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Mrs Alis Rocca  
Morgans Primary School & Nursery  
Morgans Road  
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Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mrs Rocca

### **Short inspection of Morgans Primary School & Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in April 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead by example and have built up a strong leadership team. This is a learning community where staff are encouraged to undertake research projects in areas of interest. They put into practice any new learning that emerges from their research. Staff are reflective about the way in which they teach. They are trusted to take risks and try out new methods to suit the needs of the pupils they teach. Continued professional development has a high profile in the school, including mentoring and coaching for those new to their roles.

At the last inspection, your predecessor was asked to increase the level of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics and to provide them with clearer guidance on how to improve their work. There is increased challenge in lessons, particularly in mathematics. Here, pupils choose their level of challenge through the 'chilli challenge' where the level of difficulty of different tasks is signalled by the number of chillies. There is greater focus on tasks that extend thinking, where pupils are increasingly challenged to explain their reasoning. In 2017, at the end of Year 6, the most able pupils performed better than the most able pupils nationally, not only in mathematics but also in reading and writing.

Governance is highly effective. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities, linked to the strengths that they bring to the governing body. Governors take an active part in school life. They are very proactive in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met, including safeguarding, with regular spot checks. They ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively and check on the impact of additional support. Governors provide both support and challenge to leaders, not only through their monitoring visits to the school but also through governing body

meetings.

Parents and carers are generally very positive about the school. One parent, described how her child had 'developed into a person with resilience, a "can do" attitude, a determination and a keenness to be the best she can be.' Parents value their involvement in the parent forum meetings. They feel that these meetings give them a voice, so that not only are their views taken into account but the meetings also provide a platform for them to be involved in new school initiatives.

Pupils value the seven learning powers which encourage them to have a positive attitude to learning within the classroom by developing their confidence. They describe how 'We get merit points if we show learning powers', and they value being awarded the 'learning champ' in lessons. They talk confidently about challenging themselves within lessons based on being in the 'safety, stretchy or danger zones'. Pupils are very courteous and polite. They look out for each other and enjoy extra responsibilities, such as sports captains, house captains or through helping at lunchtimes by organising games.

Support from the local authority through the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner programme has provided challenge to leaders and a useful external view of the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

This is a caring school, where the well-being of pupils matters and where there is an ethos within which pupils feel 'safe, respected and ready to learn'. Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and its many forms. They say that incidents of potential bullying are rare. They are confident that adults will always investigate through the 'roots and fruits' process to find out why it is happening as well as resolving any issues.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There are clear systems in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff, including checks on their appointment to the school. Through induction, all staff are made aware of the school's policies and procedures to report any concerns that they may have regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Records are well kept so that leaders have an overview of any child protection or behaviour concerns. This enables them to take appropriate and prompt action.

Training is thorough and revisited so that the culture of safeguarding has a high priority. This is promoted through visual prompts, 'be safe, ready and respect', and the expectation that it is everybody's responsibility to look after pupils within the school.

The school has been active in adding safety glass, new fire doors and an updated alarm system following the recent local authority health and safety audit. Regular site walks are completed so that any concerns can be quickly addressed.

## Inspection findings

- I explored a number of key lines of enquiry during the inspection. These were based on issues raised through my analysis of the school's recent assessment information and the school website. My first key line of enquiry focused on how pupils were being supported in developing their writing skills. This is because attainment for middle-attaining and disadvantaged pupils was below national averages and they made less progress than other pupils within the school.
- Teachers are planning links between reading and writing so that pupils use a range of texts to identify features that they might use in their own writing, particularly in key stage 2. There are many examples of exciting writing opportunities linked to topic themes. For example, Year 3 pupils had been learning about Pompeii and were writing poems about a volcano erupting. Year 6 pupils were finding evidence that the spell is beginning to break and predicting what will happen next after reading extracts from the book 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Teachers aim to engage boys in writing. For example, Year 4 pupils were using iPads to create an animation linked to the Vikings and Saxons. This provided them with a sequenced plan to write their own stories.
- The development of checklists for writing, particularly in key stage 2, support and encourage pupils to check their own and others' work. As a result, most-able pupils make rapid progress and produce high-quality writing. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of checklists. Pupils, particularly in key stage 1, are not always clear about what they need to include in their writing to achieve their learning goals in lessons. For example, pupils are not consistently using punctuation correctly. You have identified that pupils need to build up their skills through greater opportunities for extended writing in English and across the broader curriculum.
- Leaders have been focused on increasing the impact of teachers' ongoing assessment, support and feedback to pupils during lessons as they work. The feedback and support that teachers provide is supporting pupils in editing and improving their work. You agreed that, sometimes, pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are heavily supported in lessons and there are insufficient opportunities for them to show what they can do independently.
- I also wanted to find out how the school is addressing pupils' barriers to learning and how effective the different approaches are, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, in improving pupil outcomes.
- The school has introduced tracking systems to enable leaders and teachers to track pupils' progress. Leaders meet with teachers half-termly through pupil progress meetings to discuss the progress of key groups of pupils who may be underachieving. Any barriers to learning are identified so that appropriate interventions can be put in place to match the needs of pupils. Leaders review the interventions regularly to ensure that they are having the greatest impact.
- A significant number of disadvantaged pupils also have more complex learning needs. They are well supported in developing socially and emotionally as well as academically. A range of therapy and nurture groups are available for these

pupils to access to boost their confidence and self-esteem. In turn, this is supporting them to access their learning within the classroom. Parents support each other through a parent support network and many speak highly of the inclusion team.

- The school's assessment information shows that, currently, although disadvantaged pupils are not all meeting the expected standards of attainment, they are making good progress from their starting points.
- My final key line of enquiry was to evaluate the impact of subject leaders in school improvement across the broader curriculum, including developing cross-curricular skills. Subject leaders demonstrate a good understanding of their role in school improvement and their impact. This is evidenced through the creation of portfolios to illustrate what they find through monitoring activities. They are developing an exciting curriculum and an assessment system based on identifying the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught within their subject areas. There is a clear progression of skills being taught across the school.
- Subjects are often linked together. For example, the leaders for the arts combine opportunities to include art, music, drama and dance. Subject leaders work closely together and support other teachers in developing their confidence in teaching across the broader curriculum. For example, the science leader has developed a 'working scientifically' wheel. This provides a focus for both teaching and learning so that pupils develop the skills they need to approach investigations in science. This approach is now being adopted in other subjects.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the teaching of writing skills by:
  - providing increased opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their key writing skills, both within literacy lessons and through the broader curriculum
  - making it clear to pupils what they need to include in their writing in order to achieve the learning objective
  - making sure that all groups of pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have the opportunity to work increasingly independently in lessons.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pauline MacMillan  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

We discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment. During the inspection, I held meetings with you, members of the leadership team, six subject leaders, five governors, administrative staff and the inclusion team. In addition, I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Together, we undertook joint observations of teaching and learning in all classes, including the early years provision. I looked at a sample of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities in lessons. I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning, and met with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, including the management of health and safety, and the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. Furthermore, I considered the views of parents through 131 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, 'Parent View', and 68 free-text messages. I also took into account 7 responses from staff and 23 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires.