

Moorpark Junior School

Park Road, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 1EL

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. From their starting points pupils do not make enough progress during their time at the school. Progress is particularly slow in Years 3 and 4 and at times in Year 5, in mathematics and writing. Boys' underachievement in writing is particularly of a concern.
- The impact of teaching over time is inadequate. The targets for the amount pupils will learn are set too low. Teachers do not plan lessons matched to the different needs of pupils nor do they expect high enough standards in punctuation, spelling and handwriting. The quality of marking is inconsistent.
- Teaching assistants do not always support pupils well enough with their learning.
- Governors do not understand the information they are given about pupils' progress. Therefore, they are unable to check sufficiently and regularly enough if pupils are achieving as well as they should, whether teaching is good and whether additional funding is helping to raise achievement. Some governors do not regularly attend meetings of the governing body.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety require improvement because sometimes behaviour is not good enough in lessons, at morning break times and with staff who do not usually teach the pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, along with senior leaders, is improving the quality of teaching. The school has taken effective action to improve attendance so that it is now above average. These improvements demonstrate leaders' ability to move the school forward.
- Pupils feel well cared for and enjoy the good opportunities for them to think about social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues.
- Most pupils in Year 6 make the progress expected of them, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The progress of some pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is improving because of the additional support given to them.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons. Six of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to six pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils. Inspectors also held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to the school's plans for improvement and its procedures for checking the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Pupils' books were checked by inspectors with the headteacher.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Philip Choi	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A high proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of forces families.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A breakfast club operates on the school site that is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, but particularly in Years 3 to 5, so that all pupils make at least good progress and achieve higher standards in mathematics and writing by:
 - setting higher and more challenging targets for pupils to achieve
 - raising teachers' and pupils' understanding of the importance of correct spellings, punctuation, and handwriting across all subjects and ensuring these skills are taught well
 - ensuring each lesson is planned with the correct level of challenge for pupils of different abilities in order that pupils are interested in and remain focused in their learning
 - ensuring teaching assistants are clear on how they are to support pupils' learning effectively
 - ensuring the curriculum provides pupils, particularly boys, with the opportunities they need to develop their writing skills
 - developing a wide range of interesting topics to inspire pupils' imagination in their writing
 - ensuring teachers regularly check on the progress pupils are making in lessons, particularly on how well pupils are developing their skills in writing
 - ensuring that teachers' marking and other feedback consistently and effectively inform pupils how to improve their work further
 - focusing the recently improved systems by which leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning still more sharply on raising standards in Years 3 to 5.
- Improve behaviour so that it is at least consistently good in lessons and at morning break times by:
 - keeping a close check on standards of behaviour and making pupils aware that good behaviour is expected of them at all times, for example, when they are not with their usual class teachers
 - providing an appropriate range of play equipment at break times and ensure that all pupils know how to play purposefully without resorting to boisterous behaviour.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of the governing body to hold the leaders to account for the school's improvement by:
 - rapidly improving governors' understanding and use of sources of information to check on the quality of teaching, assess how well funding is making a difference to pupils' achievement and hold all staff to account for their performance
 - ensuring governance is subject to a detailed external review in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved
 - improving the attendance of some governors at meetings, so that they know what is going on in the school, are regularly informed of the school's work and can ensure that school leaders take the necessary actions to make improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement, including that of those with special educational needs, is inadequate overall. Too many pupils make inadequate progress across Years 3 to 5 in mathematics and writing.
- Progress speeds up in Year 6 because more effective teaching in this year group helps pupils to make up some of the ground lost in previous years, but this is not enough to compensate for previous slow progress. Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons, together with the school's own information on pupils' progress, confirms this picture.
- Standards in writing are below average, particularly for boys. This is because teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation are far too low across all year groups and for most groups. In addition, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills. In lessons, teachers do not check on the standards of writing well enough to ensure pupils are developing the skills of which they are capable.
- Although still not good enough, some pupils supported by the pupil premium make quicker progress than other groups in reading and mathematics. This includes one-to-one support for literacy and numeracy.
- Overall, pupils do better in reading than in mathematics and writing because the school has a wide range of books that pupils enjoy and that help them develop their reading skills and interest in books. Pupils also regularly read with adults in the school. As a result, most pupils make expected progress in reading.
- Parents are not as confident that their children are achieving well as they are about other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors agree with this concern.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because over time it has failed to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. However, the quality of teaching is now improving as a result of leaders' recent actions to ensure teachers provide a better range of more relevant learning activities. This is now helping to engage pupils more in lessons and to develop their learning.
- Marking does not generally tell pupils how to improve and pupils' learning targets are too low for many to ensure they progress quickly. Common words are incorrectly spelled, punctuation marks not used and work is poorly presented. Teachers do not pick this up in their marking and when checking pupils' work in lessons. As a result, pupils do not know how to improve their writing and the standard of their work is too low.
- Weaknesses in teachers' planning mean that too often all pupils are expected to start at the same level in lessons. This means that more-able pupils are not challenged quickly enough and the less able pupils struggle.
- Some teaching assistants support those pupils with special educational needs well and have high expectations of their writing standards. For example, one teaching assistant was observed helping a child to remember to use punctuation when writing sentences. However, too often teaching assistants were observed just sitting with pupils who were struggling. The assistants were unable to simplify the pupils' tasks for them without the class teachers' support. Such weaknesses in support contribute significantly to the underachievement of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Occasionally and increasingly, teachers plan interesting activities, pay good attention to sentence construction and use questioning well to ensure that pupils understand new information. This was the case in a Year 3 literacy lesson, as part of preparing pupils to write a play script, where all were very involved because of the way that the teacher sparked their imagination. Pupils were encouraged to write in speech bubbles about what they or their headteacher would say if they saw Dr Who landing in the school playground in a telephone box. Most pupils wrote

successfully in sentences and some went on to give directions on how the speeches could be expressed.

- However, in too many lessons teachers do not inspire pupils to write because topics are not interesting enough. As a result, pupils' attention wanes and they lose interest quickly in their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- In most lessons, pupils show eagerness to learn. However, too often the positive start to lessons changes quickly and pupils' motivation declines when teaching becomes dull for many or too challenging for some who find learning difficult.
- Pupils commented that behaviour on the playground during morning break times sometimes gets boisterous and that it was not as good as it is in lessons or during lunch times. Inspectors agree with this. They also stated that behaviour was not always as it should be when their classes are taught by other adults who are not normally their teachers.
- Most pupils behave well during lunch times due to the well-organised activities and equipment made available for them. This includes activities run by sports coaches to help pupils play games. Such facilities are not as widely available during break times.
- Pupils feel safe and most comment that bullying is rare. They show good understanding of the different types of bullying and say most pupils generally get on well with each other and with staff.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the negative effects of drugs and alcohol. They also have a good awareness of internet safety.
- Attendance has improved well and is now above average. The work of the school's home-school link worker particularly helps to encourage parents to bring children regularly to school. Pupils also benefit from breakfast and after-school clubs that help to promote their safety and well-being.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The new headteacher shows strong determination and has successfully identified what the school needs to do to improve further. All staff, including subject and senior leaders, are challenged by her high expectations and most are keen to improve the quality of their teaching and leadership to ensure pupils achieve better. Arrangements to manage the performance of teachers and to link their pay closely with improvements in their teaching have been strengthened. As a result, teachers are now being challenged more about the quality of their teaching and this is beginning to improve their practice. This is reflected in the school's records of checking the quality of teaching confirmed by inspection evidence. They show a sharp reduction in the level of inadequate teaching in a short space of time.
- While the impact of the school's new leadership is evident in pupils' improved attendance and the reduction in the amount of inadequate teaching, improvements are not yet widespread enough to enable pupils to make the progress they are capable of throughout the school.
- The curriculum helps to develop pupils' appreciation of differences amongst people. For example, pupils visit a local mosque and benefit from work with a local football club to promote respect for different groups and each other. However, the curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils to ensure that they develop their skills in writing as well as they should.
- The local authority has only recently started to support the school. Guidance is now provided to help leaders check on pupils' progress. As a result, senior and subject leaders are correctly identifying where pupils and teachers need further support.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have not held the school's leaders to account for the lack of progress in addressing the key issues raised by the previous inspection. They know that they lack the expertise in understanding the management of teachers' performance, including information on pupils' progress, to judge if the quality of teaching is improving. This, alongside some governors' irregular attendance at meetings, means that the governing body overall is unable to keep a consistent track on the school's performance. Governors do not effectively assess whether the pupil premium funding is helping to boost the achievement of those pupils known to be eligible for this extra support. However the headteacher and subject leaders do ensure that this funding is targeted at these pupils' specific needs, to help improve their achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123985
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	402216

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joy Garner
Headteacher	Karen Peters
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2010
Telephone number	01782 234440
Fax number	01782 234440
Email address	moorpark@sgfl.org.uk

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