

Morden Mount Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 100114 |
| Local Authority | Greenwich |
| Inspection number | 307295 |
| Inspection dates | 26–27 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Wendy Simmons |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 362 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Veronika Simons |
| Headteacher | Ms Mary Jackson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 September 2004 |
| School address | Lewisham Road London SE13 7QP |
| Telephone number | 020 8692 2920 |
| Fax number | 020 8694 8395 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Morden Mount is a large school, which serves a culturally mixed community. Most pupils come from Black African, White British, or Black Caribbean heritages and a growing proportion come from other White backgrounds. Overall, 24 languages are spoken by pupils. A high number join the school with little or no spoken English. Over half of all pupils receive free school meals. A high proportion of pupils are considered vulnerable or socially and emotionally very needy. High numbers of pupils join and leave the school at unexpected times throughout the year. This is often due to them being re-housed. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly related to behaviour and speech, language and communication, is much higher than average. Since the school was last inspected, there have been a number of significant staffing difficulties. The school was without a permanent headteacher for a year until the current headteacher joined the school in April 2006. The school has gained the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Morden Mount has been through a very difficult few years and is beginning to recover. The headteacher has been instrumental in beginning to turn the school around. As she said, 'It's been a hard slog but we can see light at the end of the tunnel'. Leaders are correct in their view that the school is not yet effective enough. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards, achievement, teaching and learning.

Standards of work and pupils' skills are exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. Too many pupils are not gaining suitable skills for their future economic well-being. A significant proportion of parents expressed concern about the school as improvement is still needed. Inspectors agree that the school is not yet as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. However, they also note that effective steps are being taken to bring about improvement because leadership is satisfactory. There is a trend of improvement in standards coming through most year groups. About a third of pupils, in most year groups, have made accelerated progress in the last year. This means that they are making up for past underachievement. Even so, the achievement of different groups of learners is still very uneven. For example, pupils with learning difficulties make better progress than other pupils. Pupils sometimes do better in one class than in another. The support for pupils learning English as an additional language is too inconsistent to ensure that this group can do as well as possible.

The school demonstrates a sound capacity to improve. For example, in the last year, pupils' progress has quickened. Pupils' personal development, the curriculum and the Foundation Stage have improved and are satisfactory. Most importantly, pupils are behaving better and feel more valued. Their behaviour is satisfactory and contributes to this multicultural school being a safe and friendly place to be. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils mostly enjoy school, value the range of new clubs and they are adopting healthy lifestyles well. Pastoral care is good. Academic guidance and support are improving well, although there is still more to do to ensure that all pupils are helped to develop quickly.

Teaching and learning are improving but are inadequate because the quality is too variable between classes, subjects and within year groups. Pupils are not yet challenged enough. Leaders know that the teaching is not ensuring the pupils make the progress they should. The school has relied heavily on temporary teachers and the expectations of a few staff have not been high enough. The appointment of more permanent staff and further training has generated improvements. There is now a clear focus on improving pupils' learning and progress. Monitoring by senior staff confirms that there are not enough good lessons. Some lessons are dull and do not allow pupils to be actively involved in their learning.

The leadership in the school is satisfactory. The headteacher is well supported by her senior management team, which has been reorganised well in the last year. Morale and teamwork have improved greatly. Governors are fully involved in helping the school to improve and are accurate when commenting that, 'Leaders and staff are cracking on with improvements for the benefit of the pupils and the community'. The school has been well supported by the Local Authority. In particular, they have improved the way that they check the quality of new

permanent staff and the way that senior staff track, check and monitor pupils' progress. Several new middle managers have been appointed recently and they are developing their roles, although they are not yet taking full responsibility for raising the quality of teaching, learning and standards in the subjects they lead.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children start in the Nursery many are at a very early stage of development compared with what is usually expected of children of their age. Often they find it hard to communicate, work along side other children and deal with their own hygiene needs. There has been rapid progress in improving provision this year. Children settle in well and often make good progress in developing important social skills. In most other aspects of their learning progress is steady. The recent focus on improving role-play and developing skills in using letters and sounds (Phonics) is helping children to talk to others, work cooperatively and develop important early reading skills. Children enjoy creative work and writing, as evident in their pictures and writing about the life of a frog. However, formal and informal writing activities and counting investigations are underdeveloped. By the time they leave the Reception class, standards, although improved, are still lower than expected in speaking, mathematical and emotional development. Good links with speech and language therapists and other outside agencies ensure that pupils are well supported. Assessments of children's skills are improving but sometimes these are not accurate enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that lessons are consistently challenging, interesting and fun for the pupils.
- Strengthen the roles of middle managers, so that they are more accountable for standards, achievement and the support given to pupils learning English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Although pupils are beginning to make better progress as they move through the school it is not yet rapid enough. Currently, some groups of pupils make better progress than others. Not enough pupils are doing as well as they should. Consequently, achievement is inadequate. In particular, pupils learning English as an additional language make very uneven progress. Pupils from white backgrounds have done poorly for several years. Things are beginning to improve but there is still far more to do. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily. Reading is developing well but there is more to do to lift standards to an acceptable level in writing, mathematics and science.

