

# Morden Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 102640           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Merton           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308074           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 28–29 April 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Selwyn Ward      |

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

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|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                          |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                            |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                  |
| School                                    | 251                              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body               |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr M Treherne                    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs W Veazey                     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 22 March 2004                    |
| <b>School address</b>                     | London Road<br>Morden<br>SM4 5PX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 020 8648 4168                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 020 8640 8903                    |

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| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 28–29 April 2008 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pupils join this average size school from a diverse cosmopolitan mix of backgrounds. The number of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average and their needs are varied. An above average number have statements of special educational need, including for autism and severe learning difficulties. There is extended schools provision which includes a breakfast club. After-school provision is available to pupils at another location, to which the school organises a 'walking bus'.

## Key for inspection grades

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  |
| Grade 2 | Good         |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   |

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Morden Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is an improving school and there are a number of features that are good, including the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The headteacher and leadership team know the school very well. Their accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses has enabled them to make changes that are improving the quality of provision and raising standards. This also shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

School leaders have had particular success in creating a harmonious climate where pupils from different backgrounds get on very well with each other, behave well and are keen to learn. They greatly enjoy school, and several parents told inspectors how sad their Year 6 children will be to leave Morden Primary at the end of the year. Because they are looked after well, pupils feel safe. They have a very clear appreciation of the need for a healthy lifestyle, and it is the children themselves who have sought to set some tough dietary rules, including a Monday ban on chocolate that dismayed some of the chocoholic inspectors.

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception Years and achieve well, but their progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. In the 2007 assessments, standards in Year 2 were below average; a fall on previous years. Underachievement for this group last year was due to the disruptive effect of several mid-year staff changes. Staffing is now more settled, and current standards in Year 2 are average. Based on careful tracking of their progress, pupils in the current Year 3 who did not achieve their full potential last year are being helped to catch up on lost ground. Standards in the Year 6 national tests in 2007 were average, which represents satisfactory achievement.

The curriculum is good. The way in which subjects are linked together helps make learning interesting and fun for the pupils and keeps them well motivated. Pupils are increasingly developing, for example, their literacy skills by applying them to writing in subjects such as geography. They make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), as when Year 3 pupils made travelogues about the local area. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. School leaders' monitoring has helped to increase the proportion of good teaching, although it often focuses on identifying the characteristics of 'good teaching' rather than on the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Teachers involve their pupils well and work is generally well matched to pupils' capabilities. Teaching assistants often contribute greatly to supporting those pupils who need extra help because of learning or language difficulties. However, they are not always used to best effect in the introductory parts of lessons. The school has identified that the teachers do not always allow enough time in lessons for pupils to complete their work.

Among the initiatives introduced this year, pupils' individual targets are making a significant contribution to their progress because pupils know what they need to focus on in order to improve their work. Marking, however, does not always capitalise on this because much does not give pupils clear enough guidance on the next steps in their learning. For pupils with learning difficulties, there has been a revision of target-setting and provision. The targets in their individual education plans, and in the planning for pupils at an early stage of learning English are now more specific than in the past. However, some are still not as clear as they could be and often they are not worded in language that the pupils themselves can understand.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Parents are especially pleased with how well their children settle in to school life when they start in the Nursery. One, typically, described how, 'The school has done wonders for my daughter'. Staff carefully track children's progress and the good mix of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, both in the classrooms and in the shared outside area, results in children attaining broadly average standards by the end of the Reception Year. This represents good achievement in relation to the children's generally below average starting points. Their personal and social development is particularly strong as children grow in confidence during their time in the Foundation Stage. Children's early writing skills, however, are not as well developed as their numeracy.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide clear, specific targets for all pupils with additional learning needs, expressed in language that the pupils understand.
- Improve achievement by ensuring that all marking gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Improve teaching by focusing school leaders' monitoring of lessons on the impact on pupils' learning and progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The school has been successful in tackling the drop in standards seen in 2006 in the Year 6 national tests and in the 2007 Year 2 assessments. Those pupils who did not do as well as they should last year in Year 2 are catching up in Year 3. Standards are broadly average, representing satisfactory progress for pupils of all abilities, including those with additional learning needs because of their language or learning difficulties. The overambitious targets set by the school for the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard in 2007 were not met, but pupils are on track to meet the more modest but still challenging targets for the current year. The progress that pupils make in their key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils behave well, and greatly enjoy school and taking part in all the activities on offer to them. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and form warm relationships with adults who, they say, '...always help you if you are in trouble and can't do something'. Pupils take their responsibilities on the school council seriously and are keen to talk about the improvements they are helping to make to the school grounds. They are proud of Morden's Healthy Schools status and know what to do to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are confident they can report any concerns either in person or through the 'worry boxes' provided in their classrooms. They are adamant that there is little bullying, and that swift action would be taken to resolve any incidents.

