

# Morley Place Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106711
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	309205
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Young HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Loy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A. Littlehales
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Old Road Conisbrough Doncaster South Yorkshire DN12 3LZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 863400
<b>Fax number</b>	01709 863010

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Morley Place Junior School is located in the village of Conisbrough and is similar in size to most junior schools nationally. All students are White British and live locally. There are higher levels of deprivation in this community than are average nationally, and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. Pupils' prior attainment is average on entry to the school. Pupil numbers have fallen over the past three years.

The school has gained the Artsmark silver, Activemark, and the Basic Skills Quality Mark, as well as Healthy School accreditation. The school offers a breakfast club and is a test and training centre for the European Computer Driving Licence.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI 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 pupils' achievement and standards, especially in writing.

Following its last inspection in 2005, the school was judged to be providing an effective education that included some noted strengths. However, over the past three years, results have deteriorated and in 2007 the school's performance ranked in the lowest 1% nationally. The school has experienced a period of turbulence due to the serious illness and extended absence of the headteacher and other senior staff. To the school's credit, it did not bury its head in the sand and took decisive action by contacting the local authority (LA) and requesting urgent support. Over the past 12 months this has borne some fruit and unvalidated results of the 2008 Key Stage 2 national tests show major improvement on standards reached in 2007. This upturn, together with some effective steps to address previously identified issues, demonstrates leaders' capacity to secure the further improvements required.

Achievement and standards are inadequate. Pupils throughout the school are failing to make sufficient progress, with particularly poor progress in writing. Standards attained are low. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but inconsistencies in practice are resulting in slow progress, particularly for less able pupils. Teaching is not yet consistently effective enough to promote steadily successful learning. This is compounded by setting arrangements that do not always take proper account of pupils' different needs and capabilities. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school, and involve themselves in the school council, extra-curricular activities and fundraising for charities. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. The satisfactory curriculum has some good features. It is broad and balanced, with opportunities for 'hands on' experiences, which pupils love. The integrated approach helps pupils to recognise the links between different subjects and reinforces their learning. Care, guidance and support are also satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and enjoy good relationships with staff. They are well cared for and know where to seek help if they need it. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is accurate and helps to highlight those needing additional support.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Together with the LA, leaders are spearheading the introduction of new improvement strategies including measures to train staff, enhance pupils' basic skills and improve their ability to access the curriculum. These well-conceived approaches have not yet had the desired impact on all pupils' achievement. Leaders have successfully tackled some issues from the previous inspection, including improving the quality of marking, strengthening transition links and increasing the effectiveness of middle managers. The school deploys resources adequately; however, value for money is currently inadequate because pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Most parents are supportive of the school but, justifiably, a significant minority is dissatisfied with the progress their children are making. The LA has supported the school very well over the past year and this is a major factor in the improvements secured in 2008 by Year 6 pupils. Governance is satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly in writing.

- Ensure that teaching consistently matches pupils' capabilities, needs and interests so that the quality of learning improves, particularly for less able pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Their attainment on entry to the school is in line with the national average but by the time they leave standards have plummeted and are low, particularly in writing. The 2007 Key Stage 2 national test results confirmed a three-year declining trend in standards, and pupils' progress was in the bottom 1% of schools nationally. However, provisional Key Stage 2 national test results for 2008 indicate a substantial improvement in mathematics and science as well as a rise in standards in English. Nevertheless, the standards reached in writing were low, once again. Whilst this is encouraging overall, scrutiny of the school's data on pupils' progress reveals that significant numbers of pupils elsewhere in the school are failing to make the expected rate of progress or, in some cases, regressing. Less able pupils make particularly slow progress, while the progress of more able pupils is variable. Writing remains a major weakness, and pupils continue to make slowest progress in this area. These varying rates of progress were borne out by lesson observations. The use of data to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress has improved and is helping the school to recognise which pupils need help. Newly introduced pupil progress meetings increase the focus on tailored intervention to secure better achievement. However, overall the impact of improvement strategies is not fully evident. The school did not meet its targets in 2007 or 2008.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall with particular strengths in pupils' moral and social development. Staff and visitors from a local church reinforce strong moral messages. Through their work in personal, social, health and citizenship education, pupils become increasingly aware of their responsibilities towards themselves and others. They willingly take on roles such as school councillors, playground buddies and members of the healthy schools working group. Such opportunities enable them to develop well as responsible members of the school community. Pupils behave well, enjoy learning, and benefit from good relationships with staff. Pupils know that bullying and racist behaviour are unacceptable and that staff will deal with any incidents firmly and fairly. Although attendance is broadly average, the progress of some pupils is interrupted by holidays in term time. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and keep safe. Though most pupils have good attitudes to learning, they are not acquiring the basic skills they need for the next stage in their education rapidly enough to secure their future economic well-being. Nevertheless, they are developing their thinking skills and are increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with a number of good features. Schemes of work and curriculum planning are sound. Pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum, including learning a modern foreign language. The programme is broad, balanced and based on a thematic

