

Morda Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123484
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340350
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Crosby
Headteacher	John Eglin
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited 11 lessons taught by eight different teachers. He held meetings with pupils, senior leaders, staff and governors and talked on the telephone to a local authority officer. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at data on pupils' progress, pupils' work, school improvement plans, monitoring records, governing body minutes and questionnaires returned from 63 pupils, 12 staff and 80 parents and carers. An additional inspector checked the safeguarding arrangements.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of actions taken to raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics and writing throughout the school
- the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and whether this is leading to improvements in pupils' achievement
- how effectively assessment information is used to plan lessons that match pupils' specific needs
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels and whether leaders and managers demonstrate the ambition and capacity to drive school improvement.

Information about the school

This Church of England primary school is smaller than average. It is located close to the Shropshire market town of Oswestry. Most pupils are of White British heritage although there are very few whose first language is not English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally although there are fewer with a statement of special educational needs. Three teachers are newly appointed to the school since September 2009. The number of pupils on roll is increasing which necessitated a reorganisation of classes from January 2010. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Morda is a satisfactory but rapidly improving school. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 dipped in successive years so that by 2009, it was below average in English, mathematics and science. This decline has now been stemmed. Pupils are now making at least expected progress and some are achieving at a faster rate, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Standards in all subjects are rising. They are now average but attainment in mathematics and writing is not as strong as that found in reading.

Better assessment and tracking of pupils' progress has in turn led to improvements in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils are provided with challenging and appealing tasks in many lessons. Interesting activities, such as their study of the Romans, motivates and engages pupils and contributes to their good enjoyment and progress. One parent enthused, 'The teachers are so imaginative in their teaching methods. Our son says he has had some amazing days.' However, some variation remains. A minority of lessons do not challenge pupils sufficiently because teachers do not expect enough of them. Marking is regular but it does not always give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve. Teachers' expectations of punctuation, spelling and presentation are inconsistent throughout the school. Nevertheless, pupils are now making at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons.

Care, support and guidance are good, and the more vulnerable pupils are looked after particularly well. Many of the other outcomes for pupils are good, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour. Good relationships exist between the school and parents and carers. As one parent said, 'Teachers are always available to discuss any matters and all are approachable.'

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They have been effective in raising attainment and have put in place a good system for regularly checking pupils' progress against their targets. This has been particularly successful in raising standards in mathematics. However, action plans for improvement are not rigorous enough. The role of subject leaders in supporting school improvement is developing. Many are new to their post. Consequently, they have had insufficient time to develop their role in supporting staff to improve their teaching skills and share best practice. Although governors are committed to the school, they rely too much on the headteacher for information and do not find out enough what is happening in school for themselves. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise levels of attainment and further accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school, especially in mathematics and writing, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so that 80% is good and 10% outstanding by December 2010
 - ensuring consistency in assessment and marking so that all pupils know and understand what they need to do next to improve
 - ensuring consistently high expectations of spelling, punctuation and presentation in written work.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring action plans for improvement contain clear and precise targets and indicate clearly when actions will be monitored, by whom and how the resultant findings will be shared
 - ensuring that subject leaders monitor the quality of pupils' learning and findings are translated into actions that will bring about further improvement
 - ensuring that governors find out more about what is happening in school for themselves and hold the school to account for standards and quality.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although attainment in English, mathematics and science dipped to below average last year, standards have now improved and are broadly average. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that learning and progress are satisfactory and improving rapidly. The focus on mental mathematics and calculations is beginning to pay dividends with pupils increasing their confidence in these areas. Pupils' enjoyment of learning has increased markedly. This was evident in a Year 2/3 lesson when pupils thoroughly enjoyed composing music, using instruments such as xylophones, Indian bells and maracas, for their forthcoming role play of a Pakistani wedding celebration. Teacher assessments are more accurate, the tracking of pupils' progress has been sharpened and challenging targets are set for all pupils. Improved teaching and effectively tailored small-group and one-to-one support for pupils at risk of underachieving have also had a positive impact. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose first language is not English, now make at least satisfactory progress relative to their starting points.

Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils with particular social, emotional or behavioural needs benefit from carefully planned programmes that are effective in ensuring their progress and that of others. Around the school, pupils are very courteous and sensitive, reflecting the school's core value of respect. They feel safe and secure and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. They take responsibility in many ways, for example, through the school council, in the playground and in

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classrooms. They have a good understanding of both the local and wider community through links with schools in Liverpool and Oldham and in their developing contact with Quetta in Pakistan. This broad knowledge and their good social skills stand them in good stead for the future, but standards and attendance are not at such high levels.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching continues to improve. While there is evidence of good lessons, their positive features are not sufficiently widespread and embedded throughout the school. The strongest teaching is accelerating progress rapidly. The pace of learning is brisk in the most effective lessons. Teachers make good use of open-ended questions to challenge pupils' thinking and trigger good, well-reasoned responses. This was seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson which helped increase pupils' understanding of how to calculate the percentage of different amounts. All lessons are now well structured and planned around clearly identified learning outcomes. Good support is provided by teaching assistants. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils respond well to the increased opportunities for paired, group and discussion work. Some very

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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skilled explanations reflect good subject knowledge. Despite improvements, there are still occasions when teachers do not expect enough of some pupils. Also, in a minority of lessons the pace is at times too slow, or occasionally too rapid. As a result, a few pupils disengage from their learning which prevents them from achieving as well as they can.

Assessment systems have recently been improved and there is more information available as to how much progress pupils are making. Teachers are increasingly using this information effectively to ensure that pupils are adequately challenged in lessons and in setting targets for improvement over time. The quality of marking is variable. A variety of systems are used better in some subjects than others. In addition, marking does not consistently provide sufficient guidance on what pupils have done well and on what they need to do to improve.

The connected curriculum, which links together different subjects, is interesting and sufficiently broad and balanced. It supports pupils' enjoyment of their learning, such as the current work on Pakistan. Pupils commented upon the 'fun lessons and exciting work.' However, some subjects, such as geography and design and technology, are not covered in sufficient depth. Information and communication technology is used well in several subjects to allow pupils to present their work or research information. The size of the hall restricts opportunities for gymnastics, although the local village hall is used to compensate for this. A wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities support the curriculum well.

Parents and carers appreciate the good level of care and support that their children receive. All staff know each pupil well and are fully involved in providing effective pastoral support, especially for the more vulnerable pupils. Learning difficulties are identified early. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have effective individual education plans. In-school support for individual pupils is well organised and monitored. The high quality work of the learning mentor is greatly valued by pupils and their parents and carers. The school draws well on the expertise of external agencies to devise programmes for those with more complex needs and it keeps in close contact with all parents about how well their children are progressing. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by senior staff, has worked skilfully to secure

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improvements to provision. For example, staff have a better idea of pupils' strengths and what needs to be improved due to improvements in the way information about pupils' progress is collected and monitored. Since September 2009, new teachers appointed to the school have been suitably inducted. Although leaders have identified appropriate areas for development such as improving achievement in mathematics, subsequent action plans are not sufficiently detailed. They do not give clear and precise targets for improvement nor do they describe clearly how and when monitoring activity will be carried out.

