

Inspection of a good school: The R J Mitchell Primary School

Tangmere Crescent, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 5PP

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils are proud of their school's history. They are enthusiastic to share what they know about the school's links to the Royal Air Force and the creation of the Spitfire aircraft.

Pupils enjoy school. They get on well with each other and learn how to make and keep good friendships. Pupils particularly like the way that everyone is included and valued for who they are. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated. When bullying or any other problems happen, staff sort things out well.

Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They like taking on responsibilities such as 'sports captains'. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy preparing the hall for Friday assemblies. Pupils who are part of the 'learning council' said that leaders take their ideas seriously. For example, when pupils asked for an outdoor gym, leaders listened and set up 'The Red Gym' in the playground.

Even though pupils study a range of subjects, leaders have not ensured that these are all planned carefully. This stops pupils from building their knowledge securely in some subjects. Leaders have introduced new approaches for teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are still getting used to these. This affects how well pupils are taught and how well they learn.

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

Leaders have changed the way that writing and mathematics are planned and taught throughout the school. They have also changed the way that reading is taught in Years 3 to 6. These new plans are at the early stages of development. Teachers and teaching assistants are still finding out how to make these work for their year groups. Staff

sometimes lack subject knowledge. They do not routinely pick up on pupils' errors, particularly in mathematics. This is all affecting how well pupils learn, including in the early years.

Other subjects are in various stages of development. What pupils learn in subjects such as history, art and science, is not planned consistently well. Leaders have not worked out exactly what pupils need to know and remember in each subject and in each year group. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. Systems to check pupils' learning are not embedded.

Sometimes, pupils find it hard to remember important subject content. For example, pupils remembered dissecting a flower in science but could not remember the parts of the flower. Other pupils remembered dressing up as Vikings but could not remember important dates and facts. Pupils enjoy art. The displays around the school contain a range of paintings, pictures and collage that pupils have created. However, pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills well because art is often used as a way of enriching other subjects. Some subjects have been given more thought, such as physical education (PE).

Leaders' work to improve pupils' early reading is making a positive difference. From Reception to Year 2, pupils follow a well-planned phonics programme. Staff are well trained to help pupils learn to read fluently. Staff make sure that pupils have books to take home that match their place in the phonics programme. Staff help pupils who need to catch up. They give pupils extra time each day to go over the sounds and words they struggle to remember. Pupils enjoy reading. They like the online library and love it when their teachers read to them at the end of each day.

Staff identify children's needs well in the early years. They support children's speech, language and communication needs effectively. Well-trained staff provide pupils who learn in Franklin class, the specially resourced provision, with the support they need to communicate their feelings and needs. Staff work closely with a range of therapists to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve their individual goals.

Pupils usually pay attention in lessons and they are keen to learn. Pupils said that teachers are fair and sort out any problems well. Leaders arrange for pupils to join clubs and other after-school activities. But pupils would like more of these, especially in music and the creative arts. Leaders have plans in place to introduce more clubs. Pupils enjoy a variety of educational visits. They like the way the school celebrates festivals throughout the year, during which pupils learn about different faiths and cultures.

The school has recently joined another local primary school to make a federation. There has been some turbulence with governance over the past couple of years. Things are now more settled. Although the new governors have the skills and expertise needed, they are still getting to know the school.

Most staff feel well supported by leaders. They feel that their workload is considered by leaders. Teachers that are new to their careers are very happy with the guidance and

support they receive. Staff value the strong sense of community and teamwork that exists in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained to identify pupils who might be at risk of harm. Staff understand and use the school's procedures effectively. They report concerns diligently. The school's 'student and family support team' meets regularly to consider pupils' welfare needs. Leaders work with a range of professionals to keep the most vulnerable pupils and their families safe.

Leaders make sure that pupils, including in the early years, learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have worked with parents and carers to help them to understand the potential risks pupils might face when using the internet and social media apps.

Pupils said they feel safe in school. They feel confident that staff will listen to them and address their concerns properly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced new curriculum plans and approaches for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. These plans are not embedded. Staff have varying levels of subject knowledge and confidence. This leads to inconsistencies in how these subjects are delivered. This affects pupils' learning. Leaders need to ensure that the new approaches are embedded. They need to ensure that teachers have secure subject knowledge and that pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- In science and many of the foundation subjects, leaders have not considered well enough what pupils need to learn and in what order. They have not identified the important components that pupils must know and remember in each subject and in each year group. Pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not secure. Leaders need to ensure that science and the foundation subjects are planned and sequenced well. They need to be clear about what pupils need to know in each subject and in what order.
- New governance arrangements are in place as part of the school's recent federation with another local school. Governors have the skills and expertise needed to fulfil their roles, but they are still getting to know the school. Governors must ensure that they hold leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 13 October 2011.

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	131590
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10200411
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorraine Earle
Headteacher	Barry Read
Website	www.rjmitchellprimaryschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became part of a The Elm Park Primary School and The R J Mitchell Federation in March 2022.
- An interim executive headteacher took up her post at the start of the summer term. The interim executive headteacher is also the headteacher of the other school in the federation.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. It caters for 14 children in the Nursery provision and 14 pupils in the primary provision.
- The school makes use of one registered 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 met with the headteacher, interim executive headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector met with the governors, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history 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 also reviewed curriculum plans for other subjects, including science, art and physical education. He looked at pupils' work in other subjects and reviewed documentation provided by leaders for these subjects.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks. He met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding matters. He sampled safeguarding records.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. He looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments from parents.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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