

Moulsham Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114800
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378930
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Nichola Perry

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	563
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Reynolds
Headteacher	Linda Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty-three teachers were observed in 30 lessons. One assembly and break and lunchtimes were also observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, heads of year, subject leaders, the inclusion manager, other staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and displays, and at documentation, including the school development plan, assessments, data related to pupils' progress, teachers' planning and safeguarding and welfare arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised 144 parents' and carers' questionnaires, 31 staff questionnaires and 94 pupils' questionnaires.

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

- Do all teachers have a sufficiently clear understanding of what information from assessment is telling them?
- Are all teachers' expectations of what pupils can do year on year sufficiently high, leading to more rapid progress and more consistently high attainment?
- Is the curriculum outstanding in all aspects of pupils' learning and development?

Information about the school

This very large junior school has 20 single-age classes in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are taught in ability sets for mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school serves mainly its local catchment area, a relatively socially advantaged area, with a few pupils being admitted from outside the area. The school population is very stable. A small number of children and their families face challenging circumstances or experience significant social and emotional needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly lower than the national average, although this is increasing. Numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are broadly average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is significantly higher than that found nationally. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. There is a broadly average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language.

The school has been awarded Sportsmark Gold, Charter Mark for PE, Football Association Charter Award Advanced. The school has recently regained the National Healthy Schools Award and the International Award.

There is on-site pre-school provision for children aged 2 to 4 which is not managed by the school and which is inspected separately. Breakfast and after-school clubs are provided by the pre-school provision.

The school shares a large campus with feeder infant and high schools. Together with the school's other feeder infant school, it is in partnership with Barnados and employs a family support worker. The school is a founder member of the Chelmsford

Network comprising 22 schools which together employ a finance manager and a surveyor.

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

Moulsham Junior School is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The leadership of the headteacher is dynamic and highly effective. She is supported very ably by the recently appointed deputy headteacher and a large team of senior staff. Together with an effective governing body, she has ensured that the entire school community works as a cohesive team striving to improve all aspects of pupils' academic and personal development.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils and their families are exceptional. That, along with an excellent personal, social and health curriculum, contributes strongly to pupils' very good personal development, including their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are friendly, articulate and very proud of their school. Spirituality is nurtured extremely well through the 'Pride of Moulsham Awards' where pupils nominate others for striving through adversity, outstanding bravery or demonstrating success. Pupils play an active role in the school community and speak confidently about their actions and achievements. They develop strong social and moral awareness and values, for example, as members of the school and class councils, librarians, play leaders or in assisting with reception during lunch times. . Adults throughout the school are very effective role models in the way they show great respect towards all pupils. That contributes very strongly to the excellent relationships evident throughout the school. It is why attendance is above average and pupils say how much they love coming to school. Behaviour in and around school is good and much of it is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding awareness and understanding of why they need to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe because these aspects are developed very successfully throughout the curriculum.

Attainment is above average in English and mathematics as a result of good and improving teaching. A significant amount of teaching is outstanding where teachers demonstrate a wide range of advanced skills leading to rates of progress which exceed expected levels and lead to good achievement for all pupils. Much work has been done to improve the quality of teaching. There remain a few inconsistencies where teaching is satisfactory so that pupils do not always have access to high-quality learning. Assessment and tracking of all pupils' progress are thorough and carried out regularly so that staff are very clear about the needs of all pupils. Pupils are increasingly aware of how well they are doing and are involved in assessing their own performance, although this is not consistent. The curriculum is good and improving so that it has a good impact on pupils' academic progress. Currently, there

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is insufficient focus throughout the curriculum on developing pupils' key academic skills, most notably in writing, and in providing enough opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in different subjects.

Senior leaders and the governing body have an excellent, realistic understanding of the school's performance. That is because self-evaluation is highly accurate and leads to well-thought-out and tightly focused plans for developing and improving provision and outcomes for all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase further the rate at which all pupils in all groups make progress by focusing the curriculum more closely on developing pupils' key academic skills, particularly in writing.
- Accelerate the good improvements in teaching so that learning is at least consistently good in all year groups by:
 - maximising use of the advanced skills of existing staff so as to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
 - strengthening and extending the range of methods used to help pupils understand how well they are learning and what they need to do improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

School data show that pupils' abilities on entry to the school vary from year to year, but are broadly as expected for their age. Significant improvements in teaching, along with recent curriculum development in mathematics and writing, have eliminated pockets of underachievement. That has led to much-improved outcomes for pupils, with more-even progress across the school, so that pupils in all year groups are making at least good progress and their achievement overall is good. School assessment and tracking data and scrutiny of past and present pupils' work, show that pupils in Years 3 to 5 are attaining at higher levels than in the past. That indicates that pupils are on track at least to sustain current levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.

Learning outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements, are good. Some groups attain at a higher level than found nationally because individual needs are identified quickly, provision is comprehensive throughout the school and managed effectively, and teaching is differentiated very well. All result in a very positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

Learning was good or better in nearly all lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and great enjoyment of lessons because most learning experiences are motivating, challenging and relevant. Pupils enjoy lessons particularly when they can apply their basic skills in practical ways and

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they can see the relevance of what they have learned. An excellent example was in an outstanding mathematics lesson where Year 6 pupils had to apply their learning to a range of problems about school dinners, cake recipes and saving money. In another excellent lesson, Year 4 pupils made outstanding progress and produced some sophisticated writing about the rainforest. The teacher used excellent subject knowledge and structured pupils’ learning particularly well so that their understanding was consolidated very effectively.

Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge of faiths and different cultures through visits to places of worship and links with schools in the wider world. They uphold values of kindness and tolerance and show an excellent ability to reflect on issues facing themselves as well as others. During ‘well-being’ week, pupils enjoy opportunities to reflect on their own self-worth. They participate eagerly when taking on additional responsibilities around the school. Enterprise awareness is developed effectively when pupils prioritise, make decisions and make best use of budgets when growing and selling produce from their garden. Pupils’ well-developed personal skills and their above-average attainment in basic skills, including their very confident use of technology, mean that they are being prepared well for the next stage of their learning. Pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sporting activities, and they recognise individual achievement and the value of team spirit.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

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

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The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons, typically, include well-planned and challenging tasks for pupils in all groups. Expectations of pupils are high, explanations are clear and pupils understand how to assess their progress at the end of lessons. Questioning is used well to check pupils’ understanding and to offer feedback during lessons. Consequently, pupils learn well, behave well and enjoy the lessons. Information from assessment ensures that activities are focused sharply on the needs of all pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs, and that individual support is provided when needed. Marking is consistently good. In a diminishing proportion of lessons, where assessment is not used to such good effect, pupils are less sure about how well they are doing and occasionally become inattentive.

The curriculum is effective because it is reviewed regularly, planned and delivered well. It is enriched extremely well so that learning is brought alive and, therefore, meaningful for pupils in all ability groups. An excellent example of that was a two-day ‘immersion’ in Shakespeare, which motivated and roused pupils’ enthusiasm for a style of writing quite different from their own. Effective provision for pupils who are gifted and talented and those who find learning difficult ensures that all pupils achieve well and sometimes very well. A very good range of additional activities adds to the quality of the curriculum and there is good take-up of available places.

Pastoral care and support for pupils are exemplary. Wide-ranging work is undertaken with pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and with their families, including excellent support from the learning mentor and family support worker. Parents and carers are involved closely with their children’s learning and development. Several commented positively about the progress their children are making and consider that their children enjoy school, are safe and cared for very well. Very positive links with feeder schools ensure that transfer arrangements for all groups of pupils are very well planned, including specific arrangements for pupils who find change difficult. Unnecessary absences have been reduced as a result of rigorous monitoring.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Pupils thrive in this school, regardless of their ability or background, because the headteacher and staff have created a safe, caring and happy learning environment

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which values everyone highly. The school is extremely successful at ensuring equal opportunities so that all groups of pupils are able to achieve well in all aspects of their academic, social and emotional development. All senior leaders demonstrate an exceptional commitment to the headteacher’s relentless drive for improvement. That commitment is also evident at all levels throughout the entire school community. Regular and rigorous self-evaluation, which involves the whole school, is highly accurate and provides strong signs that the school is continuing to improve rapidly. Highly effective monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by a wide range of senior staff. Relationships with parents and carers are good.

Governance is good. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Arrangements for safeguarding, child protection and training of staff are excellent and take account of best practice. The school puts all aspects of health and safety at the heart of its work and these areas are promoted very effectively throughout the curriculum. The governing body has developed its role significantly since the last inspection so that it plays a key part now in strategic planning and in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school.

Partnerships to support pupils’ learning and well-being are excellent. They include specialist support in humanities, science and art through the Chelmsford Network and Campus Alliance. ‘Plato’s People’, for example, provides very effective input to develop gifted and talented pupils’ thinking skills. Although the school is struggling to secure contact with a school in a contrasting area within the United Kingdom, this by no means diminishes pupils’ understanding of national issues or its multicultural make-up. Much work has been done to develop pupils’ excellent understanding of that aspect of their learning, due to its strong emphasis throughout the curriculum. Wherever possible, cultures and faiths of the school and wider communities are used so that pupils gain first-hand experience. That takes the form regularly of international evenings, when parents and carers share different foods and their cultural songs and music with pupils. Well-established links with a Japanese School provide excellent opportunities for pupils to visit each other and to compare and contrast cultures and faith. Following the tsunami, pupils were very keen to send messages to the children at the school. Pupils reflect on others’ needs and hardship through a partnership with a school in Bulgaria and, more recently, in Uganda.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over a quarter of parents returned a questionnaire. Analysis shows a high level of satisfaction with their children’s experience at the school. Of those who returned questionnaires, there was almost total unanimity regarding the safety of their children and that they enjoy school. The majority are positive about other aspects of the school, although fewer parents consider that behaviour is managed well. A few parents and carers expressed concern about behaviour. Inspectors looked closely at pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school and found that it was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moulsham Junior 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 563 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	53	65	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	57	59	41	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	49	34	78	54	7	5	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	31	79	55	14	10	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	51	35	82	57	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	47	33	74	51	11	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	28	93	65	5	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)	53	37	77	53	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	31	84	58	10	7	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	28	73	51	15	10	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	28	79	55	11	8	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	43	30	81	56	7	5	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	57	40	76	53	6	4	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



19 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moulsham Junior School, Chelmsford, CM2 9DG

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you very much for being so helpful to the inspectors in finding out all about your school and what you think of it. We agree that you go to a good school where everyone is happy and friendly and that it is a great place to go to every day. There are lots of good things about your school.

- You try very hard to do well and make good progress in your learning.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes excellent.
- Your headteacher and senior teachers have excellent ideas about how to make your school even better and work very hard to make sure they achieve this.
- You have an excellent understanding about how to keep yourselves safe and why you need to have a healthy lifestyle.
- You know lots about other people's faiths and cultures.
- Adults in your school really care about you all and make sure you are very safe.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with what the school provides for you and they get on well with your headteacher and the teachers.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to do a few things to make your school better.

- We would like all the teaching to be the best so that you all make even more progress and get even better results when you are assessed.
- We would like to see you spending more time practising what you are learning, especially your writing.
- We are asking the school to make sure that you know how well you are doing.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Perry
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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