

Moorhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124220
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380838
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Adamson
Headteacher	Sandra Peck
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 28 lessons taught by 14 teachers. They also met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies and procedures. Inspectors also analysed the responses to the questionnaires for pupils and staff, and the 104 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How effectively is the school raising standards in reading and mathematics, and building on the successes evident in the upward trend in Year 2 results?
- Do pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and good behaviour, and the impact of these on how well they can learn?
- How effectively is the curriculum planned to engage pupils and accelerate their progress, especially in mathematics, and is it taught well enough?
- Are all leaders and managers clear about how to improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 and do they follow up areas for improvement robustly enough?

Information about the school

This is larger than the average sized primary school. It has a very high proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including with statements of special educational needs, is above average, and, in some years, well above. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and some have behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. A much greater proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal time than is found in most schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is below average.

The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy Schools status, Sport England, FA Charter, Investors in People and an International Schools Award. Privately-run before- and after-school clubs, and a pre-school, operate on the school site. They are inspected separately.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Attainment on entry to Reception has improved in recent years as a result of the close links formed with the on-site pre-school and is now a little below what is expected. The improvement coincides with the upward trend in attainment in Year 2, which is now feeding into Years 3 and 4. By Year 4, attainment is broadly at the levels expected for pupils' ages. The legacy of underachievement, caused by staffing difficulties in the past, is still evident in Years 5 and 6 but attainment in Year 6 is now below, rather than significantly below average, and much is in place to raise it further. While achievement is satisfactory overall, pupils' progress has improved in recent years, and more of it is good. This is linked to better teaching and assessment, and a well-planned curriculum that engages pupils and takes account of their needs and interests. Although satisfactory overall, the majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good or better. It is not yet good enough in Years 3 to 6 to ensure pupils make consistently good progress throughout Key Stage 2.

The quality of feedback given to pupils through marking and in whole-class sessions at the ends of lessons lacks consistency. Nevertheless, the more precise arrangements now in place for gathering and using assessment information play a valuable part in accelerating progress. This is illustrated well in the programme to improve literacy skills in Years 1 to 3. Nevertheless, pupils' weak comprehension skills affect their ability to understand what they read, and to solve written mathematical problems. They do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their numeracy skills across different subjects or to apply their knowledge in real-life situations. This is beginning to happen, for example, in geography, where pupils use graphs and charts to plot coordinates and examine levels of rainfall.

Good quality care, guidance and support underpin pupils' good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Pupils report that 'the school keeps us very safe'. They behave well and appreciate the rewards and sanctions systems and how they enable them to learn. Good pastoral care is provided for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and for those who join the school at different times. The school is vigilant in addressing their needs, and ensuring their health, safety and well-being. It works well with other agencies to promote this and, where relevant, with parents and carers. Inspectors saw several parents and carers adopting the school's procedures when managing their children's behaviour at the beginning and end of the school day.

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The school has used support from the local authority and other schools effectively to improve teaching and learning, and it has followed up areas for improvement robustly. Its self-evaluation is mostly accurate, if slightly generous. There is a clear, shared vision for improvement. The school has systematically tackled the issues raised at the previous inspection, and more aspects are now good. Senior leaders have taken a measured approach to this to ensure improvement is sustainable. Taken together, all of this shows the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement but that its capacity is getting steadily better, particularly as the new middle managers settle into their roles and implement their action plans.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - helping pupils to read, understand and solve mathematical problems
 - showing them how they can apply what they learn in mathematics to real life
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Improve pupils' comprehension skills so that they understand better what lies behind the written word in different literacy texts.
- Iron out the remaining inconsistencies in teaching in Years 3 to 6 and ensure that marking is improved so that it always gives pupils guidance on how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils throughout the school are gaining a good understanding of different styles of writing. They are beginning to write with an increased focus on audience and purpose. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils used a checklist well to identify the different styles in which a traditional tale had been written. They used the information effectively to write their own different versions of another tale. There are still weaknesses in punctuation, spelling and grammar but pupils are using an increasingly wide range of vocabulary to engage the reader. Year 6 pupils' letters applying for a job as an MI5 agent demonstrated this well. They presented a cogent argument for why they should be employed, and created just enough tension about what the role might entail. Pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects. They know their writing targets well and can explain clearly what they need to do to reach them. They are well and fully involved in assessing and improving their own work.

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Pupils’ ability to break mathematical problems down in order to solve them step-by-step is underdeveloped. Part of the reason for this is the pupils’ weak comprehension skills, which the literacy programme is now addressing. Calculation skills are satisfactory, and pupils’ work shows a developing understanding of shape, space and measure.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as their peers. This is because teachers take good account of the targets in individual education plans as they plan work for the whole class. Well-briefed support staff then assist the pupils and help to close the gaps in their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are fully integrated into the school and they too make satisfactory progress. Higher-attaining pupils benefit from links with the local high school, or working with an older year group and their progress too is satisfactory. The school assesses every pupil’s attainment on entry, at whatever point they join it. Its records show that pupils who join after normal times make at least satisfactory progress and, because of the attention paid to their individual needs, they often close gaps in their learning caused by, for example, having previously attended several schools.

Pupils understand the importance of following a healthy lifestyle, although they admit they ‘do not always choose well’. They acknowledge that bullying occurs occasionally, but say it is dealt with quickly and effectively when reported. They are becoming increasingly able to manage their own behaviour and to help others sort out their differences. They state proudly that ‘if my partner has been good, I can give them a perfect partner sticker.’ They were heavily involved in the discussions leading to the new school motto, ‘mutual respect’, and are keen to show they understand what it means. Pupils who attend the nurture group benefit from the calm, relaxed atmosphere that helps to develop their social and emotional skills. Pupils make a real contribution to their school and wider community, for example through the different councils, and by fundraising for different charities at home and abroad. They have a strong curiosity about the world around them and show a keen interest in new experiences. They talk about other cultures’ values in a mature way, and appreciate the opportunities they have to engage with different cultural groups. They leave the school adequately prepared for their future.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

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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Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Within its warm, welcoming learning environment, the school cares, guides and supports all of its pupils well. It has successfully improved their attendance, attitudes and behaviour, fostering in them a willingness to learn and an appreciation of how good attendance and behaviour helps their learning. It reaches out to pupils and their families, particularly those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nurture group, counselling where needed, and the vigilance of all staff contribute to this. The large majority of pupils, parents and carers acknowledge this good provision.

Improved teaching is leading to the higher attainment evident in pupils' work, the school's assessment data and recent results in national tests. Teaching is consistently good up to Year 2 so that pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well. Teaching is more variable in Years 3 to 6, and this affects the rate of pupils' progress at times. Planning is usually matched well to the needs of all pupils, from the least to the most able. The strong focus on learning, good subject knowledge and good relationships all lead to effective learning. Where teaching is less effective, pupils' are not sufficiently engaged because tasks do not challenge them enough.

