

Inspection of Morice Town Primary Academy

Charlotte Street, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon PL2 1RJ

Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

There have been frequent changes to staffing at this school. As a result, pupils' learning has been patchy. The school's curriculum, across a range of subjects, has not been carefully enough planned to ensure that pupils build on what they already know. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Some families feel unsettled by the speed and amount of change at the school.

Pupils are proud members of this community-centred school. They like their lessons and playtimes. Pupils look out for each other and help each other. Pupils enjoy the range of activities there are to do at playtimes and lunchtimes. Consequently, pupils interact and play happily together. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Pupils appreciate how staff look after them.

Pupils generally behave well, including in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions carefully. Pupils take pride in their work, which is very well presented. However, many pupils find it difficult to use what they have learned when working on their own. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), say that their teachers are helping them to become more self-reliant. Pupils know that this is an important step to learn more.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders' work, including from the trust, is beginning to have a notable impact on making the school better. Leaders are working hard to re-engage the community following a long period of instability. Leaders know that the quality of education that pupils receive is not good enough. They are working with determination on the right things to bring about improvements.

Leaders know that pupils have gaps in their knowledge across most subjects. They are tackling the weaknesses in the school's curriculum head on. They have redesigned teachers' planning to ensure that lessons focus on helping pupils to remember more. Increasingly, teachers are planning work that is building on what pupils already know. Consequently, pupils are being helped to learn in a much more joined-up way. Current pupils are beginning to learn more and do better.

Leaders are ensuring that there is a sharp focus on the teaching of reading. However, this current work is not yet having the impact it needs to. Staff subject knowledge of phonics is not sufficiently strong. Similarly, leaders have not yet ensured that pupils' reading books match precisely to the sounds that pupils are learning. As a result, pupils who struggle to read do not get enough practice. The teaching of reading for older pupils is not delivered consistently well. Pupils still have gaps in their learning and they do not read with the accuracy and fluency they should.

The early years leader has a clear vision. She is using the support from the trust to bring about improvements well. For example, increasingly, teachers make good use of the information they have to plan activities that interest the children.

Nonetheless, the quality of education that children receive in the early years is not yet good enough. Children do not get frequent enough opportunities to apply their core knowledge and skills or use what they are learning for themselves in their learning and play. Much improvement is taking place. However, it is too recent to see a notable impact yet.

Provision for pupils with SEND is effective. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) brings passion, knowledge and warmth to her leadership of SEND. She is appropriately trained and has a wealth of useful first-hand experience that she puts to good use in delivering her role. Consequently, SEND provision is effective and these pupils are supported well in class.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is part of the fabric of the school. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that pupils' health, including their mental health, is a priority. There is much on offer to broaden pupils' experiences in sport. They are given a range of opportunities to take responsibility and support each other. For example, older pupils can volunteer to be play leaders, or to represent other pupils on the school council.

Leaders are working hard to ensure that pupils' learning attitudes improve. However, pupils are not yet self-reliant and some can find it difficult to work on their own. Too few pupils attend well. Leaders are making efforts to ensure that pupils' attendance improves. However, they know that there is more to do.

Staff say that leaders support them well and that their well-being is considered when decisions are made. They feel positive about the changes that leaders are making to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead knows the school community very well. This, alongside excellent relationships with other agencies, means that families are supported effectively. Leaders are knowledgeable about important areas of safeguarding. They have put in place sensible ways to work together to keep pupils safe. For example, all staff know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Records relating to child protection are kept diligently.

Local governors and members of the trust hold leaders to account appropriately. They check for themselves that staff know what they are doing. This helps leaders ensure that they are properly focused on the most important things.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' work on improving the curriculum is too new to have the intended impact across the full range of subjects. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that the planned curriculum is implemented fully so that pupils learn consistently well and gain the knowledge that they should.
- While there is a sharp focus on the teaching of reading, teachers' subject knowledge and the implementation of the reading curriculum are not sufficiently strong. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge so that they can implement the reading curriculum well. Leaders should ensure that pupils' reading books link to the sounds they have learned. Leaders need to ensure that pupils get enough practice so that they can read with good fluency and understanding.
- The quality of education children receive in the early years is not yet good enough. Children do not get enough opportunities to use their existing knowledge and practise their core skills. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum delivered makes sure that children are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Pupils do not attend regularly enough. Pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders need to do more to tackle pupils' persistent absence. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils attend well to maximise pupils' opportunities to learn.
- Pupils are not good at applying what they have learned when working on their own. Too few pupils are self-reliant or able to get on in lessons with confidence. Leaders need to continue to build on how teaching gets the best out of pupils. Leaders need to enable pupils to learn with the determination and confidence they need to become fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143892
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10111567
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Agius
Headteacher	Joe Roberts
Website	www.moricetownprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Morice Town Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- On 1 January 2017, Morice Town Primary School converted to an academy and joined Reach South Multi-Academy Trust, becoming Morice Town Primary Academy.
- In September 2018, the school entered a collaborative arrangement with Drake Primary Academy, another school which is part of the Reach South Multi-Academy Trust. This arrangement started by sharing an executive headteacher and a head of school. In January 2019, the local governing board then amalgamated to oversee both schools.
- This is the first inspection since the school became an academy.
- Pupils start at the school in their Reception Year, which is the academic year in which they turn five. Some children join earlier in the Nursery at the age of three.
- Governors run a breakfast club for pupils between the ages of four and 11.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A very small number speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, two associate leaders from the trust, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years leader, two members of the local governing board, including the chair of governors, a member of the board of trustees and a regional director of education from the trust. We also met with a range of subject and curriculum leaders, including the leads for reading, mathematics, science and history. Meetings were also held with some pupils and teachers.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and history. We met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 3.
- To inspect safeguarding, we met with those responsible for safeguarding, including the executive headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and SENCo and members of the local governing board. We spoke to pupils and observed how the school was organised at the beginning of the day and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. We analysed documentary evidence, including the records kept by leaders, recruitment records and training logs.
- We also met with leaders to discuss the wider curriculum, how they manage behaviour and records of bullying and behaviour incidents. We analysed the 34 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, and met with some parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. We also analysed the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys completed during the inspection.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Fortey	Ofsted Inspector

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