Attendance has improved and is now broadly average as a result of the school's efforts to encourage pupils and their parents to understand the importance of regular attendance. Pupils' contribution to the wider community is good, as seen in their involvement in charity fundraising, where the nominated charities are selected by the pupils themselves.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Relationships are good and pupils work hard to please their teachers because they like and get on well with them. Planning has improved and lessons have a clear focus, usually sharing with pupils at the outset what it is they are expected to learn. Teachers mostly use resources, demonstrations and discussions effectively to help pupils learn in different ways. Lessons are made interesting, often through the use of ICT. Pupils are being given more opportunities to share their ideas and widen their understanding through discussion. The reorganisation of Year 6 into ability groups for teaching in English and mathematics is a positive move which is having a notable impact on pupils' progress because work and methods are better matched to their needs. Teaching assistants give good support during group work to pupils with learning difficulties and, where needed, to pupils whose first language is not English. However, sometimes opportunities are missed to support these pupils during whole-class sessions. Some teachers mark pupils' work well, giving them a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve and to achieve their targets. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is enlivened by activities that make learning interesting and exciting. Leaders are correctly focused on improving basic skills to better prepare pupils for their future lives. They are providing ever more opportunities to practise and develop these skills through subjects other than English and mathematics. Curriculum planning has improved and takes better account of the needs of pupils of differing abilities. New sessions where teachers guide pupils' reading are beginning to have an impact, although sometimes pupils are given tasks to do in these sessions that are not directly related to reading.

Staff have succeeded in creating a learning environment that is attractive and stimulating, including the development of an 'outdoor classroom'. Special themed weeks and visits help to make learning fun and provide good opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons and extend their knowledge and understanding. There is a very good range of clubs and enrichment activities outside lessons. These are very popular and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff know pupils well and provide good role models to help them feel secure and enjoy learning. Parents express confidence in the school. One described Morden as '...a warm and safe environment for children to learn in'. Another said that her children are '...always happy to come to school and are enthusiastic about their learning'. Arrangements for vetting staff are

secure. Careful attention is paid to health and safety matters within the school environment and on educational visits.

Academic support is satisfactory but improving. Targets have been introduced for each pupil in English and mathematics and pupils are mostly aware of what level they are working at and what they need to do next. This is still a relatively recent development, however, and pupils are not always helped to meet these targets through careful marking of work. The targets set for pupils with language or learning difficulties have improved but are not always specific enough, nor written in parent- and pupil-friendly language, to enable these pupils to make better than average progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's clear direction for improvement is due to the good leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors, parents and staff at all levels are very supportive and share a common vision. Former weaknesses in assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress have been tackled well and all staff are taking greater responsibility for the analysis and use of data.

Frequent monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and progress has helped to improve the quality of provision and has laid the foundations for improved achievement. Realistic but still challenging targets have been set for standards in the current year and leaders are more aware of how to bring about improvement and, as a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, opportunities for all pupils to make good progress are not consistent. This is because feedback from the monitoring of lessons, although providing useful pointers to improve teaching techniques, does not always focus clearly enough on the effect of the lessons on pupils' learning and 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 |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| 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?                                  | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| 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?   | No  |
| Does this school require a notice to improve?  | No  |

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morden Primary School, Morden, SM4 5PX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education, and we were pleased to see how things have been improving and that there are a number of features that are good.

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes but you haven't all made such good progress as you have got older. Again, we were pleased to see that this is getting better. The split class teaching this year in Year 6, for example, is working well. Those of you who need extra help often get good support. The targets you are given have certainly improved, but they are not always clear enough or written in a way that you and your parents can easily understand. This is one of the things we have asked the school to look at. We have also asked that marking for all of you gives you clearer guidance on how you can move your work on. You can help too, by asking your teachers how you can make your work even better.

You obviously enjoy school and we were delighted to see how well behaved you are and how very well you all get on with each other. What a friendly place Morden Primary is! We are also pleased to see that your attendance has improved and that you are attentive in lessons. Teachers are certainly succeeding in making lessons interesting and fun for you, particularly in the way they link different subjects together. We were also pleased to see that so many of you join in the many clubs on offer.

There have been many improvements over the past year or so, and these have been brought in by your headteacher and staff team following their careful checking of how well you are doing. We have asked school leaders to make sure, however, that when they visit lessons they look especially closely at how teachers are helping all of you to learn and make progress.

Best wishes,

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector