rising to the new challenges well. There is an extensive range of experiences which contribute to pupils' personal development. For example, pupils benefit from sporting opportunities, community arts projects and visits to historical buildings.

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

Since the school joined the Learning Academies Trust in 2018, leaders have worked intensively on reforming the curriculum. This has been senior leaders' central focus for the last 18 months. They have thought carefully about what they want children to learn. They have rightly prioritised improving pupils' ability to read well and to draw on their learning across many subjects, particularly geography and history. The early reading programme is well established. Staff ensure that pupils read books that match their phonics knowledge closely.

Across all subjects, senior leaders have worked with teachers to revise their plans to ensure that they are suitably demanding and build on pupils' previous learning. Teachers are enthused by the new curriculum and the higher expectations. In most subjects, the

plans are ambitious and well planned. Teaching staff have had training and can refer to guides and specialists in the trust to develop their knowledge of the subjects and how to teach them. However, the rollout of the curriculum is still relatively recent. Sometimes, in some subjects, teachers are not yet confident about their knowledge of the subject and the ways in which it might be best taught. As a result, they are not accurate in their assessments of pupils' knowledge. Consequently, sometimes, learning is not broken down into small enough chunks or practised enough so that pupils develop secure knowledge.

Children who join Mount Wise in the Nursery get off to a flying start. The strong focus on developing their language prepares them well to join the Reception class. Adult-led sessions and the questions adults ask help children to think about what they are learning.

The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are included well in learning, working towards the same learning goals as their classmates but supported by extra teaching in lessons. Staff are swift to identify pupils who may present with SEND and work with specialists to carry out assessments. For most pupils, this leads to adjustments in the way teachers plan learning for them. Leaders have not been able to access specialist input for pupils with speech and language needs to help these pupils overcome their challenges.

Leaders have mapped out the opportunities available to pupils as part of the wider curriculum. They are embedding plans to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development further. While opportunities are extensive, more work is needed to bring these plans together to demonstrate how this is supporting and extending the taught curriculum.

Leaders have sensitively, but determinedly, introduced many changes, including through periods of disruption due to COVID-19. Although some parents do not feel that they have been as well informed about the changes as they would like, leaders have encouraged and supported staff well. The positive impact is clear to see. Leaders have considered teachers' workload carefully to make sure they are not overwhelmed by the changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are trained fully in the risks that pupils face, particularly in the local context. Periodically, leaders check how much they have remembered. The safeguarding leader and her colleagues work well with other agencies, including the local authority, to ensure that families receive the help they need to keep themselves safe. There is a nominated trustee and a dedicated trust leader who oversee the safeguarding work.

Staff use the knowledge they gain from their training to identify any pupils who are at risk of harm. They follow the school's procedures in a timely manner. Teachers also include teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online, through their lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although the recently introduced curriculum is well considered, pupils' recall of the most significant knowledge in some subjects is not yet secure. This is because teachers do not use their assessments of what pupils know well enough to revise their teaching. Leaders should ensure that teachers continue to develop their subject knowledge so that they become more skilful at adapting their teaching to meet pupils' needs.
- The proportion of pupils with speech and language needs is very high. Leaders struggle to access adequate support to help these pupils to overcome their challenges. Trustees should ensure that pupils benefit from the specialist support they need to improve.

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 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Mount Wise Community Primary School, to be good in November 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 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	145656
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10231290
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Butcher
Headteacher	David Sammels (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.mountwiseprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Learning Academies Trust in April 2018.
- The executive headteacher and head of school took up their posts in January 2021. The executive headteacher oversees Mount Wise Community Primary School and Mayflower Academy, Plymouth.
- The school has a nursery for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, early reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and senior and subject leaders. He met with the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees of Learning Academies Trust.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and met with the school's safeguarding leader. He checked staff's recruitment records and sampled some of the cases where the school had involved other agencies. He spoke with staff and pupils about their safeguarding knowledge.
- The inspector considered 13 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

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 <http://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 2022