approach, which connects and consolidates pupils' learning by integrating subject delivery. Pupils particularly enjoy the practical aspects of the curriculum, including day trips to places linked with studied topics that offer problem solving, outdoor and adventurous opportunities. The Egyptian and Victorian theme days allow pupils to immerse themselves in their learning and bring subjects to life. Pupils value the enrichment opportunities available, including music, art and a range of sports activities, provided as part of the school's involvement with the local school sports coordinator scheme. Pupils have opportunities to develop their leadership and team working skills through work as charity coordinators. There are good links with the local community and the church has a high profile presence in the school. Regular curriculum reviews enable the school to take account of pupils' changing needs and interests. Planned developments include improved provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Following a realisation that significant improvement was required and with the support of the LA, the headteacher and senior staff are now providing a more focused and purposeful educational direction. The school functions effectively on a day-to-day basis and the expected systems and protocols are in place. Staff are held to account for the quality of their work through performance management reviews and regular appraisal by the headteacher and the LA. Children are happy and the school projects a very caring ethos. Staff fully support senior leaders and are committed to making the necessary improvements. They have benefited from training, which has helped them to embed new behaviour and assessment strategies.

Some effective steps taken to tackle issues from the previous inspection, together with the substantial improvement in the achievement and standards of Year 6 pupils, reflect the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further. The quality of marking and assessment is better, there are improved links with the neighbouring infant school and middle managers are becoming more effective in their roles. With significant support from the LA, the school has developed a coherent recovery strategy. However, the measures introduced so far are not yet showing sufficient impact across the whole school. Teaching does not consistently promote a high enough quality of learning to eradicate the legacy of underachievement. Planning and setting arrangements are not tailored sufficiently to individual needs. These factors diminish the impact of the measures introduced, particularly for less able pupils. Parents are largely supportive of the school, although a significant minority feel their children's progress has deteriorated since transferring from the infant school. The school is working closely with a partner junior school, the LA and a number of external agencies to improve the quality of education provided. Governors are experienced, know the school well and perform their duties diligently.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good. Most parents and pupils find staff approachable, understanding, and believe the school seeks and takes account of their views. The school complies with all requirements for child protection. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and are confident that staff will resolve any issues of concern. Though health and safety procedures are sound, parents did raise some concerns about site security, which the school has acknowledged and is remedying. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and staff work well with a wide range of outside agencies to promote

their well-being. More recently, the school has begun to take account of the needs of more able pupils. Improved collaboration with the neighbouring infant school is helping to smooth the transition of pupils, with similar arrangements in place for pupils transferring to the high school. The school now has a better grasp of the pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, the school recognises that not all staff consistently implement the protocols for academic guidance and support. As a consequence, pupils are not always sufficiently aware of what they need to do next in order to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Following a realisation that significant improvement was required and with the support of the LA, the headteacher and senior staff are now providing a more focused and purposeful educational direction. The school functions effectively on a day-to-day basis and the expected systems and protocols are in place. Staff are held to account for the quality of their work through performance management reviews and regular appraisal by the headteacher and the LA. Children are happy and the school projects a very caring ethos. Staff fully support senior leaders and are committed to making the necessary improvements. They have benefited from training, which has helped them to embed new behaviour and assessment strategies.

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## Annex A

## 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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	4

### 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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Morley Place Junior School, Doncaster, DN12 3LZ

Thank you for being so welcoming to my colleague and me when we visited your school. We found it fascinating and enlightening to visit your lessons and to assess the quality of education you receive. A special thanks to those of you who we talked to at lunchtime and during lessons; you conducted yourselves well.

Although you work hard, are well behaved and enjoy coming to school, we have given your school a Notice to Improve. This is because many of you are not making the progress you are capable of. Pupils in Year 6 have made some good progress over the last year, but this is not the case in the other classes. The progress you make with your writing is particularly slow.

Other aspects of the school's work are satisfactory and there are some good elements. The varied curriculum programme provides you with some good opportunities to learn. Some of you told us that you particularly enjoy PE and sport, art and music. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although activities do not always allow you to learn as effectively as you could. Your contributions to the school and wider community are good, as is your commitment to living healthy lifestyles. You enjoy being part of the school council, acting as playground buddies and raising money for charities. However, some of you miss too many lessons because your parents take you on holiday during term time, which can affect how much progress you make. The school takes good care of you, although you sometimes need more help to know how to improve your work. Your headteacher and the staff have already introduced some improvements and know what else is required.

We have asked your school, with the support of the local authority, to raise standards by improving your learning and making sure the work you are set is just right for you.

Please continue to behave well, work hard and support the staff in their efforts to improve your school.