



Morda CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123484
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292683
Inspection date 19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Morda
School category	Voluntary controlled		Oswestry
Age range of pupils	4-11		SY10 9NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01691 652025
Number on roll (school)	113	Fax number	01691 679320
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Crowhurst
		Headteacher	John Eglin
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Morda is a smaller than average primary school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Children enter the school with skills and experiences that are at the expected levels. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Morda Church of England Primary is a good school. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. The school is moving on at a good rate and as a result, standards in mathematics, reading and science are rapidly improving. However, standards in writing are a relative weakness because pupils' punctuation and spelling lack accuracy. Pupils thrive in the school's friendly and purposeful atmosphere and, as a result, their personal development is good. Pupils really enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. They are extremely polite to adults and to each other. Pupils feel very safe at school and are very safety conscious. They talk proudly about the responsibilities they take on and the school council, both of which are developing their good sense of community. Pupils clearly understand the need to be healthy and put this knowledge into practice very well in their choice of food and by taking plenty of exercise. Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school and rightly think that the pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Typically they say, 'My child is happy at school, makes good progress and is well looked after'.

Teaching and learning are good. Children in the Reception Year make good progress because their learning needs are well met. Nearly all children reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and a small minority exceed these. Teachers manage lessons and behaviour well. Lesson plans take account of different learning needs and this ensures that all pupils make equally good progress. Teachers use well-judged questions to probe pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. Relationships with adults are good and as a result, pupils are keen to learn. The good curriculum makes an important contribution to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their good achievement. Pupils talk excitedly about participating in the many extra-curricular clubs on offer.

Leadership and management are good. Rigorous self-evaluation ensures the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. These effective procedures stem from the detailed checking of the school's performance by senior management. The recently appointed headteacher has correctly identified the need to develop the roles of the new subject leaders so that they can take fuller responsibility for further raising achievement in their subjects. Improvements since the last inspection and the recent record of improvement show the school has good capacity to make further gains.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve pupils' punctuation and spelling so as to improve writing standards
- fully involve subject coordinators in checking the pupils' progress to sharpen their understanding of what needs to be done to raise achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and the few children in the early stages of learning English, is good overall. Pupils make good progress and standards are above average. Good provision in the Reception class ensures that children progress well. Most achieve the expected levels by the start of Year 1 and some exceed these. Children settle quickly into the Reception class and make especially good strides in their personal, social and emotional development.

In Years 1 to 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Over the past year, there have been improvements in all three of these subjects. As a result, the school met challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests in 2006. However, in English, pupils do better in reading than they do in writing. In pupils' written work, punctuation and spelling are relative weaknesses and these diminish the quality of their writing in different contexts and for a variety of audiences. When reading, pupils have a good appreciation of the different styles of literature. In mathematics, they show particularly good skills in solving problems and in mental calculations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children settle well in the Reception class and are confident and keen to share their experiences. By the time they start in Year 1, they work and play well together. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is supported well by the school's strong Christian tradition. Pupils respect and value each other and the world around them. However, pupils' understanding of other religions and their appreciation of their place in a multicultural society are under-developed. Pupils' outstanding behaviour comes from a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils show good self-discipline and, in class, they behave and concentrate very well even when the task becomes difficult.

Pupils report no bullying and are confident that they can approach a member of staff if they have a worry and their concerns will be quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the need to maintain healthy lifestyles and do their best to keep fit through taking regular exercise. They are clear about the pitfalls of a poor diet and choose a healthy lunch. To underline their commitment to good diet, the school council has banned crisps in school! Pupils' skilful use of computers, together with good skills in literacy and numeracy, ensure good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know what they expect pupils to learn and their explanations are clear. As a result, pupils are confident about tackling their work and try hard in lessons. Class debates are lively and there is skilful use of questioning by teachers to ensure that pupils have grasped the learning. Just occasionally the pace of lessons slows when the planned activities lack real excitement and relevance for the pupils. Teaching assistants are generally well briefed and make a particularly valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with learning difficulties. Planning has been strengthened to give appropriate attention to improving pupils' skills in punctuation and spelling.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and supports pupils' personal development well. The Reception Year curriculum is good, with an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-led activities. However, the outdoor work area for children is uncovered and this restricts the range of learning activities in wet weather. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well used to support pupils' independent learning in Years 1 to 6. The most able pupils are provided for well, with appropriate extension work in English and mathematics. Regular visits to places of interest and a good range of popular clubs extend pupils' interests and aspirations well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance to pupils. Sensitive support and care is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. The few pupils at the early stages of learning English are provided with effective specialist help. This enables these pupils to participate fully in lessons and make good progress. The school is making good use of external agencies and specialists to promote the welfare of individual children when the need arises. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are robust. The school is using robust and effective measures, such as rewards for regular attendance, to improve attendance. As a result, attendance levels have improved over the past year and are now broadly average.

Procedures to assess pupils' work and track their progress are good and have helped to raise standards. Pupils largely meet the challenging targets set for them. However, older pupils are not always given clear enough guidance as to what they need to do to further improve their mathematics. This limits the opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning and occasionally slows their progress at reaching their targets. The school provides very effective additional support, through booster classes, for individual pupils who underperform.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management have ensured that pupils' standards have risen markedly over the past year. High expectations for pupils' academic and personal development are communicated effectively to staff so that everyone strives to do their very best for the children.

The school's clear view of its strengths and areas for development stem from the rigorous checking of the school's performance by senior managers. Weaknesses have been tackled tenaciously. For example, standards in mathematics have greatly improved because of well-judged action taken to boost pupils' skills in problem-solving. Strategic planning identifies the right priorities for attention and the school is well placed to get even better.

The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start. He has correctly identified the need to ensure that effective monitoring and evaluation extend beyond senior staff. Several subject coordinators are new to their roles and are undertaking training in their areas of responsibility. Procedures for checking on and developing their subjects are not yet sufficiently rigorous and this restricts their impact on raising pupils' achievement further.

Governors are well informed through good day-to-day involvement in the school's work. Their good understanding of data enables them to effectively support and challenge the school on its performance.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. You clearly enjoy being in a school in which you all get on so well and help each other. We enjoyed our conversations with you about your work and the other things that you do at school. The school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the 'highlights':

- you really enjoy your learning and work hard in your lessons
- your behaviour is outstanding
- you have a very interesting range of lessons and clubs which most of you attend
- all the staff care for you very well
- the youngest children settle well into Reception, and you make good progress as you move up the school so that you reach good standards at the end of Year 6
- the school is well led and managed and your new headteacher has made a good start.

What we have asked your school to do now

- improve your writing by making sure your punctuation and spelling are accurate
- ensure that those teachers with responsibilities for subjects regularly check on the work that you do.

Best wishes for your future and the future of the school.