

Infant School Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130863
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	364018
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Spink
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Wildey
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2010
School address	Regent Street Moorthorpe, Pontefract West Yorkshire WF9 2BL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in nine lessons taught by eight teachers and one higher level teaching assistant, and met groups of pupils, staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and a local authority officer. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including policies, safeguarding records, the self-evaluation form, analysis of pupil data and minutes of the meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at the 30 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- Whether pupils' attainment and rates of progress are good enough.
- The measures the school has taken to safeguard pupils and improve attendance.
- Whether school leaders have implemented the right strategies and actions and secured rapid and significant improvements in the quality of provision and better outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Moorthorpe is smaller than the average primary school. The number of pupils on roll has declined by around 25% in the past year. Most of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school has experienced prolonged staffing difficulties, largely as a result of staff absence for various reasons. At the time of the inspection the school was led by the deputy headteacher due to the absence of the headteacher since May 2011; a restructure of classroom support staff was underway; and four classes were being taught by teachers supplied through an agency or on temporary contracts. The Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority governor joined the governing body in the autumn term of 2010.

The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and has achieved Healthy School status. The after-school club is privately run and is not part of this inspection. The school was last inspected on 23 and 24 June 2010, when it was given a 'notice to improve' because it was deemed to require significant improvement. The school received a monitoring inspection on 10 February 2011 when it was judged to be making inadequate progress.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

While many aspects of the school's work are satisfactory or better, its overall performance has deteriorated since its last inspection. Pupils' achievement is inadequate and pupils' attainment is too variable. This has occurred largely because of past underachievement by pupils in Key Stage 1 mainly as a result of past staff turbulence and inadequate direction from senior leaders. Consequently, the rate of progress pupils make between Year 1 and Year 6 is uneven and many pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school does not have firmly established systems to monitor pupils' progress. For example, leaders have not ensured that data are reliable and used effectively to establish a clear picture of the levels that pupils are working at and the standards of which they are capable, or to identify and tackle underachievement.

Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception because teaching is good and they generally enter Year 1 working securely towards the goals expected for their age. Progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 is too uneven. Although pupils leave Year 6 with broadly average levels of attainment in English and mathematics, this represents underachievement for too many pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily from their varying starting points.

There has been some improvement in teaching which is now broadly satisfactory with some key strengths in Years 5 and 6. However, though the quality of teaching is now satisfactory this has not been the case for long enough to overcome a legacy of pupil underachievement. The proportion of teaching that is good is improving and staff absence is being managed more effectively. Inspectors observed some good progress in individual lessons as a result of stimulating and engaging activities. However, methods to observe lessons and manage the performance of teachers are not systematic or robust enough to develop consistently good practice throughout the school or to help individual teachers identify precisely what actions they can take to improve. Even when areas for development have been identified, staff have been provided with too few opportunities to engage in appropriate professional development. This has limited teachers' ability to implement effective actions to improve teaching so that more is good in order to raise attainment and ensure all pupils make at least satisfactory progress.

At the time of this inspection the school had effective safeguarding arrangements. Pupils are well supervised during the day and report that they feel safe because security arrangements around the school site have been improved. There have been significant

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changes in the constitution of the governing body. Newly appointed governors have relevant and suitable expertise and take their responsibilities very seriously. They acted quickly to tackle the shortcomings identified at the last inspection. As a result the governing body now meets its statutory duties with regard to safeguarding and promoting community cohesion effectively. All school policies have been reviewed and ratified. New performance management procedures for the headteacher and other staff have been produced in consultation with the local authority and these are currently being finalised.

Despite some signs of improvement in recent weeks senior leaders have failed to act with any sense of urgency or consistency since the last inspection. The accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, robust planning and rigorous self-evaluation activities that are needed to drive improvement forward rapidly are lacking. Key priorities and actions are ill-defined and poorly communicated to staff. Middle leaders and teachers have received insufficient direction and guidance. It is due to these considerable shortcomings that the school has demonstrated an inadequate capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment and improve the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - – improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better
 - – devising systems to monitor pupils' progress and taking prompt decisive action to identify and arrest underachievement
 - – ensuring that pupils' progress does not slow when they transfer from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - – building more opportunities in the curriculum to develop pupils' writing skills
 - – developing a consistent approach to correcting spellings, punctuation and grammar in all subjects
 - – paying more attention to presentation and handwriting.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - – establishing systems to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - – identifying a manageable number of key priorities and producing a detailed action plan to bring about improvements
 - – introducing more rigour in the way staff evaluate the quality of the school's work
 - – providing staff with opportunities to engage in professional development activities that are carefully aligned to the schools key priorities and will meet their individual development needs
 - – ensuring that assessment data are reliable and staff thoroughly understand how to use them to provide work that is consistently well matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Most children join the Nursery class with skills which are below those typical for their age. From a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress slows when children transfer to Key Stage 1. They make too little progress in Years 1 and 2 so that their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is low. Better progress in Key Stage 2 generally closes gaps in pupils' learning so that their attainment is close to average.

Scrutiny of pupils' work over time indicates that their progress, particularly in writing, is uneven and much weaker than their reasoning skills. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1. Pupils' writing is closer to national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2, although weaknesses in spelling, handwriting and presentation persist.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and recognise the importance of learning. Pupils show good attitudes to learning and try hard to do well. This is particularly the case when lessons give plenty of time to developing pupils' collaborative and group- working skills and independent enquiry. Opportunities to comment on each other's work are undertaken seriously and with due sensitivity, resulting in some carefully considered and meaningful feedback for peers. Pupils say they have a lot of confidence in their teachers and are well cared for by all of the staff. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Attendance is broadly average. Effective school actions such as 100% attendance certificates and 'star award' assemblies have reversed a decline in attendance earlier in the year and reduced the proportion of pupils persistently absent from school by two-thirds.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and take adequate exercise. The school council meets regularly and has contributed to improvements in the school, such as the rewards system and the 'rainy day play' box. Pupils contribute to the school and wider community through organised activities, such as fundraising, and local initiatives, for example, 'marvellous Moorthorpe'. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and develop a sound knowledge of other cultures and traditions different from their own.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

The best lessons include a variety of interesting activities, skilful questioning and regular checks on pupils' understanding. Pupils are given targets for learning and generally understand them, although they are not always clear about the level they are working at. The recently introduced marking system is generally being used well to praise and encourage pupils and provide useful feedback about what they can do to improve their work. Less effective lessons are characterised by teachers talking for too long and tasks that do not provide the right levels of challenge for pupils.

Teachers have worked hard to make the curriculum enjoyable and imaginative. A range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors help to broaden it. Pupils produce some good art work and this takes pride of place in the many high quality displays around the school. While staff are involved in planning to develop the curriculum around interesting whole-school themes and to integrate subjects, too little emphasis is paid to developing a consistent approach to improving the quality of pupils' writing skills.

Staff care for the pupils well. As a result, most pupils are happy and feel safe. In many classes teaching assistants make a significant contribution to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and when working with small groups. However, some teachers do not deploy teaching assistants effectively to accelerate pupils' learning.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders are not driving and securing improvement sufficiently. Too little has been done to raise attainment and improve achievement. There has been insufficient focus on accelerating the progress pupils make. The extent to which the school promotes equal opportunities is inadequate because a significant number of pupils are underachieving. The school lacks a clear and coherent plan that identifies key priorities to improve outcomes for pupils. The reliability of assessment data is improving but is not robust enough to provide leaders and teachers with an accurate picture of underachievement. Middle leaders and teachers have not received sufficient information, guidance and support or been held accountable for pupils' progress. In the last few weeks the acting headteacher has started to focus on improving pupils' progress and to communicate a greater ambition to staff to raise attainment but it is too early to see any impact.