The school successfully engages with parents and carers through the newsletters, the website, texts and the school's 'forum'. School systems ensure that equality of opportunity is good. This is why all groups are making similar progress over time, there is no discrimination and every pupil has the same opportunities to join in with school activities and make a contribution. Safeguarding requirements are met and arrangements are regularly reviewed. A number of projects promote community cohesion well. The school reaches beyond the local community by making links with communities in United Kingdom as well as cultivating international contacts in Pakistan.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school, their skills are generally low in language and literacy. They make good progress in Reception and enter Year 1 with broadly average skills in most areas. An emphasis on developing children's personal skills establishes secure foundations for learning so that children happily work independently and together with

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increasing confidence. Strong, positive relationships between home and school enable children to settle quickly and allow parents and carers to become fully involved in their children's learning. Good teaching includes high-quality, teacher-led group work and activities where children explore for themselves. Children thoroughly enjoy everything that is on offer. The 'Forest School' initiative in particular develops children's speaking and listening, investigative and collaborative skills outstandingly well. The children thoroughly enjoy making shelters or hunting for minibeasts in a safe and secure learning environment. Although writing has been a weakness in the past, every opportunity is taken to write for a purpose. For instance, pupils were 'checking in' for their flight to Pakistan or writing postcards about their visit. This is leading to good improvements. Two teachers share responsibility for the class. Staff work together well as a team, know the children well and ensure that their safety and well-being are paramount. Adults ensure the room is attractive and encourage children to take an interest in their surroundings. Good leadership ensures that children's progress is accurately assessed so that good development takes place. Assessment folders and the 'daybook' give valuable insights into how well children are making progress. This information is used effectively to match activities to every child's needs. Though they use it to best effect, staff know that the outdoor learning environment requires development. The area lacks a permanent shelter and large equipment is not accessible to children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are highly positive in their views of, and support for, the school. One parent wrote, this is 'a well run village school which all my children have enjoyed.' They feel that there is a caring, friendly and welcoming ethos and that the school has been very responsive to families and to pupils' learning needs. A few parents and carers expressed concern that pupils in Year 2 have had too many teachers this year. School leaders acknowledge and understand their worries. Increasing numbers of pupils joining the school during the autumn term necessitated the reorganisation of classes in January 2010 as some classrooms are too small to accommodate more pupils. More importantly, leaders feel that smaller class sizes will educationally benefit pupils in the longer term because they will receive more adult attention and support. The inspector agrees with this view. Also, a few parents and carers felt there are insufficient opportunities for physical education. The inspection findings indicate that the school ensures that pupils

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get their full entitlement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Morda Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The delete as appropriate: The inspector received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	53	36	45	0	0	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	50	63	26	33	1	1	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	34	47	59	1	1	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	36	47	59	1	1	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	39	49	35	44	3	4	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	34	47	59	4	5	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	45	36	45	4	5	4	5
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	41	37	46	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	40	46	58	0	0	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	29	47	59	3	4	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	40	37	46	6	8	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	31	39	37	46	6	8	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	50	35	44	1	1	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morda Church of England Primary School, Oswestry, SY10 9NR

Thank you very much for your kind welcome and the help you gave me in finding out more about your school. I think your school offers a satisfactory standard of education, but it is improving very quickly. There are a number of good things in your school. These are some of the main findings.

The standards in your work are rising and you are all now making better progress. Some of you are moving on more quickly in your learning.

You feel safe in school, behave well and have a good awareness of healthy living.

You take on responsibilities in school well and are active in the life of the local area.

You enjoy the connected curriculum and the activities on offer during and after school. I hope the Pakistani wedding celebration event goes well!

Your headteacher is doing a good job to help the school to improve and has built close partnerships with your parents and carers.

In order to ensure the school continues to improve, I have asked the school to do the following things.

Increase the amount of good teaching so that you all make good progress, especially in mathematics and writing. I also want the teachers to help you to become better at spelling and punctuation. You can help by taking more care with your writing and having greater pride in your presentation.

Make sure that teachers' marking gives you clear information about what you need to do next to improve. I also want those teachers who lead on different subjects to check on your learning to see if you are all making good progress.

Finally, school leaders need to make sure the plans for developing the school are clear and help them to show how things have improved. I also want governors to find out more what is happening in school by visiting classes and talking to you.

It was a pleasure to meet you all. I hope you continue to enjoy coming to school and trying your very best in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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