Inspection of a good school: Morden Primary School

London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5PX

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2024

Outcome

Morden Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their welcoming and caring school. They are happy and enjoy all aspects of school life, especially reading and physical education. High levels of pastoral support are at the heart of the school community. Relationships between pupils and adults are respectful and warm, which helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils trust adults to deal with any concerns that may arise, such as bullying, which are rare.

Pupils are friendly and polite. All staff have high expectations for the way pupils should behave and engage in their learning. The school is aspirational for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. All of this helps to ensure that pupils make strong progress through the school's curriculum. Pupils are determined to achieve well.

The school offers pupils many leadership opportunities. Pupils are proud of their roles of responsibility, such as pupil leadership team members, house captains, reading ambassadors, bistro buddies and sport leaders. The school organises enriching experiences for pupils, for example visits to museums, the Sutton Ecology Centre and singing at the Royal Albert Hall. Through these experiences, pupils are taught about performance, physical health and looking after the environment.

Parents and carers appreciate the school and consider it a family. They value the efforts that the school makes to support them and their children in a range of circumstances.

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

Children in early years get off to a positive start. The curriculum provides interesting and motivating opportunities for children that enable them to learn well. A focus on developing children's language and communication is a priority. Adults engage children frequently in conversations and extend their vocabulary and understanding. Children are also skilfully guided to develop their independence, get fully involved in learning and play enthusiastically. They are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Leaders have planned a well-designed curriculum. Careful thought has gone into the key vocabulary, skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn. In most subjects, knowledge is sequenced so that pupils secure an understanding of the concepts they need in order to understand more challenging ideas. For example, in mathematics, pupils are able to explain how to solve problems by drawing on their knowledge of number. Regular practise helps to embed pupils' understanding. For example, pupils practise different ways of representing numbers to calculate fractions and decimals confidently. Staff test out pupils' knowledge of specific concepts regularly. They make sure that any gaps in their knowledge and understanding are swiftly addressed.

There are a few curriculum subjects that leaders are continuing to develop to ensure learning is well sequenced. In these subjects, the way that essential knowledge in a subject should build up in the long term has not been clarified. As a result, pupils do not develop some knowledge in as much depth over time. Sometimes, they remember the activities that they have completed rather than the key knowledge and skills identified by leaders.

Teaching pupils to read, and developing a love of reading, are priorities in this school. Children get off to a good start as soon as they come to school. The agreed phonics programme is implemented with accuracy and precision. This is because leaders ensure that all staff are well trained. In Reception, children are systematically taught phonics and how to use this knowledge to read and write words. This means that as pupils move into Year 1 and beyond, they have strong foundations to build on and quickly become fluent readers. Pupils who need to catch up are swiftly identified and receive effective support.

The school ensures that pupils develop a love of reading. Class book corners are inviting and pupils enjoy choosing their books. The school library is well resourced and pupils benefit from using the library regularly. Teachers read to pupils every day from a wide range of high-quality books. There are many opportunities for pupils to read, both for pleasure and to find out information.

The curriculum is ambitious for pupils with SEND. Effective procedures are in place to identify pupils' needs and additional support is put in place promptly. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff receive regular training. They know how to adapt activities in order to enable pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils enjoy learning. They are focused on their learning in lessons. The many reward systems celebrate pupils' success. Leaders provide additional support to pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour. Most pupils attend school regularly. For those pupils whose attendance needs to improve, the school provides effective support.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. They are taught how to identify and manage their emotions and feelings. The school supports pupils' well-being. Pupils understand that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and respectfully. They are taught to respect the opinions and beliefs of others. This is evident in pupils' relationships and behaviour towards each other, and in their conduct around the school.

Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff appreciate the support and communication from senior leaders. The governing body has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are currently developing a few areas of the curriculum, and where this is the case, the order in which important knowledge is taught is less clear than it should be. As a result, teaching does not focus sharply on building pupils' knowledge cumulatively over time. Therefore, pupils find it more difficult to remember important subject knowledge in some of the topics covered by the curriculum. Leaders should follow through on this work to ensure that the sequencing of the curriculum supports pupils to develop detailed knowledge in a progressive manner.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102640
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10323329
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Lisa Halford
Headteacher	Peta Blow
Website	www.morden.merton.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. She met with the vice-chair of governors and five other governors and met with the local authority representative.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics.
- For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of books.

- The inspector also looked at the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the views of parents, staff and pupils through both discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frances Hawkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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