

Inspection of Mortimer Primary School

Mortimer Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 0RW

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a calm and purposeful place to be. Everyone shows high levels of respect to others. Pupils are keen to help. For example, older pupils listen to younger pupils read. Other pupils keep classrooms and the library tidy. The school embodies its motto of 'excellence for all'. Pupils are safe. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe. Pupils know who to speak to if they are anxious about anything.

Right from their early years in school, children learn how to cooperate with adults and peers. Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils live up to the high expectations of staff. Pupils understand the importance of a strong work ethic. Pupils achieve very well. The school prepares pupils well for their move to secondary school. There is a strong focus on careers education. The school is aspirational for its pupils.

Pupils move sensibly around school. Pupils play happily together at breaktime, using the numerous pieces of equipment. Play during lunchtime is less restrained and behaviour is not quite as good as at other times of the day. Bullying is exceptionally rare. Any instances of poor behaviour or pupils falling out with each other are swiftly sorted out by teachers. Pupils describe teachers as being fair, with no favourites. Pupils' self-confidence and belief in themselves are integral to their success.

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

In most subjects, the curriculum is well structured. The plans link essential knowledge to key ideas. For example, in geography some pupils connected learning through their understanding of human and physical geography. In these subjects, the school breaks down what pupils need to learn into small steps. Pupils steadily build up what they know and can do. Pupils regularly revisit previous learning. Pupils confidently recall and apply what they have learned. In a small number of subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils need is not sharply identified. Pupils struggle to connect learning and remember what they have learned in these subjects.

In most subjects, the school's checks on what pupils know and remember are effective. The school uses this information to make necessary adjustments to planned learning. The school identifies, and provides extra help to, pupils in danger of falling behind. Pupils' work in books is mostly of a high standard, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils look back in their books to remind themselves of what they have learned. In a small number of subjects, however, the work in pupils' books is of variable quality. In these subjects, work in books does not support pupils' learning as well as it needs to.

There is a sustained focus on reading from the start of Nursery through to the end of Year 6. There are daily phonics lessons. These are consistently delivered and highly effective. Repetition and routine contribute strongly to pupils' rapid progress in reading, which starts in Reception. The school provides effective support to pupils who are in danger of falling behind in reading. Pupils quickly learn to read with

fluency and expression. Older pupils explain clearly who their favourite author is and why.

From the Nursery upwards, the school adapts work appropriately to meet pupils' needs. These adaptations include, for example, the use of visual timetables and lists of key vocabulary support pupils' learning by making clear the terminology they need. The school has individual plans in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These plans clearly set out the specific support pupils with SEND need to achieve their potential. The school implements these support plans well. The school provides additional adult support for pupils who need it. Some pupils have physical support, such as therapy putty or movement breaks.

The school promotes pupils' sporting and artistic interests effectively. Pupils have access to many school clubs. These include clubs for team sports, sewing and performing arts. The school organises regular trips out to local parks, museums and monuments. Pupils learn about their local community and heritage. Visiting speakers from the fire service and the police inform pupils about issues such as arson and antisocial behaviour. Pupils take on leadership roles. For example, some pupils join the school's inclusion team. They learn how to advocate for people with different needs and lifestyles. The school involves pupils in their local community, for example through taking part in the harvest festival and Remembrance Day events. Pupils raise money for good causes.

The school has recently implemented several improvement initiatives. These include a new approach to teaching mathematics. The school has also introduced more ways to communicate with parents and carers. Most parents are glowing in their praise of the school.

Governors provide strong support and challenge to the school. Governors visit the school regularly to assure themselves that the school's offer to pupils is of high quality. These visits include checks on safeguarding and provision for SEND. Staff, including early careers teachers, are very positive about the support they receive from the school. Staff morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few foundation subjects are not as well structured as they need to be. In these subjects, the key ideas that link knowledge, and the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember, are unclear, including for pupils. This is limiting pupils' ability to remember more over time and connect new knowledge to previous learning. The school should ensure that all subjects are equally well

mapped out so that pupils can learn equally well and remember more across the whole curriculum.

- There are inconsistencies between some year groups and some foundation subjects when work is recorded in pupils' books. This hinders some pupils' ability to reflect, look back, remember and make connections to previous learning. The school should ensure that the school's preferred approach to the recording of pupils' work is implemented consistently across the curriculum and is helping pupils to know and remember more effectively.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	108673
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10315547
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	606
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Clemence
Headteacher	Peter Bennett
Website	www.mortimerprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 December 2012 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils attending school is well above average.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in January 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school has a nursery unit for three- to four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and other school leaders. The inspectors also met with teachers and a range of support staff.
- An inspector met three members of the local governing body and spoke to the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education, geography and computing. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at curriculum documents and work in books in other subjects. They spoke to leaders about a range of other curriculum subjects.
- An inspector listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, in 'Wake Up, Shake Up' before school, at breaktime and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of school and of behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including some written comments.
- The inspectors considered the well-being and workload of staff. They took note of the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey, including comments made by staff about their well-being.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Mowat	Ofsted Inspector
Sonia Fraser	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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