

Moorland Centre Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126565
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	360111
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Dyson
Headteacher	Debbie Wells
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed ten sessions taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and parents and carers. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at information on children's progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from 33 parents and carers and 8 members of staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well teaching and the curriculum are increasing children's progress, especially for the boys in speaking.
- The impact of all leaders on driving improvement in teaching, learning and children's progress.
- How assessment information is being developed to support planning.
- The way the school supports children and enables them to behave well, enjoy learning and to feel safe.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-sized nursery with 30 morning and 30 afternoon places. Children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with 16% speaking English as an additional language. About a quarter of these children are at the early stages of speaking English and their main home language is Bengali. The school has an above-average proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these children have speech and language or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has recently received the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

There have been several changes in staffing over the past two years, including the appointment of an interim headteacher in January 2010. The school is situated inside a children's centre, but the work of the children's centre is not managed by the school's governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Children of differing abilities and backgrounds learn quickly at this good school. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well because members of staff provide a wide variety of interesting and challenging activities that match their specific needs well. Excellent safeguarding arrangements ensure that children are kept safe and feel very safe, without their sense of adventure and excitement in learning being stifled.

Children make especially good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because teachers encourage them to find things out for themselves. Consequently, children are very confident and independent, behave well and are polite and friendly. Leaders are aware that boys tend to do less well than the girls in developing their speech and in broadening their vocabularies. They are starting to analyse the wealth of assessment information in greater detail to pinpoint exactly how boys need to improve. Boys are happy to share their ideas and experiences during group discussions but at other times often choose to work alone or at activities that require minimal conversations with others.

Caring members of staff assess learning thoroughly and provide sensitive support for all children. This enables those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. Excellent partnerships with local schools, the children's centre and other external agencies enable the school to provide much more than it could alone. Almost all parents and carers are delighted with all aspects of the school's work and typically make comments such as, 'My child has come a long way and has learnt loads of new skills,' and, 'Our children have thrived in the clean, safe and supportive, nurturing and caring environment.' Rates of attendance are broadly average because not all parents and carers are aware of the importance of bringing their children to school regularly and leaders do not do enough to discourage unnecessary absences.

Good procedures for self-evaluation and the monitoring of children's progress enable leaders, including members of the governing body, to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and to take effective action to tackle priorities for development. There is a strong sense of teamwork and the system for tracking children's progress provides detailed information to ensure all children do well. Improvements in the strategic leadership of the governing body and in the pace of learning since the last inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of boys in speaking by:

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- using assessment information to pinpoint more precisely the gaps in their knowledge and skills
 - encouraging boys to expand their vocabularies
 - extending opportunities for boys to speak with others when working on tasks they have chosen for themselves.
- Work with parents and carers to improve attendance by increasing the rigour in monitoring and discouraging unnecessary absences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

A minority of children are working within the levels expected for their age when they start in the nursery. Clear and calm routines enable children to settle and learn quickly so that the proportion working within expected levels rises to the majority by the time the children are due to join the Reception year in primary school. Children greatly enjoy learning and are enthusiastic when working during group time and on tasks they have chosen for themselves. For example, girls and boys enjoyed helping the teacher to update the class calendar and joined in enthusiastically with the days of the week song. Children who speak English as an additional language gain confidence so that they are willing to try out what they have learnt. Girls talk more than boys when working independently and tend to use wider vocabularies. Boys prefer to keep busy rather than talking about what they are doing and learning. For example, whilst a group of girls discussed with each other and an adult how they were helping patients in the role play hospital, boys in the role play ambulance concentrated on driving.

All groups do well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, demonstrating why the school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Ability groups for literacy and numeracy enable children to learn at the right level. This has increased staff awareness of children who are gifted and talented and helped them to expect answers to more challenging questions. For example, when working with a group baking scones, able children were able to say if the amount of cheese on the digital scales was more or less than 60 grams. Less-able children contributed by counting out smaller numbers.

Children concentrate well most of the time, although occasionally they are quietly inattentive if they are expected to wait too long for their turn at a task. For example, when a group was slightly larger than usual, children found it difficult to wait for others to count out ten objects. Children demonstrate their very good awareness of safety at the same time as taking measured risks by using the hammer and nails and cheese grater carefully and by choosing a hard hat before climbing. They contribute well to the community by helping to tidy the nursery at the end of the session and by raising funds for charity. Children enjoy helping to prepare and eat healthy snacks, such as fruit and egg on toast, and take part in daily exercise. Children respect each other and adults and mix happily with children from a range of backgrounds. They understand and follow the school's golden rules such as 'we are kind to each other' and develop other social skills such as 'gentle pouring' to avoid spills. They demonstrate their appreciation of the natural world when taking delight in the way the tadpoles turned into frogs.

