

Morley Place Academy

Old Road, Conisbrough, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN12 3LZ

Inspection dates

12 to 13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, weaknesses in teaching have resulted in pupils making poor progress relative to their starting points. Although leaders have recently taken more effective action to improve the quality of teaching, pupils are not making sufficient progress to address their past underperformance.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling has not been good enough over time. This has meant too many pupils were not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The support provided for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not as effective as it could be. Leaders have not closely monitored the impact of spending on these pupils' outcomes.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, they do not always provide the right level of challenge and support for different groups of pupils. This inhibits their progress.
- Although most pupils behave well, a small minority do not meet the high standards set by the school. This leads to fixed-term and repeat exclusions being above the national average.
- Despite some successful strategies to improve attendance, too many pupils are still frequently absent from school.
- Although pupils experience a broad range of other curriculum subjects beyond English and mathematics, the curriculum is not designed well enough to deepen pupils' knowledge well in these other areas.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have recently made many improvements to teaching and pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- The school uses a wealth of effective strategies to enhance pupils' personal development and welfare. This aspect of the school's work is good.
- Leaders are effectively promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding so that pupils show tolerance and respect for differences.
- Most pupils are confident and keen to learn.
- Safeguarding is effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress from their respective starting points by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - providing work in all subjects that consistently challenges all groups of pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that improvements to the curriculum are continued to deepen pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - checking closely that strategies used to support different groups of pupils are having the maximum impact.
- Take further action to improve attendance for all groups of pupils and reduce persistent absence.
- Increase the level of support for the minority of pupils who display challenging behaviour so that the number of fixed-term and repeat fixed-term exclusions reduces.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The pace of improvement has accelerated since the school moved to a new trust. Leaders have accurately identified areas for development and plans are in place to address these. While improvements are clearly evident, some actions are too recent to have had a measurable impact, particularly on outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching. However, there is much more work to do to make sure that teaching is consistently good and meets the needs of all the pupils.
- Many of the developments to support pupils with SEND are recent and it is too soon to see the impact. Leaders have developed a much more systematic approach to identifying pupils' needs but have not acted swiftly enough in some cases. For example, the school recognised in September 2018 that additional intervention was needed in the teaching of phonics, but this is not yet in place.
- Although pupils are given opportunities to study all the subjects of the national curriculum, they do not do so in enough depth. In many subjects, sequences of learning are not well designed. Pupils are not able to consistently build on their knowledge, skills and understanding from year-to-year.
- Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils are provided with support for their pastoral needs. For example, the school has employed a family support worker to help pupils and their families. However, the effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' academic outcomes are not always checked carefully enough. Leaders cannot be sure that the use of the pupil premium funding has maximum impact on those it is designed to support.
- Leaders hold regular meetings with teachers and the trust board to check pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. These meetings are used to hold staff to account for the impact they are having and to identify actions to bring about further improvement. Early signs indicate that this work is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' progress.
- A wide range of events, such as educational outings, visitors into school and assemblies, support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school recently held a series of assemblies led by people from different professions to help to raise pupils' aspirations for the future.
- Leaders have communicated a strong vision to the whole school community. They have high expectations for the future of the school. They are outward facing and welcome the support from their links with other local trust schools. They are working extremely hard to put in place firm strategic foundations from which they hope the school will flourish.
- Staff say that Delta Academies Trust has provided many opportunities for professional development. They say that this training has helped them to be more reflective and become more effective in their roles.

- The primary physical education and sports premium is well spent. Leaders have been effective in not only broadening the range of sports available to pupils, but also in increasing the number of pupils participating in sports on a regular basis. A sports coach has been employed to improve the quality of lessons and increase the expertise of staff. The school has achieved the silver Sports Mark and is working towards gold.

Governance of the school

- Members of the local governing body know the school well. They make regular visits to school and are given reports by senior and middle school leaders. They are knowledgeable about the improvements that have been made in the school since it became an academy with the new trust. They are fully aware that leaders have more work to do to improve the quality of education across the school.
- Governors provide appropriate support and challenge. For example, they have supported leaders by brokering local community help for pupils' enterprise projects. Governors have challenged leaders about the use of pupil premium funding. However, they are not provided with the data needed to check that it has maximum impact.
- The trust board regularly tracks the progress of pupils and provides support and challenge to help leaders improve teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are thoroughly vetted for their suitability to work with children. Accurate and up-to-date records of these checks are maintained.
- All staff in school are well trained. They can talk in detail about the signs they look out for and the actions they have taken or would take on discovering a cause for concern.
- All policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Record-keeping is well organised and shows that, when necessary, appropriate actions are taken in a timely manner.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that adults in school will support them if they ever need help.
- Most parents say that their children feel safe in school and that the school responds well to any concerns that they may have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been good enough. Leaders' recent actions have brought about improvements, but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remain.
- Expectations of what pupils can do, over time, have been too low. Work in lessons is now pitched to match the expectations of the national curriculum but does not always match the needs of different groups of pupils. In some classes, work is often aimed at the middle-ability pupils, with opportunities missed to ensure the strong progress of the most- and least-able pupils.

- The quality of support given to less-able pupils is variable. In some classes, the lack of strategic deployment of adults hinders the progress made by these pupils, whereas in others, adults have a positive impact on their learning.
- The quality of adult questioning varies. In some cases, adults pose well-phrased questions that both support and challenge pupils' thinking. However, this is not consistent across the school.
- Activities in subjects other than English and mathematics often lack depth and provide limited opportunities for pupils to build on subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are given opportunities to apply and practise their English skills, but poor presentation and mistakes in spelling common words often go unchecked. This means that, in some cases, errors are repeated.
- Plans show that thought has been given to the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Support and teaching strategies are carefully thought out and adapted where necessary. As a result, these pupils are now beginning to make better progress.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils, in class and through intervention groups, has recently become more effective.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are generally positive. As a result, in most classes pupils listen carefully and want to do well. In the few classes where relationships are not as strong, the pace of learning slows because adults have to spend too much time on behaviour management.
- Teachers now check pupils' understanding carefully, especially in English and mathematics, both during and at the end of lessons. They use this information to plan future teaching and to arrange catch-up sessions. In some cases, group work designed to address misconceptions is very effective.
- Most teachers show good subject knowledge in English and mathematics. They use subject-specific vocabulary correctly in their explanations and questioning.
- A more systematic approach to the teaching of reading has been introduced across the school. Activities are designed to build on prior knowledge and to promote a love of reading.
- The school's strategy of 'It's only words' is effective in helping pupils to understand a wider range of vocabulary in different contexts. For example, during the inspection, some pupils were exploring the use and meaning of 'cackled'. The teacher posed thought-provoking questions to generate debate among the pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to debate and to politely challenge assertions made by adults and their peers. Most do this confidently and can justify their thoughts by explaining their reasoning.

- Some pupils were keen to explain how the school encourages them to have a positive attitude to learning. During assembly, they could explain why several famous people had triumphed in their chosen fields because of their strength of character. For example, they could talk about how Shackleton had succeeded in very challenging circumstances because of his determination. Pupils could explain how these examples are giving them higher aspirations for their futures.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They speak with great confidence about how to keep themselves safe online and when using mobile phones.
- Pupils know the importance of a healthy, balanced diet and regular exercise to a healthy lifestyle. They could explain why the food they eat at breakfast club and lunchtime is healthy and spoke with enthusiasm about the benefits of physical education lessons and after-school sports clubs.
- Pupils say that bullying in school is rare and this view is backed up by school records. They have a thorough understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take. Some pupils act as anti-bullying ambassadors, offering support to other pupils.
- Pupils of all ages have lots of chances to take on extra responsibilities, with many pupils taking on multiple roles. These opportunities include: eco-warriors, playground leaders, reading ambassadors, school council representatives and the sports crew. For some roles, pupils have to write applications and present their strengths prior to democratic elections.
- Pupils value the transition arrangements that are put in place to support them moving into the school in Year 3. They speak highly of their Year 6 buddies, talking enthusiastically about attending the teddy bears' picnic and receiving a postcard in the summer. One boy described his buddy as, 'The nicest kid in the school.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons, around school and on the playground whenever they are being supervised. However, some pupils do not demonstrate self-discipline and do not manage their behaviour well when adults are not close by.
- Pupils are polite and get along well together. Inspectors found them very welcoming. Pupils smiled, held doors open and confidently chatted.
- A small minority of pupils have displayed very challenging behaviour, resulting in fixed-term exclusions. The number of these exclusions and repeat exclusions is above the national average.
- The school used several successful strategies to reduce absence and persistent absence for all groups of pupils. However, the overall rates of absence and persistent absence remain above than the national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over time, pupils have made poor progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are far too low, when set against pupils' starting points.
- Pupils' progress is not improving quickly enough. In 2017, progress across key stage 2 was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018, progress was still well below average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national averages in reading and mathematics for two years, meaning too many pupils are ill prepared for the demands of secondary school. In 2018, although attainment in writing was above the national average, attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling was well below the national average. Very few pupils achieved the higher standard in any subject.
- In 2018, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was below that of their peers and other pupils nationally. Current in-school assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils attain broadly in line with their peers in reading and mathematics. However, their progress has been significantly below the national average in these subjects for the last two years.
- The school's assessment information and work in books shows that pupils are beginning to make better progress in this academic year than they have in the past. However, in all year groups, fewer are working at age-related expectations than those who did at the end of key stage 1. A significant number of pupils require extensive intervention to reach their targets. For many pupils, even if these targets are met, they will still have not made enough progress given their starting points.
- Work in pupils' books shows a mixed picture. Most English books provide evidence of strong progress, but some show weak progress. In mathematics, recent developments in teaching have resulted in pupils beginning to make better progress.
- In subjects beyond English and mathematics, pupils are not building effectively enough on their knowledge, skills and understanding from year-to-year.

School details

Unique reference number	142464
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10059024

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michelle Wood
Principal	Paul Rust
Telephone number	01709 863 400
Website	www.morleyplace.org.uk
Email address	info@morleyplace.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Morley Place Academy is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The school moved from Wakefield City Academies Trust to the Delta Academies Trust in April 2018.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of the observations were undertaken jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books alongside senior and middle leaders.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body and representatives from the trust.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of checks on teaching and learning, and attendance and safeguarding information.
- An inspector met formally with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions took place with staff about the support and professional development that they receive. Inspectors also took account of the five responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by meeting informally at the start of the school day and through the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Chris Cook, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Bowyer	Ofsted Inspector
Larissa Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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