Where teaching is good or better, assessment procedures are tightly focused on next steps in learning, which are adjusted to suit pupils' developing understanding. For example, an outstanding Year 6 lesson on punctuation, imaginatively taught, replaced the lesson originally planned because the teacher had identified specific weaknesses while marking pupils' work. Feedback in lessons and in marking is not always as consistently good in ensuring that pupils in all classes know what they need to do to improve. The school has taken a measured approach to making the curriculum more creative, and pupils' learning has benefited from this. Links between subjects are thought out well and pupils report that learning is 'more fun and more interesting' because of them. They can also see how what they learn in one subject helps them in another. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and contribute effectively to pupils' learning and personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's good leadership has been the driving force behind the upward trends evident in recent years. After several changes in staffing, she has built a team of staff fully committed to improving outcomes for the pupils. The school tracks every pupil's progress well, and intervenes quickly to get their learning back on track should it falter. It sets challenging targets for all year groups and for individual pupils, and rigorously evaluates progress towards them. Key subject leaders, new to the school this year, have already drawn up clear action plans to tackle the weaknesses identified in their audits. Arrangements for checking and improving teaching and learning are beginning to have an impact on the consistency of provision in Years 3 to 6. This is because areas for improvement are consistently followed up to ensure they are leading to better learning for the pupils.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body supports the school well and is satisfactorily involved in school improvement planning. However, it relies on the headteacher for information, and misses opportunities to find things out at first hand. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily but it works hard to break down stereotypes and to tackle any form of discrimination. The recent change in its motto is a result of this. It overtly teaches the principles of mutual respect across its whole community. It promotes community cohesion well, with an accurate focus on developing pupils' global awareness in response to its good understanding of its own make-up and that of the community it serves. It teaches social responsibility, and encourages pupils to track local, national and international events to raise their awareness of different cultures and customs in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, follow recommended good practice. Case studies and procedures observed during the inspection show that staff are extremely vigilant in their drive to keep pupils safe and free from harm. In this regard, the school uses its good links with external agencies effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	3

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met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management ensure that all staff are focused on helping children make good progress. Strong emphasis is placed on ensuring children’s health, safety and welfare at all times. This is evident in the good links with parents and carers, and the careful handover of their children to them at the end of the day. The school’s close links with the pre-school mean children settle quickly and enjoy learning. They learn and develop well, and rapidly acquire early reading, writing and number skills that prepare them well for their work in Year 1.

Adults regularly look for evidence of good learning, record it, and bring the information together in children’s learning journals. These track their progress well, and the information is used in planning. Because girls outperformed boys last year, planning seeks to even up progress across all groups this year. Children behave well, cooperate and share equipment. They are taught to behave in a safe way. Children are successfully encouraged to develop independence in their learning, and adults know just when to intervene in activities to take learning forward. The extremely welcoming learning environment supports children’s progress effectively, indoors and out, and ensures children have opportunities to be physically active. Literacy and personal development skills permeate all activities. Less attention is given to promoting mathematical development in the same way, but doing so is part of the action plan for further improvement.

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

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Parents and carers inspectors met during the inspection were overwhelmingly pleased with what the school does for them and their children. Some also commented that they recognised how the school had improved since its previous inspection, and praised the school for teaching their children to speak properly. They also said that it is a happy school and that their children come home enthusiastic about their day. A few parents and carers who returned the questionnaires raised issues about behaviour, or felt the school did not listen to their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team found that the school has very clear systems for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour and that pupils and most parents and carers appreciate them, leading to good behaviour overall. Inspectors also found that the school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and does its best to respond to their suggestions and concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moorhill Primary 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 370 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	62	37	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	67	31	30	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	50	48	52	50	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	55	42	40	3	3	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	56	54	46	44	0	0	2	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	53	51	42	40	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	41	60	58	1	1	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)	46	44	52	50	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	42	54	52	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	36	52	50	11	11	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	40	51	49	9	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	46	48	46	4	4	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	56	54	43	41	3	3	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	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.



5 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moorhill Primary School, Cannock, WS11 4NX

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was good to talk with you about what you do there and to find out that you are making better and better progress in your learning. We found this out by looking at what you do now, and at the work you did last year. Your good behaviour in lessons helps, and it is clear that you want to do well. You go to a satisfactory school, where the adults keep you safe and care for you well. As a result, you have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. The school's leaders want you to enjoy learning, make better progress, and reach higher standards. The good understanding you have of your targets and how you can achieve them, and the way most teachers keep you focused on them, are two of the things that are helping in this. In order to accelerate your progress even more, we have asked the school to:

- help you to read, understand and solve mathematical problems and show you how to apply what you learn in mathematics to everyday life
- increase your comprehension skills so that you understand better what lies behind the written word in different literacy texts
- ensure you are all taught equally well and that marking comments always show you how to improve your work.

You all can help by continuing to work hard and telling your teachers what you enjoy about your learning. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector

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