

Morgans Primary School & Nursery

Morgans Road, Hertford, SG13 8DR

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved considerably since its last inspection. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Working closely with staff and her strong team of subject leaders, she has improved teaching and raised the achievement of all pupils.
- Governors know the school exceptionally well. They have a very clear picture of how it can improve and have sharpened the challenge and support they provide for it. They are fully committed to its continual improvement and, with leaders, check the quality of teaching rigorously.
- The pupils' increasingly good achievement shows how far teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is consistently at least good with some that is outstanding.
- Children make good and improving progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in all areas of their learning. They settle quickly into school routines and rapidly become confident learners.
- Teachers have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve. Their strong subject knowledge enables them to inspire pupils so they learn well.
- Pupils' attendance is rising rapidly and they are very keen to learn and do their best. They are proud of their school and the part they play in its improvement. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they say they feel very safe in school.
- The school has a strong commitment to sport. Pupils regularly participate in competitions both within school and against other schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers provide enough challenge for the most-able pupils. This can lead to their progress slowing at times.
- Marking has improved but teachers do not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons. In each of these lessons, inspectors examined the work in pupils' books. Four lessons were seen together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. A telephone conversation was undertaken with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 71 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 39 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to the reading of a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Christine Newell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average and falling.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school hosts a pre-school and before and after school clubs. These are all privately run and so inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make consistently rapid progress by making sure that:
 - teachers set work that consistently challenges the most-able pupils
 - in their marking and other feedback in mathematics, teachers give pupils clearer guidance on how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills below those typical for their age. They make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception and improve rapidly as they move through the school. Attainment is now well above average and rising in all subjects. This represents a considerable improvement over the 2013 Year 6 test results.
- The school has been particularly successful in improving writing, which, until recently, had been lagging behind reading and mathematics. Evidence of the significant improvement in the standard of writing can be seen in the increasing numbers of pupils writing imaginatively and using a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils learn to write in a neat and joined style from Reception. Opportunities are plentiful for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in most subjects, and teachers ensure that pupils take as much care when writing in these subjects as they do when writing in English.
- Pupils' early reading skills develop rapidly, starting in the Nursery. Results in the national screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make) at the end of Year 1 were above average in 2013 and pupils are currently on track to exceed these levels. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and selecting books from the library.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good and improving progress because they are well-supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The school is careful to identify the different needs of, for example, pupils with a specific learning difficulty and those who have made slower than expected progress, and to support both groups equally well.
- The school has used the pupil premium well by providing additional staff to work with eligible pupils and also to purchase additional resources. The progress of eligible pupils has increased rapidly and the gap between their attainment and others is closing. In 2013, the gap between these pupils' attainment and the others was almost two years in mathematics, four terms in reading and almost one year in writing in 2013. However, attainment for eligible pupils currently in the school is in line with the 2013 national average for all pupils in all three subjects.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress by the time they leave, as seen by the numbers of Year 6 pupils working above or well above the levels expected for their age. However, their rate of progress is not consistently strong in all classes.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good teaching they consistently receive. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Lessons are well-planned and include work that quickly captures pupils' interest and ensures they are attentive and work hard.
- Pupils learn quickly because teachers use resources and technology very effectively to stimulate their imagination, to share examples of good work and help them to understand new ideas.
- Teachers ensure that the work set for pupils who find learning difficult is neither too easy nor too demanding. Should this happen, they quickly adapt their teaching and carefully brief support staff on what individual pupils then need to concentrate on; consequently, most of these pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make swift progress.