Standards have been exceptionally low since 2005. They fell to their lowest point in 2006 and then showed clear improvement in 2007. For example, the proportion gaining average standards in mathematics rose by 20 percentage points. Also, there was a notable improvement in the numbers of pupils who made more acceptable progress in both English and mathematics in 2007. Although standards are likely to be very low for the pupils currently in Year 6, this group has made faster progress this year. There is a trend for improvement in most year groups but progress is still very slow in Year 4.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' growing enjoyment of school and their satisfactory behaviour underpin their improving attitudes to learning and good attendance. They feel safe because they know that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils clearly enjoy taking part in sport and other physical activities and they know why they should drink water regularly and eat lots of fruit and vegetables. Pupils keenly take on responsibility by helping younger children at playtime, through roles such as 'zone park players'. They play a large part in the local Quaggy Carnival and raise money for charities, such as 'Children in Need'. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds mix well together and they see the school as a friendly place to be. Year 3 talked very enthusiastically about having pen pals in Sri Lanka. Pupils work well with each other but, because of their weak basic skills in literacy and numeracy, they are not adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

In some classes, teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. However, learning is not yet good enough because the quality of teaching is inconsistent between classes and subjects. Planning is improving but pupils are not always given challenging enough activities. One pupil put this well when saying, 'We need to think hard to be smart'. Work is not consistently well matched to pupils' abilities. This is because some teachers are better at making effective use of assessment information when planning their lessons than others. There is not enough good or outstanding teaching to help lift achievement more rapidly. Teachers generally make it clear to pupils what they should be learning but activities are sometimes dull and lack pace. As one pupil said, 'We need more fun and lots more learning'. Pupils also commented that they learn best when they are more involved and inspectors agree. Pupils' work is marked fairly regularly, but often does not inform pupils how to improve. For example, in writing, pupils are not guided sufficiently in how to edit, extend and improve their work. Pupils enjoy visits but there are missed opportunities to use these to enhance learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is improving well. Pupils enjoy the reading activities and they are reading more frequently as a result. Younger children are being helped to link letters and sounds together, which helps them to read new and difficult words. The curriculum helps pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. The range of clubs is increasing well and this contributes much to pupils' personal development. There is an increasing emphasis on helping pupils to explore their emotions. Teachers are beginning to make links between subjects but there is still more to do on this. Leaders know that investigation work is not yet good enough in science and mathematics to ensure that pupils reach higher levels in their work. Work has begun to tackle these weaknesses in science and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care given to pupils is often good and this is very important, as many pupils are needy and vulnerable. Child protection is taken seriously and there are good links with outside agencies, which enhance the care given to pupils. Following a period when pupils' behaviour was not good enough, rigorous action was taken to help pupils to know and follow the rules. As a result, behaviour is now satisfactory and exclusions have fallen. Pupils are usually well managed in lessons. Inspectors agree with pupils and staff there is a need for a better range of play ground activities, as playtime can be too boisterous. There has been a focus on improving attendance, which has been successful for all but a few families.

Pupils often know their individual targets and are keen to improve. Assessment systems are developing well and this means that most teachers identify those who have made slow progress. They are beginning to target pupils for additional support. As a result, pupils are beginning to catch up following past very slow progress in most classes. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is too patchy and the tracking of progress is not as precise as for other groups. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the effective focused support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is dedicated and has high expectations; she is well supported by other senior leaders. Leaders at all levels are committed to helping pupils to have higher aspirations and better life chances. The impact of their work is evident in the fact that pupils' progress has been much better this year. Leaders also have a clear and appropriate improvement plan, which focuses correctly on the key priority of improving standards, achievement and teaching and learning. Senior leaders monitor teaching and learning accurately and they know the school well. In the last year, several new middle managers have been appointed to develop English, mathematics and science but they have not had sufficient time to have an impact on standards. There is still more to do on this, so that the managers play an increasing part in improving standards, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. The targets set for 2008 are realistic considering pupils' past underachievement. The targets for 2009 are more challenging. Governors know the school well and are actively involved in helping it to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 4 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 4 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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? | Yes |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morden Mount Primary School, London, SE13 7QP

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know our findings.

Your school is a friendly place to be and is improving. We agree with you that you are well cared for and you mostly enjoy coming to school. Your headteacher is especially keen to make the school better for you. We agree that this is important, as it is not yet as good as it should be. We have asked the headteacher and teachers to make significant improvements for you. This is because some of you could be helped to make better progress and reach higher levels in your work. Teachers are working hard to make learning more suitable for you and they are doing well with new improvements but there is still more to do. In particular, we like the improvements that are being made in reading activities. Best of all we like that fact that you are all behaving better. So, well done and please keep this up! We agree with you that learning could be more fun and maybe a bit harder. Like you, we are pleased to hear that you are beginning to have more clubs. We are impressed in how well you are getting on with becoming fitter by doing more sports. Congratulations to almost all of you for coming to school each day.

We have asked your headteacher and all of the adults in your school to do the following things.

- Help you to make faster progress and reach higher levels in your English, mathematics and science work.
- Give you more good lessons, which are fun and sometime a bit harder.
- Build up the way that teachers help your headteacher in improving the school.

Thank you for coming to talk to us. We look forward to hearing how the school gets on and hope that the Carnival is great fun.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector