

Inspection of Mortimer Community College

Reading Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE33 4UG

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Mortimer Community College serves its pupils well. Leaders and staff expect the very best from all pupils. Pupils behave well and are focused on their studies. They show a pride in their appearance and their school. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in classrooms and corridors. Incidents of poor behaviour and the use of exclusion are declining. Most pupils feel that teachers deal well with bullying, although a small number have concerns. Overall, pupils' behaviour is a strength. Teachers and pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils also learn how to respect the rights of different groups in society.

The majority of pupils feel safe in school. Increasing numbers of pupils and their parents are putting their faith in the school. Parents are becoming more involved in the life of the school. They are attending subject information events in increasing numbers. These strengthening partnerships between home and school support pupils in their learning.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. This allows pupils to study a wide range of subjects at key stages 3 and 4. An increasing proportion of pupils are following academic subjects. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching in Spanish. This is leading to more pupils studying Spanish at key stage 4.

Senior leaders are working with curriculum leaders to enhance their subject plans. In subjects such as geography and Spanish, teachers have a clear picture of what pupils need to know and remember. Leaders are supporting staff to use research and attend training to improve curriculum plans further. In other subjects, these plans are less developed, particularly at key stage 3. Leaders are well on the way to strengthening the quality of curriculum planning.

Pupils' subject knowledge is developed well. In many subjects, such as science, teachers help pupils to remember key ideas. This is more variable in mathematics. Across many subjects, pupils explained how teachers plan lessons that help them to recall major ideas. This stronger knowledge is reflected in pupils' work. Pupils' GCSE outcomes are improving.

Pupils enjoy learning. They listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils attend well. Incidences of exclusion have declined. School leaders have ensured that the 180 pupils who have recently joined the school are very much 'Mortimer pupils'.

Leaders have developed the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of equality. Pupils work with teachers and visiting speakers to challenge racism and homophobia. Pupils also work with employers to appreciate the world of work. This builds pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice.

Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They use this understanding to help pupils with SEND to learn effectively. This is complemented by work in the new learning zone. Here, pupils receive specific help with their reading, writing and mathematics. This helps them to understand their learning in other subjects. Strategies to promote a love of reading outside of the learning zone are less well developed.

The headteacher provides clear purpose for staff and pupils. He is supported by a capable team who have raised pupils' achievement and improved behaviour. Parents are becoming more actively involved in school life and the education of their children. Leaders have taken practical steps to reduce staff workload. Staff feel well supported. They are a highly motivated team who are proud to work at the school. Most parents appreciate the quality of education that their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders take their responsibilities for pupils' safety very seriously. They check the suitability of adults working at school. Staff are trained to look out for pupils' welfare. Good systems are in place to help pupils. Leaders follow up any concerns over pupils' safety quickly. They record these concerns thoroughly. Leaders have good links with other professionals to support pupils' welfare. Leaders teach pupils about safety in assemblies and through the wider curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have worked effectively to plan a coherent curriculum in science and Spanish. Other subjects, such as mathematics, are less well developed. Teachers do not always understand what pupils must know and remember in their subjects. Curriculum plans do not include this level of detail. This makes it difficult for leaders to check whether the curriculum is being taught effectively.
- Leaders have worked with teachers to improve the quality of teaching. On some occasions, the curriculum is less effectively implemented. This is because teachers do not consistently use assessment or their subject knowledge to challenge pupils' misconceptions as they arise.
- Although leaders are beginning to promote pupils' love of reading, this work is at an early stage of development. Pupils do not consistently read widely to build their knowledge and interest in different types of texts.

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're 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	108727
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10110565
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1035
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Coldwell
Headteacher	Simon Hignett
Website	www.mortimercommunitycollege.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2017

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a significant increase in pupil numbers. Over 180 pupils joined the school in the previous academic year.
- A small number of pupils carry out part of their learning at South Tyneside College.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held several discussions and carried out lesson visits with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and assistant headteacher.
- We looked in detail into the curriculum in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and geography. Inspectors talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. We also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work.
- We talked to five members of the governing body, including the chair, to find out how they supported and challenged school leaders. We also met the school improvement partner from the local authority to find out her views of the school.

- We checked safeguarding arrangements. We looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. We also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety were recorded and followed up.
- We made a telephone call to South Tyneside College to explore curriculum and safety for pupils on placement at the college.

Inspection team

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