Parents and carers report that relationships with them have improved recently. The safeguarding and child protection issues raised at the last inspection have been rectified. All of the necessary systems, policies and procedures now meet current requirements and are effectively organised. The school's duty to promote community cohesion is developing satisfactorily through links with the local and wider community. Members of the newly constituted governing body have ensured they are better informed about their work. Appropriate training has ensured they are fulfilling their statutory duties. The committee structure has been revised. There is clear evidence through minutes of meetings, for example, that members of the governing body have worked diligently and determinedly over the relatively short period of time available to them to ensure they are now fully equipped to hold school leaders to account and tackle poor performance robustly.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. All of the staff contribute well to children's welfare and learning and have a good regard for children's safety.

The children's introduction to the Nursery is carefully planned so that they settle quickly and feel safe and happy.

Teaching and learning are good. Staff give a high priority to children's personal, social and emotional development, which supports them well in developing these key skills. A good mix of child-initiated activities, carefully prepared resources and focused teaching encourages children to make good progress. Children enjoy the exciting range of activities available to them. Their indoor and outdoor environments stimulate creative and social development and encourage imaginative play.

Parents and carers enjoy good relationships with staff and appreciate the good- quality induction and ongoing information the school provides. There are good partnerships with other services, such as the children's centre that shares the school site, and with local pre-school providers. Leadership and management are good. The leader has focused well on providing interesting learning activities and experiences in a warm, supportive, inclusive setting. Relationships with staff and children are excellent and there is a shared vision and working practice within the team. The work of the support and teaching staff is well coordinated; they are a skilled and experienced team who plan well together and have a clear understanding about how young children learn. Staff regularly observe the children at work and assess their progress. This ensures staff can consistently secure good evidence of children's attainment and progress, support them and move them on in their learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Their views were mostly positive. Several parents took the opportunity to say how happy they were with the Early Years Foundation Stage and to praise the care and support their children receive. They commented on how quickly the acting headteacher had established good relationships with them. Very few parents shared any concerns. However, the points that were raised were very similar to those made by the parents and carers inspectors met. These have been shared with the acting headteacher without breaking any confidences so that she can report back to them on the issues they have raised. These related to the number of pupils who had left the school in the past year and to children's learning and progress in Key Stage 1 in particular.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Infant School Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	63	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	63	10	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	27	18	60	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	30	18	60	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	47	14	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	23	20	67	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	27	20	67	1	3	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)	8	27	18	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	27	21	70	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	23	19	63	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	23	18	60	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	23	11	37	8	27	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	40	17	57	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 pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. 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 pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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 pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moorthorpe Primary School, Pontefract, WF9 2BL

Thank you so much for making us feel welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your school and watching you at work.

Your good behaviour and improving attendance shows how much you enjoy coming to school. You told us that you feel happy, safe and secure and we agree that the adults take good care of you and keep you safe.

You know about the importance of healthy lifestyles and some of you help with the running of the school, for example, by serving on the school council, helping to set up the 'rainy day' boxes and suggesting the 'team point' system. We were really impressed by how sensitive you are when you talk to each other about your work. The youngest children get a good start to their school life.

Your teachers work really hard but there are some important things that the school needs to do to improve and we have judged that it requires 'special measures'. This means that it will get extra help and inspectors will visit regularly to make sure that the school is improving quickly enough. We are asking the headteacher, other staff and governors to do a number of things to help you improve your writing skills, make better progress and achieve higher levels in all your subjects. These include:

- making sure that the headteacher and staff keep a closer eye on how well you are doing in class
- ensuring that teaching always helps you learn enough in lessons
- putting in place lots of opportunities to develop your writing skills in all of your subjects
- looking closely at all the things going on in the school to find out what works well and what does not, so that they know they are taking the right actions.

You can all help the headteacher and all of the staff to make these improvements by always trying your best, attending regularly, always trying to spell words correctly and taking care to keep your writing neat and tidy.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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