

William Morris Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102661
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	385413
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2012
Lead inspector	Nasim Butt

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katy Willison
Headteacher	Nathalie Bull
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 November 2010
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3–11
1–2 March 2012
385413

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Introduction

Inspection team

Nasim Butt

Additional inspector

Lyn Riley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by nine teachers. This includes whole and part lessons and several joint observations with senior leaders. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of the school's self-evaluation documentation, including a wide range of action plans and progress tracking data. Because the inspection is deemed a section 5 inspection, having started out as a monitoring inspection, parental questionnaires were not distributed, nor were any responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) taken account of in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

The school is slightly above average in size compared to most primary schools. Although the school is one-form entry and includes nursery provision, the number on roll has increased in recent months resulting in the creation of a second Reception class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic heritages is high and many speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, these being mainly behavioural and emotional difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

An executive headteacher who leads another local school was appointed in April 2011. The two schools came together as a hard federation under one governing body in September 2011. The school has had two monitoring inspections since it went into special measures in November 2010.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- This is a good school. Inspirational leadership has created a culture of continuous improvement, as a result of which pupils’ attainment has risen sharply, and progress has accelerated in all year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. A very calm and purposeful atmosphere prevails throughout the school resulting in the creation of an aspirational learning community where pupils and adults genuinely want to do their best. This is not an outstanding school because teaching and pupils’ achievement are good rather than outstanding.
- The legacy of low attainment has been reversed and current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics indicating good achievement in relation to their starting points. Pupils’ attainment in mathematics has risen more sharply than their attainment in reading and writing, although in all cases the rise has been considerably faster than the national rate. The school recognises the importance of embedding fully the good initiatives in place to promote pupils’ writing skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils’ learning and progress are good because of effective teaching underpinned by good planning which consistently focuses on the steps pupils need to take to achieve successful learning in the lesson. Occasionally, the pace of the lesson slows down and more-able pupils do not always make the maximum progress.
- Pupils take great pride in their work and show admirable attitudes to learning. The very safe and uplifting environment created by school leaders is well cared for and respected by pupils.

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

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- The executive headteacher has successfully galvanised the school community and, supported by a very competent and energetic senior leadership team, achieved remarkable outcomes in a relatively brief span of time. Good progress against the key issues for development was made on the two previous monitoring inspections. School leaders have maintained a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement showing demonstrable impact on academic outcomes. The leadership and management of teachers' performance are very effective.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2012, sustain the sharp rise in standards in English and close the remaining gaps between the school and national performance by fully embedding initiatives to ensure that all pupils have high quality opportunities to develop their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum.
- Build upon the increase in good or better teaching by ensuring that:
 - all more-able pupils are sufficiently challenged and reach their full potential as shown by the rise in the proportion of higher levels achieved at the end of each key stage
 - all teachers maintain a swift pace and progress on to the main teaching activity at an earlier stage in the lesson.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

After a legacy of significant underperformance, the trajectory for pupils' attainment has been on a sharply upward trend for the past 15 months. Children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with standards that, while variable, are below those expected for their age. They make good progress across all areas of learning so that standards are average by the end of Reception. Previously weaker progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 has been eradicated. In 2011, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly average in mathematics and low in English. Rapid progress continues to be made across Key Stage 2 so that pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to achieve nationally expected standards in both English and mathematics this year. For pupils in Year 6, standards in reading are broadly average.

All pupils, regardless of background, do similarly well. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as their peers. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, partly because meticulous attention is given to the planning for their learning needs. For example, in many lessons the skilful probing and prompting by teaching assistants and teachers, coupled with the use of tailored resources, allowed these pupils to engage just as

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effectively in both self- and peer-assessment. As a result of such effective classroom strategies implemented consistently, the school is rapidly closing the gap in attainment between these key groups and all pupils nationally.

Pupils make good progress in lessons because they concentrate well and work hard. In a Year 6 English lesson for example, pupils watched and listened attentively as their teacher modelled how to evaluate the quality of a letter in relation to clear assessment criteria. They then worked hard to apply their knowledge of Level 5 punctuation when assessing a piece of letter writing. Pupils' good collaborative skills often make a strong contribution to their progress. This starts from an early age, exemplified when Year 1 pupils worked together in pairs assessing each other's writing against criteria, for example finger spaces, adjectives and basic punctuation. Year 2 pupils worked equally well together when they thought through the steps involved in working out one-step and two-step number problems.

Developing pupils' reading, writing and number skills from an early age is a high priority in the school. Pupils' confidence and competence in reading is enhanced by the sharper focus on phonics (linking letters with the sounds that letters make) and guided reading. As a result, pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve average standards in reading. The school recognises that there is the capacity for more-able pupils in particular to make even stronger progress and reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

Quality of teaching

Children are given a stimulating start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because good, well-organised teaching creates learning opportunities that are personalised for the needs of every child. Adults are adept in using every opportunity to develop children's language and communication skills as well as their social and emotional skills, and this is reflected in children's improved attainment in these areas.

Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, and build well upon their positive attitudes to learning and consistently good behaviour in lessons. This contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the overall good quality of teaching. The school's own surveys of parental and carer views indicate that the overwhelming majority agree that teaching is good.

Teachers have generally high expectations of their pupils' achievement. Teachers' planning is of a consistently good quality throughout the school, making effective use of assessment information to build on pupils' previous learning. There is admirable consistency in the way teachers structure their lessons using clear learning objectives supported by a set of success criteria which pupils can use to assess their own progress. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows down because lesson introductions are over-lengthy and teachers talk too long before they begin to deepen pupils' understanding through the main teaching activity. Individual learning targets for literacy and numeracy are clearly laid out in pupils' books, and constant reference is made to the levels at which pupils are working. Marking of pupils' work is generally

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thorough and helpful, providing a good balance of praise and guidance for improvement. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the effective deployment of well-trained teaching assistants, in particular for those pupils who are less able and for those who have a range of special educational needs.

Teachers are generally effective in their questioning and make good use of talk partners to encourage learning conversations between pupils. This was evident in all lessons seen, for example when Year 4 pupils discussed the impact of using similes and 'wow' words on the quality of their descriptive writing. Classes are very well managed, and a suitable level of challenge is present for most, but not all, groups of pupils, and particularly for the more able. As a result, some pupils do not always make the maximum progress. Pupils are rapidly acquiring the skills to evaluate their own and each other's work because teachers are modelling this effectively and constantly sharing with pupils what they need to do to make good progress in the lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All pupils, regardless of their background, ability, gender or disability, get on very well and play and work happily together. They show caring attitudes to each other, seen in how kindly they treat any pupils who have difficulties. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons. This coupled with their good conduct makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement, as well as to the harmonious ethos of the community. Parents and carers who have responded to the school's own surveys say that behaviour for learning has improved considerably, and inspection evidence supports this.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance. They take great pride in their school and say they feel very safe. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare. Work on tackling different types of bullying has given them a secure understanding of what effect it might have and they are keen to combat this. Pupils are very sure that any issues that do arise are dealt with quickly by staff, and are confident in approaching adults if they have problems at work or play. Pupils have a very secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. The curriculum is very effective in teaching pupils about the importance of safety.

Leadership and management

The school's leaders, including the governing body, have high aspirations for the school and a very clear sense of purpose in promoting improvement. Under the remarkable leadership of the executive headteacher, these aspirations have been given life and a clear sense of direction. As a result, pupils' attainment in all year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, continues to rise and the remaining gaps between national averages are closing fast. The admirable drive to improve the quality of teaching has the desired impact. Very effective partnership work with staff from the local primary school with which William Morris is federated

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has resulted in improving teachers' pedagogical skills. Much of the previously satisfactory teaching is now good as a result of this effective and ongoing professional development coupled with the relentless follow-up with teachers of their individual performance targets. Leaders recognise what needs to be done to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better.

The school's performance is effectively monitored and evaluated which ensures improvement planning is clearly targeted in the right areas. Consequently, pupils' progress has accelerated and achievement has improved, particularly in mathematics and reading. A good, broad and well-balanced curriculum is delivering learning which pupils appreciate and enjoy. It successfully promotes literacy and numeracy skills as well as personal, learning and thinking skills. Leaders promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination effectively as reflected in the vibrant learning environment they have created for all pupils to thrive. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective, for example through the daily whole-school inspirational assemblies which bring the school's core values to life. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and routinely reviewed. The governing body has a good understanding of school performance data and uses this knowledge well to effectively support and challenge school leadership. Remarkable improvements have been made in the past 15 months across all key areas of the school's work indicating good capacity to make further gains.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



5 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Morris Primary School, Mitcham CR4 1PJ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. Yours is a good school which has made rapid improvements over the last 15 months. By the end of Year 6, your attainment in English and mathematics is now average and you make good progress over time. We congratulate you on your continued improvement especially in your reading and mathematics, and are pleased that you have such a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.

You are all very well looked after and cared for, and the school keeps you very safe. Your good behaviour also helps you to keep safe, and we were pleased to see that because you enjoy school so much, your attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Your learning and progress have improved greatly, because you have good teachers and leaders, especially your executive headteacher who sets such an example for you all.

Even though the school continues to improve, there is always more to do. We have said that your rise in standards in English must be sustained by giving you every opportunity to develop your writing skills across the curriculum. We have also recommended that your teachers do their best to help some of you to reach even higher levels than you do now in English and mathematics. You can help by continuing to work hard and monitoring your own progress against your targets.

We offer our good wishes to you all for the future, and hope that you continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt
Lead inspector

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