

Morton Trentside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120464
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	313626
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Badmin
Headteacher	Ms J Norbron
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Crooked Billet Street Morton Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 3AH
Telephone number	01427 613472
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school has few pupils from minority ethnic groups and no pupil has a first language other than English. The proportions of pupils claiming free school meals or identified with learning difficulties are below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is similar to age-related expectations, although standards in mathematical development are above those expected for their age and many pupils are very capable. The school has achieved the ActiveMark, ArtsMark and Healthy Schools awards. There has been considerable turnover of staff in recent years.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

While pupils make satisfactory progress in some areas, their achievement is inadequate overall. Standards are generally similar to the national average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, but pupils do not do well enough in mathematics through the school. The more able make insufficient progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and girls' achievement is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. The school failed to reach its realistic targets in English and mathematics in 2007. This is because teaching is inadequate overall and particularly in Years 2 and 3. While it is good in Year 6, there is too little teaching of a similar quality that might ensure consistent progress through the school. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and tasks are not matched sufficiently to their different abilities. Consequently, the work set for pupils is often not challenging enough for them. Pupils have targets for their writing, but their knowledge of these is inconsistent and teachers' marking does not always help them to know how to improve their work.

The school takes satisfactory care of pupils' personal and emotional needs and therefore their personal development and well-being are sound. Pupils behave well and there are good relationships between them and with adults. There are strengths in their social and moral development and pupils have a well-developed sense of fair play. They enjoy school, particularly the range of activities outside the school day. However, pupils are often over-reliant on adults and there is scope to offer them more opportunities to take on responsibilities. While most of the older pupils are mature and sensible, they are inadequately prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives because they are underachieving.

Staff turnover has been a significant factor in interrupting the school's improvement but this does not totally account for the school's recent failure to thrive. The headteacher has ensured that relationships and morale are good. Although she is aware that the school needs to improve, there is a general lack of the understanding of how to bring about the necessary changes. There is also some complacency and over-reliance on the headteacher, who has tried to deal with too many issues at once and consequently her efforts have been spread too thinly. As a result, when events occurred that distracted her attention, the whole school was knocked off course. Consequently, efforts to tackle the underlying weaknesses have had too little impact. Senior staff have undertaken monitoring of the school's work but this has not been sufficiently rigorous. Nevertheless, some shortcomings were recognised, and the headteacher took appropriate action in requesting the support of the local authority (LA). Resulting actions have been effective, particularly in ensuring that children make adequate progress in the Foundation Stage. However, there is not sufficient expertise and determination among the staff to raise standards and therefore the school does not have the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements on its own.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning in the Reception class and reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. However, they do not do as well as they could in mathematical development, where standards were higher than usual on entry to the school. With the guidance of the LA, the staff have ensured that the children have a reasonable balance of activities, between those that are led by adults and those they can choose independently. The outside area has been developed with a sound range of activities. There is some good questioning in lessons and children are prepared for their work but too much time is sometimes spent on tasks that do not advance their learning rapidly enough. The room is provided with a range of appropriate areas, for example for writing and role-play, but it lacks excitement and interest.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve leadership and management so that monitoring and evaluation at all levels are rigorous and action to remedy shortcomings is urgent and effective.
- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, and increase rates of progress throughout the school.
- Improve girls' achievement in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, make better progress and achieve challenging targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Since 2004, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has been average in reading, writing and mathematics, demonstrating that progress for some groups of pupils has been satisfactory in English since entry to the school. However, achievement is unsatisfactory in mathematics, and pupils have failed to make up the ground they lost in Reception. In the 2007 and 2008 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments, few pupils reached the higher levels, showing that the more able have made insufficient progress. In Key Stage 2, standards have also been similar to the national average. Test results indicated that the pupils who left in 2006 made slower progress through Key Stage 2 than expected. Those who left in 2007 made inadequate progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. The girls made poor progress in both years. The pupils presently in Year 6 are working at an average standard, indicating satisfactory progress in English and science, but inadequate progress in mathematics. Current progress through the school is inconsistent and inadequate overall. Pupils who need extra help with their learning make satisfactory progress but the more able and the girls do not.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are courteous and get on well together; the older ones take good care of the younger ones when asked. No evidence of bullying was found during this inspection but a minority of parental questionnaires raised it as a concern. Pupils say that there is little aggressive or harassing behaviour and are confident that it would be dealt with rapidly if it occurred. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, although they have insufficient understanding of life in a multicultural society. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and

safe. Their attendance is above average. They have some opportunities to contribute to school life, through taking on responsibilities such as playground 'buddies' and the school council members take their duties seriously. There are satisfactory links with the local community and pupils recycle a range of waste materials. They behave well around the school and in class but many appear reluctant to contribute in lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teachers are developing a range of skills and strategies to engage pupils' interests but this is not having a strong enough impact on raising achievement and standards. Pupils are sometimes told what they are expected to learn during a lesson and on occasions, have opportunities to show what they have achieved. However, this practice is inconsistent. There is effective use of questioning in some lessons, but in too many classes, boys dominate and the girls lose interest. The pace of learning is too slow. Often, tasks are not matched well enough to the purpose of the lesson and pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged enough. Teaching assistants make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the groups and individuals they support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is starting to develop a skills and theme based curriculum in order to make it more meaningful to pupils. All required areas are covered with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. French is taught in Years 5 and 6 and there is a range of popular extracurricular activities. There is a sound personal, social and health education programme and a good emphasis on living safely and healthily. Teaching time is well over that recommended but the school day is not planned efficiently. Therefore, some subjects are squeezed for time and this narrows the pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Pupils say that they feel safe and their views are taken account of. All the required safeguarding measures are in place and risk assessments are carried out. Pupils are well supervised and their behaviour is monitored soundly; however, the methods for recording incidents of unacceptable behaviour are insufficiently thorough.

The school's assessment systems are inconsistent and are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils achieve what they are capable of. Pupils that find learning difficult receive additional support to reach their individual targets. However, the school does not make sufficient strategic use of this assessment information to focus on other groups, for example the girls, to identify or remedy variations in performance. The pupils say that their targets are helpful but they are not individual and therefore not specific enough. In addition, they are not challenging enough for the more able. Marking is sometimes helpful in showing pupils how well they have succeeded and what they need to do to improve, but practice is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

There has been some improvement since the local authority provided support, for example in the way that developments are planned. However, the school's slow progress is a result of systemic weaknesses. While there has been regular monitoring, it has been unfocused and the evaluations are not rigorous enough. The school had not identified the decline in the girls' performance, which had been evident for two years. When this was drawn to the attention of the leadership, too little was done to remedy it, although it was a key area of underperformance. Conversely, too many priorities were identified and, as a result, efforts to deal with them are superficial.

There is a wealth of assessment information but this is disorganised and not used efficiently. Those with subject responsibilities do not have enough understanding of the detailed data showing pupils' performance. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for the school to demonstrate exactly how much progress pupils make, or the standards they are reaching.

The senior management team, and particularly the subject leaders, do not have a realistic view of how well the school is performing and therefore there is little urgency in attempts to bring about improvements. A substantial minority of parents rightly have concerns about aspects of the school's work. Governance is broadly satisfactory; recent improvements to their practice have ensured that governors are examining the school's work more carefully and are challenging it to account for pupils' progress.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	4

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
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?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Morton Trentside Primary School, Gainsborough, DN21 3AH

Thank you for being so helpful and polite to us when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed meeting you very much and looking at some of your work. I thought you might like to know what we found out about your school.

Although there are some good things about Morton Trentside, we feel that the school needs some support to help it get better. Your teachers look after you well and make sure that you are safe. You behave yourselves well and the older ones sometimes look after the younger ones. It was pleasing to hear that you get on well together. However, many of you don't do as well as you could and that's because some of the teaching isn't good enough.

There are four things that need to happen to help you do well and your school to improve. Therefore, we've asked Miss Norbron and your teachers to:

- check how well you're doing and make sure that the school has good plans to make things better
- make sure that you all make better progress, particularly in mathematics
- make sure that the girls do better in Key Stage 2
- make sure that teachers help you to learn faster, especially those of you who find learning easier

You can help by working as hard as you can and continuing to behave well.

My best wishes for the future and to the Year 6 children in their new schools.

Pat Cox

Lead inspector