

Mugginton Church of England Primary School



The Mugginton Mile September 2023



'It makes me feel good about myself. Every time I run I feel like I get fitter and more healthy.' (Archie, Year 6)

At Mugginton, we aim to have the fittest children in the County. Our children join staff and parent-helpers for two runs of up to 5km per week around the village and local area. Our ethos is centred around our aim of being a second family to our children and our staff. Their wellbeing is of the highest priority. We believe that running can help to reinforce this.

Why Run?

When you become a runner, it changes your life. Our staff believe that running can have a transformative effect on your life and we want to share the joys and challenges of running with our children as part of their primary school experience and to help and prepare them for a happy, healthy life beyond our school.

Numerous studies have shown that running increases lifespan – a 2018 meta-analysis of research on running and longevity (Pedisic et al, 2018) found that runners have about a 25 to 30 percent lower rate of all-cause mortality than non runners. Another piece of research showed that runners gain about three years of extra life because of the potential for greater cardiovascular fitness, better body composition), lower cholesterol, excellent glucose and insulin control, stronger bones, better hormone regulation, and positive neurological functioning (Lee et al, 2017).

Running has been proven to help children and adults sleep better. According to the Medical Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Sleep,

'We have solid evidence that exercise does, in fact, help you fall asleep more quickly and improves sleep quality.'

Running sensible distances – particularly with children – can improve your knee-strength and back development (Ponzio et al, 2018). Because running involves continuously moving your entire body weight, running burns more calories than most other activities and can help to improve breathing and lung development (Phillips & Joyner, 2019). Moreover, running modest distances can improve the body's immune system and reduce the risk of respiratory infections (Nieman & Wentz, 2019).

'Running is fun because you get fresh air and talk to your friends. It makes me fit and I can run faster.' (Oscar, Year 3)

Running regularly can even help children in the classroom! Running raises heart rate and blood flow which includes oxygen-rich blood being pushed to the brain – in short, running can improve cognitive function (Dinoff, 2017).

The reason I run is because it makes me feel better. If I have a lot of things on my mind or have had a difficult day, I am better able to manage the situation if I have been running. There is a huge body of evidence that running improves mental health and wellbeing (Kvam et al, 2016).

We have seen how running can improve the confidence and self-esteem of our children, which has also been demonstrated scientifically (Gilani & Feizabad, 2019). Running increases resilience and reinforces a simple message: effort and determination produces results; a lack of effort and giving up easily does not.

'Running helps me to improve my skills in other sports as it makes me quicker. It's a Mugginton thing and such a good opportunity that we're lucky to have.' (Joe, Year 6)

Running at Mugginton

At Mugginton the children in Key Stage 2 join our running groups on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12.45pm. Children must have appropriate running gear to get changed in to and have an early lunch and drink before we leave. Parents and other members of the community are always welcome to join us and often do so.

Distances vary depending on our group. Confident runners complete a circuit of approximately 5km around the village whilst other runners complete a 2km circuit across the local fields.

Children may only join these running groups when they are able to run for a period of 5 minutes or longer without stopping. This is because we want to encourage children to concentrate and focus on their run and help them to understand that running successfully involves speed management and discipline. Children who cannot yet run for 5 minutes or longer without stopping are helped towards achieving this goal by practising running on the playground or down 'Taghole Lane' – a small path next to the school.

Our runs are not races. Staff may choose to time the run but this is to emphasise personal improvement to help the children recognise their own success and remain motivated, particularly in the colder months. In other words, we explain to the children that they are in competition with themselves and their last run, not with anybody else.

At the end of every term we select children who have shown particular determination and progression in their running. These children receive a £5 Decathlon voucher to spend on running gear.

Keeping our Runners Safe (see full School Risk Assessment for more detail)

- There are a minimum of two adults with the children at all times, usually significantly more. At least one adult holds a charged mobile phone and has up-to-date Paediatric First Aid in the case of injury.
- The home contact (usually Mrs Horobin) knows our route and makes sure to sign the children in and out of school. A register is kept of runners each week.
- The children know to stop immediately when they are told a car is approaching and stand to the side before restarting their run once the car passes by.
- Parent runners are never left alone with children and 'regulars' will receive an Enhanced DBS check.

'I feel energised. It wakes me up and makes me feel hungry and happy. I feel excited about going.' (Matthew, Year 6).