Good progress in the development of literacy and numeracy skills and good levels of personal development prepare children well for the next stage of education and later life.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships and the consistent use of positive behaviour management and praise help children to develop good self-esteem and to understand how they should work and behave. Challenging questions help children to learn quickly. For example, children in the water play were asked, 'What will happen if we close the pipe?' When counting out objects children were expected to use vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Members of staff help children to enjoy learning by using masks and props to bring stories to life and by making amusing deliberate mistakes in their counting. Opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage boys to talk about what they are doing, going to do or have done, so that they can expand their speech and vocabularies.

There is a good mix of activities indoors and outside, including those planned by adults and tasks that children have chosen. Routines and explanations for tasks are clear so that children, including those who speak English as an additional language, know what they are doing and feel secure. The school works very well with neighbouring schools and uses assessment information well to plan opportunities that promote weaker aspects of the children's knowledge and skills across all activities.

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All children are cared for well and are given high levels of pastoral support. Assessments on children's progress are thorough, including the 'Learning journeys', and are used to show each child's next steps. Sensitive support is given to enable children to learn about how to settle disputes fairly and how to 'make the right choice'. The school works closely with parents and carers to ease the transition between home and school and very strong links with external agencies ensure that children, including those who are very vulnerable, are given the right level of support. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have access to the same activities as other children and are given individual help to enable them to benefit from these learning opportunities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders embed ambition and drive improvement well because they have a clear vision for the future based on an analysis of what works well and what still needs to be developed. There is an enthusiasm to improve provision and progress further by increasing formal monitoring. Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination well. All pupils are included well socially, and the school is working to eliminate the slight unevenness in learning and progress, especially of boys in speaking.

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The school's safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Policies and other paperwork are exemplary, as are links with external agencies to support children in keeping safe. Consequently, children feel very safe when trying out new things at school.

Governance is good. The governing body is well informed about the school and is involved in all its activities. Members of the governing body are fully trained and are starting to take a more proactive role in evaluating provision and the children's progress. The school works exceptionally well with other schools in the area to ease transition from one school to the next. For example, the schools are currently working together to improve children's writing and to make assessments between schools more consistent.

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Parents and carers are very positive about the school and have appreciated the workshops giving them advice on how they can help their children at home. Parents and carers particularly enjoyed the recent bedtime-book-sharing pyjama party. The school provides good opportunities for children to learn about the community and about various cultures, demonstrating good community cohesion. For example, children share their personal celebrations with each other and enjoyed taking part in a story about a child living in Africa. Members of staff are sensitive towards cultural and religious observance and accommodate families' needs and preferences whenever possible. They are exploring ways of involving parents from all ethnic backgrounds more fully.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Most parents and carers are very pleased with all aspects of the school's work. They are particularly pleased that their children are kept safe and happy and that members of staff are friendly and support them in helping their children at home. A very few negative comments were made about information on what children eat at school, children's progress and the way behaviour is dealt with. Leaders are happy to provide information about food provided at snack time. The inspection team found that children make good progress and that behaviour is handled positively and by the good example set by all members of staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Moorland Centre Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	85	5	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	82	6	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	76	7	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	70	7	21	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	82	5	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	61	12	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	67	10	30	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	58	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	61	22	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	67	10	30	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	55	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	79	5	15	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	91	3	9	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 May 2010

Dear Children,

Inspection of Moorland Centre Nursery School, Milton Keynes MK6 4LP

Thank you for talking to us when we came to see you in your nursery. We are pleased that you enjoy coming to this good school.

These are the best things about your school.

- You learn quickly because teachers help you and give you interesting things to do, such as working in the hospital and ambulance.
- Teachers look after you well and help you to feel very safe.
- You behave well and stay healthy. It is good that you enjoy preparing and eating healthy food such as egg, toast and fruit.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make your school even better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next to make it even better.

- Help boys to talk more about what you are doing and to use new and interesting words when you talk.
- Work with your mums, dads and carers to make sure that you always come to school when you are well enough.

Thank you once again for talking to us. You can help your teachers by talking more about what you are doing and learning.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector

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