

Morda CofE Primary School

Morda, Oswestry, SY10 9NR

Inspection dates 14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although the raised expectations of staff have led to improvements in teaching, they have not yet had enough time to lead to achievement that is consistently good.
- Teachers do not always plan work which is at the right level of difficulty for all pupils.
- The marking of work does not always give pupils enough information about how to improve their work or move their learning on.
- Pupils are not benefiting fully from the feedback they receive on their work.
- Some teachers make pupils overly reliant upon them, which reduces the opportunities for pupils to be more independent in their own learning.
- The questions teachers ask do not always make pupils think enough about their learning or how to deepen their understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- The pace of pupils' progress is improving rapidly as a result of some outstanding teaching, which is now being used to improve teaching across the school.
- The leadership of the school, including that of governors, has improved significantly over the past year.
- Children make a good start in the Reception class because of the high-quality teamwork of the staff.
- All staff show great care for pupils and nurture them to become successful. They are committed to improving the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and reflects the mutual respect between them and the staff.
- The school provides a good range of clubs, societies and trips to make learning interesting and inclusive.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, and saw all teachers teaching. All observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector looked at many examples of pupils' written work. Time was spent observing the quality of support given to pupils by the teaching assistants, and hearing pupils read.
- A group of pupils met with the inspector to discuss the school and their progress.
- Meetings were held with middle leaders, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. A number of meetings were held with the headteacher and his deputy.
- Many documents were looked at, including curriculum planning, those relating to attendance, safeguarding and child protection, records of pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour, records relating to the monitoring of teaching and minutes of the governing body.
- Views of 12 parents and carers, taken from the online questionnaire (Parent View), and from talking with parents and carers, were taken into account. The views of staff from the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection team

Keith Shannon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and attracting funding through the pupil premium is average. There are a small number of looked after children, but no pupils from service families in the school.
- An average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported through school action.
- The percentage of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Pupils learn mainly in mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate weaker teaching and raise the overall quality and consistency of teaching by ensuring that:
 - lesson activities are always tailored to the needs of pupils with different abilities
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to research topics and solve problems for themselves
 - the excellent practice of the best teachers is used to firmly establish the expectations for good and outstanding teaching in all lessons
 - the questions asked by teachers enable pupils to think carefully about their learning and deepen their understanding.
- Improve the use of assessment as a tool for increasing the pace of learning by:
 - ensuring that work is marked with clear guidelines as to how it can be improved
 - checking how well pupils respond to that advice and use it to take a greater responsibility for their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as well as their starting points suggest that they should because the quality of teaching does not enable them to learn at a quick enough pace. Although significant improvements have been made in this area, some pupils are still not being shown clearly enough what it is they need to do in order to improve their learning. Some teachers do not set work that is at the appropriate level of need for all pupils in the class.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are close to those expected for their age. They make good progress because there is a consistent focus on developing children's ability to communicate with each other and learn about the world around them. They have a wide range of learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors, and are successfully prepared for learning in Key Stage 1. They become highly skilled at solving problems for themselves. These children leave the Reception being able to recognise letters, many sounds, and key words. They are able to write short sentences, and read at levels which show good progress.
- In 2012, standards in mathematics were broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. However, there was a clear dip in standards at the end of Key Stage 2, and pupils were almost two terms behind other pupils nationally.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is not consistently good in Key Stage 1. Staff spend too much time talking and do not check carefully enough how well pupils understand their work. These weaknesses mean that there are too many pupils who are not skilful readers. In Key Stage 2, however, the best readers are fluent and read with expression. They are able to talk about favourite authors and read for pleasure
- The progress of pupils in writing varies across the school. There are examples of extended pieces of imaginative, well-written and interesting stories. However, opportunities for pupils to produce such writing are limited.
- When pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning and research, they respond with enthusiasm, find out things for themselves and make good progress. However, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to learn independently.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of the additional support given. Pupils who join the school other than at the start of the year also make good progress.
- The pupil premium funding pays for extra staff to help to improve literacy skills in particular, concentrating first upon reading. Pupils for whom this funding is intended are also supported, where necessary, to ensure that they can participate fully in school clubs and trips. The use of the funding is having a positive impact of some aspects of pupils' work. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals performed better than other pupils in mathematics by almost a term of learning, and half a term in reading, while in writing they were about two terms behind other pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2, these pupils achieved slightly better standards than other pupils in reading and mathematics, but were almost a year behind in writing.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good enough for all pupils to make good progress. There is some outstanding teaching, but also some that requires improvement. Weaknesses have yet to be fully eradicated, although leaders have been challenging teachers about their performance, and have put into place measures to support improvements through coaching.
- In weaker lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunity to find out information for themselves. Some teachers talk too much, making explanations rigid and uniform, and this sometimes leaves pupils not really understanding the purpose of the lesson. In these lessons, teachers focus more on what pupils are doing, rather than on what they are learning.
- In the most effective teaching, teachers help pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson, do not spend too much time talking, ask probing questions and ensure that pupils work at a quick pace. These teachers understand the needs of the individual pupil, how they are making progress and set targets that are specific to their needs. As a result, pupils expect to learn and develop their independence as learners.
- Although the marking of work and feedback to pupils offers encouragement, it does not always give them clear guidance as to what has been done well and what is needed next. In the very best examples, this guidance is given and a written dialogue takes place between teacher and pupil.
- Teaching assistants are used and managed effectively in most cases. They are skilled at supporting pupils in their learning, and this is seen especially with those pupils who have particular special needs. The extra support offered is clearly based on their individual needs.
- There is a strong emphasis upon the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and this is reflected in the opportunities that exist for pupils to work cooperatively in art, music, sport and other areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In the best-taught lessons, pupils are keen to learn; their good behaviour and their enjoyment have a positive impact on their progress. When faced with challenging work, they support each other in finding how to tackle it. For example, younger pupils did not want to walk through mud, so worked on building a bridge. However, there are some occasions when pupils do not rise to the challenge and avoid working hard.
- In most lessons, pupils behave well, and this is due to the school having a clearly understood expectation of what is acceptable and what is not.
- There are strong supportive relations between staff and pupils. Around the school, pupils are polite and helpful to one another. At playtimes, they use the equipment provided to share games, or take advantage of areas set aside for sitting and talking. They chat happily with staff, and take time to make visitors feel welcome.
- Pupils know about keeping safe in a variety of situations. They know that occasionally bullying and bad behaviour occur, but say that these incidents are quickly dealt with. If they approach a member of staff for help, they feel secure that it will be given. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.

- Parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire, those who spoke with the inspector, and staff of the school, all agree that behaviour is good. Many felt that the reason for this is that there are consistent expectations, and that the school's policy of talking through events with the participants is effective.
- Attendance is now in line with national averages. The school rewards pupils for good and improved attendance, and it has strong systems for supporting families who may struggle with attendance issues.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have had a strong focus on driving improvements, especially in the quality of teaching, and this has already begun to have a positive effect. Middle leaders are beginning to have a much greater impact on improving pupils' progress. A recent teaching appointment has greatly enhanced the quality of teaching.
- Leaders make good use of their links with other schools and the school improvement advisor. These have had a positive effect upon teaching and learning, especially by challenging what the school had been doing and showing how other approaches can produce improved results.
- The commitment of leaders to ensuring that all have equality of opportunity is clear. The support for groups of pupils with particular needs is good, and funds for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are used effectively. For example, this money is used to ensure that eligible pupils can access the same range of activities as others. It also provides extra support for reading groups, and improving the monitoring of attendance of these pupils. The effective ways of tackling these particular areas of needs show that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The school provides a wide range of interesting activities for pupils. There are clubs and groups to meet the interests of most pupils. These include music groups, many sports groups, drama and art groups, and a gardening club. Much has been done to improve progress in writing by providing interesting stimuli to generate ideas to spark the imagination. Letters to grandparents about life in years past are an example of this.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn about people of different cultures, backgrounds and faiths. Displays around the school show examples of how this is taught. One parent told the inspector that her young daughter can pick out places on a map that she had not heard of. The time set aside to think about those who are less fortunate was clear during the inspection as the school raised money in a variety of ways for 'Red Nose Day'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has greatly improved its awareness of the school's effectiveness, especially on matters of comparing performance against other schools, and now provides strong support and challenge to the headteacher. Governors have benefited from good training, and are now more aware of their own needs in order to help the school to improve further. The Chair of the Governing Body meets with the headteacher fortnightly and ensures that pupils' progress is at the centre of discussions. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show a greatly improved focus on understanding and meeting the school's needs, particularly evident in budget issues, although governors as a whole were unsure about the allocation of funding for particular groups of pupils. They are fully involved in the performance management of teachers and the headteacher, know how good performance by teachers is rewarded, and understand the setting of clear targets for teachers. Governors are aware of

how the issues of underperformance should be challenged, and are working with the headteacher to ensure that the quality of teaching improves.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123484
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	402166

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Bradley
Headteacher	John Eglin
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
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Fax number	01691 652025
Email address	Head.morda@shropshirelg.net

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