- Most teachers make sure all other groups of pupils are fully engaged by work that challenges them. However, this is not consistently the case for the most-able, who are occasionally asked to repeat work they already securely understand.
- In the Nursery and Reception, teachers use their assessments of children's progress to plan carefully the next steps in their learning. This includes sessions led by teachers and support staff as well as those where they choose work for themselves, either inside the classroom or outdoors.
- Pupils understand how they can improve their work because teachers and other adults prompt them to think more deeply by questioning them closely and helping them assess their own work accurately.
- Teachers offer clear oral and written feedback on what pupils have done well and what they now need to do next. Pupils readily acknowledge how helpful they find teachers' clear and informative marking comments, particularly in writing. This is less consistently the case in mathematics. However, marking in this subject has rightly been identified by the headteacher and subject leader as a priority for action.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very well-mannered and treat adults and each other with great respect and consideration. They are very clear about what is expected of them because adults apply the school's agreed systems for rewards and sanctions consistently and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils are highly motivated and come to school wanting to learn. Key learning skills such as listening carefully and collaborating sensibly start in the Nursery and are built on very effectively across the school. This results in lessons moving forward unhindered by any distractions and teachers rarely having to wait for pupils to give them their full attention.
- Attendance is above average and rising rapidly because of the school's focus on reducing the incidence of persistent absence by working closely with families concerned. Pupils say they love their school and enjoy learning because they say they find lessons so interesting. They speak with confidence and are very proud of their contribution to the school, such as through their work in the school council or as house captains.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are thorough, rigorously implemented and regularly checked through the governors' committee. Pupils develop a very clear understanding of how to identify and deal with risk, whether this should be online or in their everyday lives. They are quite clear what constitutes different types of bullying and know that it is unacceptable. They and their parents say incidents are very rare and dealt with swiftly. This is confirmed by school records.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and governors have restructured the school's leadership so that everyone takes responsibility for raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. The headteacher leads by example and gives the school a clear direction. She sets staff and pupils challenging targets and makes sure they have the support and guidance needed for them to be achieved. Subject and year group leaders have been trained well and carry out their responsibilities enthusiastically. The school's incisive self-evaluation is based on rigorous monitoring and the

analysis of data. This gives a very clear picture to everyone of where action is needed.

- School leaders have kept all staff fully focused on improving teaching and learning since the last inspection. They use a wide range of mechanisms to check on each teacher's performance so that individual support and training can be put in place, including working alongside some of the school's outstanding teachers and learning from their excellent practice. The evaluation of a teacher's performance is tightly linked to their pupils' progress and pay enhancement is only awarded if teachers meet their targets.
- The headteacher is strongly committed to working in partnership with others, including with local schools and taking a leading role in the local sports partnership. The local authority has worked very closely alongside the school in its process of improvement since the last inspection. This has included helping the leadership team to clarify where improvement in teaching was needed and then supporting action to enable this to happen.
- The headteacher holds teachers to account for the progress of all pupils in their classes. This includes those supported through the pupil premium or with special needs. Improved monitoring of provision for these pupils in lessons and training for staff in how to support specific learning difficulties are factors in the rising achievement of these groups seen in recent years. The impact of additional programmes is evaluated carefully, so they can be adapted if they are not having the desired effect.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and kept regularly under review to take account of national changes. There is a strong focus on developing basic skills, with writing promoted well across subjects and with pupils applying their number skills regularly to solving problems. Links are made between subjects where sensible and pupils say they love the start to a new topic each term. Pupils have extensive opportunities to participate in a wide variety of cultural and sporting activities. They develop a strong sense of their place in the local community and understand the part they can play in making communities safe and pleasant places in which to live. Pupils learn to respect the values of others by studying the major world religions and supporting a school in Kenya.
- New sports funding is enhancing the school's already extensive provision. The school hires sports coaches to extend pupil participation in sports activities and strengthen teachers' confidence and expertise. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the sports they play in mixed gender teams and those they organise themselves through the house system.
- The views of parents are regularly sought and used to change aspects of the school's work as necessary, for example in the setting of homework. Parents particularly value and find useful the guidance they have been given about how to support their children's reading and writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and both challenges and supports the school in its search for improvement. Governors have high levels of expertise and a very clear understanding of the school based on their regular monitoring visits. This enables them to ask searching questions particularly where assessment data is concerned. They undertake a wide range of training so they can keep on top of changes locally and nationally. Governors are clear that improving teaching is the key to future success and have made sure the school only employs the most effective teachers. They are very aware of the quality of teaching and the action the headteacher is taking to improve it. They have supported the headteacher in bringing greater rigour and clarity to the role of subject leaders since the last inspection. Governors carefully monitor school finances and ensure that pay progression is closely linked

to classroom performance. They are fully aware how additional funds such as the pupil premium are allocated making sure money is used for the maximum benefit of the pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117363
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442023

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Croston
Headteacher	Alison Pepper
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
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