

Inspection of Morley Place Academy

Old Road, Conisbrough, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN12 3LZ

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 May 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Morley Place Academy is a good school. Leaders have created an environment where pupils feel happy and safe. Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful. Pupils are confident that adults will deal with issues when they happen.

Leaders have built a culture where everyone is valued, and differences are accepted. The school is an inclusive place for pupils to learn. Following an application process, the newly appointed pupil librarians are full of enthusiasm for their role. They know that they make an important contribution to running the school library and promoting reading.

Pupils value the rewards they receive when they demonstrate school values such as determination, resilience and perseverance. Pupils' behaviour around school is calm and orderly. Classrooms are productive places, where pupils enjoy learning. Leaders have put lots of help in place for the small minority of pupils who struggle with their behaviour. It is clear that leaders make pupils' social and emotional needs a high priority.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. This is evident in the way the curriculum has been planned. Pupils receive the support that they need from teachers and teaching assistants to do their best.

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

Leaders have made significant improvements to the curriculum in a very short space of time. It is now ambitious. They have drawn on the knowledge and expertise of all staff to create a curriculum that is well planned, carefully sequenced and unique to Morley Place. Subject leaders have worked with other trust schools and trust wide directors of learning to plan their subjects. English and mathematics leaders regularly check that the changes they are making are helping pupils to remember, know and do more. They monitor pupils' progress through lesson visits, discussions with pupils, and by looking at the work they complete. Leaders say that the support they have received has really made a difference. As a result, all staff are clear about the expectations of pupils, and aspirations are much higher. In other subjects, such as history, leaders are less clear about the impact their work is having, because they have not been able to monitor their subject with the same rigour.

Reading is the lynchpin of the curriculum. Leaders check pupils' phonics knowledge as soon as they start school. Teachers use these checks to identify and teach the sounds that pupils do not yet know. Adults who lead phonics lessons are well trained. This helps pupils to catch up quickly when they have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have invested in new reading books to ensure that pupils have a good selection of interesting texts to read. Daily reading lessons develop pupils' reading fluency as well as their understanding of plot and characters. Pupils say that they enjoy their reading lessons. They say that they are looking forward to using the

new library once COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions are lifted. One pupil said that the way that reading is taught 'makes me feel less shy about reading books'.

Teachers teach mathematics well. Leaders have trained teachers in how to check pupils' learning accurately. Teachers now use assessment adeptly. Teachers assess pupils' misunderstandings and use this information to decide what to teach next. Teachers use mathematical vocabulary accurately and they ensure that pupils do too. This helps pupils to understand and remember what they have learned. One pupil said, 'If you don't get it, teachers make sure you do.'

In all subjects, leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' spoken language and their vocabulary choices. However, pupils are not yet using their newly learned words with confidence in their writing. Teachers' expectations of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are inconsistent. As a result, the quality of pupils' written work varies across the curriculum.

Leaders expect that all pupils will achieve well. Given the pace of change, leaders have rightly supported staff to use assessment well in mathematics and reading. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the use of assessment is not as well developed. It is not always clear how teachers make changes to the sequence of learning in order to take account of what pupils know and understand.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is well trained and provides support and guidance to teachers. Teachers are receptive to this advice. Detailed assessments clearly identify pupils' barriers to their learning. Plans are in place to help teachers overcome these difficulties. As with other subject leaders, the SENCo has been involved in creating the curriculum from the start. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support that they need to access the ambitious curriculum.

Pupils are taught about the world around them. They have a sound understanding of issues such as equality and diversity. In Year 5, for example, pupils have learned about the history of racial segregation. They have considered how this was acceptable then, but not now. They have thought about how behaviours of today may be considered unacceptable in the future. Pupils are accepting of difference. They know that people hold different beliefs but that they are all the same and part of a happy team at school. Leaders have established an 'Anti-bullying Alliance'. Pupils from across the school are part of this group. They have been trained to spot signs of bullying and they are clear about the steps they would take to help others. While COVID-19 has restricted the range of extra-curricular activities on offer, leaders are offering some activities remotely. This includes a virtual art club that is well attended and resourced.

The Academy Advisory Body provides appropriate challenge and support to leaders. The advisory body knows the actions that leaders have taken to improve the school. However, COVID-19 restrictions mean that the advisory body is reliant on reports from the head of school. The usual processes for checking the impact of the work of leaders have been somewhat restricted.

All staff told us that they are well supported by leaders. They said they have benefited from training and that this has given them greater confidence to undertake their roles. Staff describe Morley Place as being like a big family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong safeguarding culture in this school. This is because leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority for everyone. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and manage risks they may face in the future.

Leaders carry out the necessary checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with children. Records are well maintained and responses to safeguarding incidents are thorough.

All staff have received relevant and recent training. They know how to identify and report concerns. Leaders follow up safeguarding matters in a timely and considered way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is not as well developed. This means that teachers do not have as accurate a picture of what pupils can do and remember in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that assessment processes in all subjects are equally well developed.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not have the same opportunities for evaluating the quality of their subjects. This means they are unclear about the impact of the new curriculum on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum leaders have the training and support to evaluate the impact of the new curriculum in their subjects.
- The quality of pupils' written work varies across the curriculum. They are not consistently using the vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar knowledge they have been taught. Leaders should ensure that the high expectations they have of pupils' spoken vocabulary are in place across all subjects when pupils record their work.

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 are the school and you are 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	142464
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10184598
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Vicki Pearson
Acting head of school	Louise Wright
Website	www.morleyplace.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Delta Academies Trust in April 2018.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- We held meetings with the acting head of school and with senior leaders. We also met with the SENCo and carried out joint lesson visits.

- We looked in detail at reading, mathematics, science and history. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' books and talked to pupils and teachers. Subject leaders were involved in all the activities with us.
- We listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited reading and phonics lessons.
- We met with representatives of the Academy Advisory Board and the trust.
- We spoke with a selection of parents at the start of the school day.
- We considered the 33 responses that were received through Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, as well as the 14 free-text responses. We also considered the 11 responses that were received through the Ofsted questionnaire for staff.
- We observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, including during lesson visits, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- We scrutinised the school's safeguarding documentation and behaviour and attendance information.

Inspection team

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