

# Inspection of Morton Primary School

Main Road, Morton, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 6HH

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Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Morton Primary School is a happy school. Pupils arrive at school each morning with positive attitudes to their learning. At the end of the school day, they leave, having worked hard and done their best.

Pupils have impeccable manners. They pay close attention to their teachers and listen to each other with respect. They follow the school's 'good to be green' behaviour system. This approach motivates pupils to behave well. Pupils are keen to receive a 'gold card' when their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptional. Pupils do not worry about bullying. They say that the adults in school care about them. They are confident that every member of staff will listen to them if they have a problem.

Leaders and staff have worked with focus and determination to improve the school. Many positive actions have been taken. Leaders have prioritised the right things. Despite the significant workload required to improve the school, leaders have been considerate of staff's well-being. Staff appreciate the school's strong leadership. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the care their children receive.

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

The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects. Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. A small number of curriculum plans are well designed, for example mathematics and phonics. In these subjects, pupils are learning well. In mathematics, teachers break learning down into small steps. Pupils have time to practise the concepts they have been taught in order to become fluent and confident mathematicians. They make links between prior learning and new learning. Year 6 pupils know how important it is to recall their times tables at speed as they prepare to learn long division. Teachers make regular checks to ensure that pupils are ready to move on to new learning. They provide extra help for pupils who need it. However, many other curriculum plans are not well thought out. This is because the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember has not been identified with enough precision. It is not clear how learning is sequenced so that pupils' knowledge is built on over time. Teachers do not have the information they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Pupils do not retain the intended knowledge because it is not taught in a logical order. In religious education, they confuse what they have been taught about what Hindus and Muslims believe.

Leaders are ambitious that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) should be 'lifelong learners'. Staff have received training to improve their understanding of how to accurately identify pupils with SEND and how they can meet their needs. Each pupil with SEND has a plan that identifies their needs and the support they will receive. These plans are too general. The actions and

strategies are not broken down into small enough steps. This means that the support is not as closely matched to the needs of each pupil as it needs to be.

Pupils enjoy reading. In the early years, story times are a key part of each day. Children also enjoy creating stories. They help their teacher to make up stories when she wears the 'story cape'. They tell their own stories, using impressive expression and language.

Phonics lessons begin as soon as children start in the Reception Year. Well-delivered lessons teach pupils to blend sounds together to read words. Assessment is used effectively to group pupils for these lessons. Pupils who are falling behind get extra help. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know.

Leaders make sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about important values such as democracy and tolerance. They understand how these values are relevant in everyday life. Older pupils discuss and debate issues that are in the news. Pupils learn to take on responsibility. They can volunteer to help at lunchtimes as 'mini leaders'. These pupils organise games, like 'cat and mouse', that everyone can join in with. Pupils are proud to represent their peers on the school council.

The governing body has been through a period of turbulence. Its members now fulfil their statutory duties. They check that leaders are keeping pupils safe. However, they realise that they have not challenged leaders well enough in the past or had an accurate picture of how well the school is doing.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made significant improvements to the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders have ensured that staff have regular training so that they are confident to spot and report concerns. Staff stay alert to the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They pass concerns on without delay. The records kept are detailed. Leaders make sure that the right actions are taken when a concern is reported. Pastoral support is provided for pupils. Leaders also seek support from external agencies where it is needed.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not well designed in many subjects. The key knowledge that pupils need to learn is not precisely identified. It does not help pupils to remember more over time or to connect their learning. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans identify exactly what pupils need to know and remember, and in what order.
- Governors do not check for themselves that leaders are making the right decisions to improve the school. They do not validate what leaders tell them in order to ensure that they have an accurate picture of the school. Governors should ensure that they have the skills they need to provide appropriate challenge for leaders and hold them to account for the decisions that are made.
- The targets set for pupils with SEND are often too general and lack precision. As a result, the support provided for pupils with SEND is not always tailored to their needs as well as it could be. Leaders should ensure that pupils with SEND receive targeted support to enable them to access the full curriculum and achieve as highly as possible in all subjects.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112596
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254330
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nick Morrissy
<b>Acting headteacher</b>	Erika Thornhill
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.morton.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.morton.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, an acting headteacher has been appointed for three days each week.
- There has been considerable change to the governing body since the previous inspection. The chair of governors was appointed in September 2022.
- The school operates before- and after-school provision that is managed by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, other leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils from the lessons visited and looked at samples of pupils' work. Pupils were observed reading to a member of staff.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, at lunchtime and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors discussed the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe with the designated safeguarding lead. They reviewed safeguarding documentation and the records that are kept. Inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.

### **Inspection team**

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Watkins

His Majesty's Inspector

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