

Morden Primary School

London Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5PX

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and successfully meets their needs.
- Pupils make good progress from low starting points to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teachers are particularly good at helping pupils develop excellent vocabulary and grammar skills. This has contributed to especially rapid progress in writing.
- The new leadership team makes regular checks on the quality of teaching and provides effective opportunities for staff to improve their practice.
- The school works exceptionally well to keep pupils safe. For example, pupils understand clearly what bullying is and ensure that it does not happen in school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; pupils treat each other, adults and the school environment with care and respect.
- Pupils love coming to school. Attendance has risen rapidly over the last few years and is now above average.
- The school works well with parents, especially those families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. Parents hold very positive views about the school.
- The school's work to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a great strength. This helps pupils become mature, considerate individuals who are well prepared to move on to secondary school.
- Governors, leaders and managers plan effectively to ensure the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have remained good since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure pupils make rapid progress across year groups.
- Pupils are not given the time to act upon the advice given in marking and this restricts how well their work improves.
- Pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills are not sufficiently well developed for them to use these to help pupils when they get stuck in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons, six of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. These observations included mathematics, writing and phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) as well as other subjects such as music and physical education.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, listened to pupils read and held meetings with staff, pupils and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' work in lessons as well as work pupils have completed over time in their books.
- Discussions were held with pupils about behaviour and inspectors observed behaviour in lessons, around the school, in the dinner hall and at playtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 43 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as the views of parents spoken to during the course of the inspection. Questionnaires completed by 28 staff were also considered.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, behaviour and attendance, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, the development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, information about pupils' academic performance and checks on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Rogers

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and/or those with special educational needs supported through school action is slightly lower than national. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also lower than national.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families) is slightly higher than national. There are currently no pupils from service families on roll in the school.
- Nearly two thirds of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, reflecting the diverse community that the school serves. This is much higher than national figures.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is more than double the national average. A few of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school had a turbulent couple of years prior to this academic year, with high levels of staff sickness, including that of the previous headteacher and another senior leader, and maternity leave. There is now a stable team in place, with a new headteacher appointed in September 2013, and a new deputy headteacher appointed in January of this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teaching is outstanding so that an increasing proportion of pupils make rapid progress across year groups by:
 - asking pupils to act upon the advice given in marking and making necessary improvements
 - developing pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills so that the pupils are more able to use these to help their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typical of three- and four-year-olds. Routines and high expectations are quickly established so children begin to make good progress immediately. For example, children told their classmates about a favourite item brought from home. Their explanations were clear and relevant because they have been taught how to take the needs of their audience into account when speaking. In turn, the audience asked pertinent, insightful questions because the pupils have been taught what makes a good question.
- Progress continues to be good, enabling pupils to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils progressively acquire a range of reading skills, including secure phonic awareness, which they use to tackle increasingly complex texts. Reading is well promoted in school so pupils develop a love of books. They are particularly proud of their Alice in Wonderland-themed library and use the attractive reading areas available in their classrooms to further their enjoyment of reading.
- The school's focus on improving writing has been successful. Consequently, pupils made significantly better progress across Key Stage 2 in writing than was the case nationally last year.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because there are chances to apply mathematical skills in a range of subjects, such as when studying maps in geography or presenting graphs and charts in science. This resulted in increases in the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels (Level 5 and Level 6) last year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. There are robust systems in place for identifying what will best meet their needs and well trained teaching assistants deliver the relevant provision effectively.
- The school is putting its pupil premium funding to increasingly good use to narrow gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and other groups in school. Last year, at the end of Year 6, the gap in reading was just over two terms, in line with the national gap. The gap in writing was much less at only one term. The gap in mathematics was wider at just over three terms. For the current Year 6, the gap in mathematics has been completely eliminated, and in reading has narrowed to over half a term less than national.
- More able pupils do well. The proportion of those who reach the highest level (Level 6) is higher than the national average in writing and the new grammar and punctuation test. In mathematics, it is well above.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at least as well as other groups in school because there is a strong emphasis on developing vocabulary and using correctly-constructed sentences.
- The school demonstrates its commitment to equality of opportunity by ensuring that pupils from different groups achieve equally well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Throughout lessons, teachers check whether pupils have understood and amend tasks or explanations accordingly so that pupils learn well. This keeps lessons well-paced and ensures all pupils are engrossed.
- Teachers provide good challenge for the most able so they are engaged and eager to learn. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, more able pupils explained excitedly that they were now subtracting fractions, which was considerably harder than the addition they had successfully completed the day before.
- There is a very strong emphasis on supporting pupils to develop a broad vocabulary. Along with

very clear teaching of correct grammatical usage, this ensures pupils both speak and write with a high degree of accuracy.

- Teachers write useful comments in pupils' books that let pupils know what they need to do to improve or give them a challenge to move their learning on further. However, pupils are not regularly asked to act upon these comments which restricts the overall impact of marking on progress.
- Pupils answer teachers' questions well and rise to the high expectations in terms of clarity and breadth of response. However, when they are working without teachers or teaching assistants, not all pupils have sufficiently well-developed thinking and problem-solving skills to be able to take the initiative when they get stuck, which sometimes slows learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well around the school, such as, for example, going from their classrooms to the playground or in the dinner hall.
- Playtimes are harmonious because pupils all get on well and there are plenty of activities to spark their interest, keep them active and promote their physical well-being. Items such as tyres, large boxes and dressing up clothes are particular favourites because they encourage pupils' imaginations. The school encourages pupils to become caring individuals who have empathy for those with lives different to their own.
- Pupils have positive attitudes in class. The school fosters relationships well and this means pupils and teachers work in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They listen to each other and this allows learning to proceed well. However, attitudes are not exemplary because pupils do not always take the initiative if they get stuck or are not sure what to do and there is no adult present to guide them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know that bullying can take many guises and that it is persistent and hurtful. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson on internet safety, pupils learned a lot about cyber bullying. They say that they would intervene or tell an adult if they became aware of any bullying because it has no place in their happy, cohesive school environment.
- Behaviour is managed exceptionally well, which means that pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties are helped to work and play safely alongside their classmates. There have been no exclusions for the past eight years.
- The school tackles discrimination highly effectively so all pupils feel safe in school irrespective of their backgrounds. This ensures that pupils from different ethnic groups and of different faiths work and play exceptionally well together.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because the school provides a range of opportunities to learn about aspects of safety. For example, they are clear about the potential dangers on the internet, know how to cross the road and what to do in the case of an emergency such as a fire.
- Pupils are unanimous in saying that they feel safe at school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey agree with their views.
- Leaders use a range of strategies to promote attendance and designated staff support those families that find it difficult to attend regularly. This has seen a significant reduction in absence and the school's attendance figures have risen to above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has established a clear vision of where she wants to take the school. Governors and staff at all levels are equally committed to this drive for improvement because it is based on a deep understanding of the strengths of the school and the needs of the local community. Actions planned to achieve this aim are well thought out. That the school has closed the gap in mathematics for those eligible for pupil premium funding in the current Year 6 shows

that it has the capacity to make the improvements needed.

- Leaders make regular checks on how well pupils are learning and have a range of measures to help any pupils falling behind to catch up. They ensure staff are well trained to deliver high quality specialist provision. These measures are proving successful and pupils are making very strong progress in school this year. However, leadership and management are not outstanding because they have not secured enough outstanding teaching so progress has not been rapid over time, particularly during the period of staff turbulence.
- Senior leaders, ably supported by governors, use the appraisal system highly effectively to improve teachers' performance. Through accurate and detailed lesson observations, leaders identify what would most support individual teachers to improve. They then provide tailored training packages and carefully evaluate how effective these have been. Staff unanimously agree that this helpful cycle meets their professional needs well.
- Leaders have robust methods for checking the quality of teaching. Staff at all levels are involved in evaluating the quality of teaching by, for example, observing lessons, looking at work in books and making sure that planning identifies the different starting points of pupils in each class. Senior leaders have supported middle leaders in taking a full part in this work to support the development of leadership within the school.
- Pupils have opportunities across the curriculum to practise and apply their speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, the Year 2 teacher created a range of mathematics problems around an Alice in Wonderland theme. Pupils were both amused and well challenged by having to work out how much the Mad Hatter would have left in his bath full of tea after taking different amounts out.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Teachers use the well-established links across subjects to deepen pupils' understanding and help pupils empathise with others. Starting with an exceptionally high quality book, pupils in Year 5 have developed a deep insight into the life of poor children in Victorian times. Pupils used the song *Food glorious food* to empathise with what it must have been like to be fed only gruel every day and to long for a better meal. This is just one example of the many ways in which the school broadens pupils' horizons and ensures pupils leave as well-rounded, socially-adept individuals.
- Pupils' physical well-being needs are well met. The school has evaluated where best to spend the sports funding and this has already increased participation in after-school sporting clubs. The school's teams are now experiencing success in local tournaments because teachers are becoming increasingly confident at teaching the skills needed to excel in different sports.
- The local authority is responsive to the school's needs. Usually offering light touch support as befits a good school, it stepped up support when there was a period of significant staff absence. It also played a role in supporting governors during the recent successful recruitment process which has seen a new and highly effective leadership team established.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors use a range of data sources to make sure they know how the school compares to others nationally. They use this information to challenge senior leaders to continually develop the quality of teaching. For example, governors question whether targets set are ambitious enough or whether measures to meet targets are well thought out. Governors are involved in setting priorities for development and reviewing the impact. They know that teaching is improving because of the resulting rise in pupil achievement, such as the increased progress in writing. They look carefully at how funding is spent and know that the school has narrowed certain gaps for pupils supported by the pupil premium. Governors know that where staff do not meet performance targets set, pay rises are withheld and support is provided to tackle underperformance. Governors attend all relevant training and are proactive in keeping their skills up to date. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are meticulously met.

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	102640
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	440964

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Simpson
Headteacher	Peta Blow
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 March 2010
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