

Moulsham Infant School

Princes Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9DG

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, fully supported by all staff, has high expectations and is focused on making sure that all pupils have the opportunity to experience a rich and creative range of subjects and activities.
- Progress is good. From below-average starting points, pupils leave Year 2 with standards in line with pupils nationally in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. Positive relationships contribute to the happy and purposeful atmosphere of the school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite to adults and to each other. They play and work well together.
- Parents are positive about the school. They especially praise the welcoming and caring atmosphere, good relationships and the safe environment.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They provide a good level of support and challenge to school leaders. They are clear about what the school needs to do to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants do not always fully challenge the individuals or groups of pupils they are supporting during whole-class teaching time.
- In some less engaging lessons, pupils spend too much time sitting on the carpet and their attention drifts.
- Data produced, following the checking of pupil progress, is not always in an accessible format for leaders, managers and staff to be clear about how pupils are achieving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, some observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- They also visited the nurture room and attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs, literacy and numeracy leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them during play and lunch times.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and on display.
- Inspectors took into account the 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a telephone call. The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day through informal discussions as they brought their children to school. Inspectors also took into account the views of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, policies and records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, information on pupils' progress and attainment, the performance management of teachers and the work of the governing body.

Inspection team

Valerie Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Gossage

Additional Inspector

John Viner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is smaller than that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families, is below average.
- There is a breakfast club on site. This provision is not managed by the governing body and so did not form part of this inspection.
- Moulsham Infant converted to become an academy school in July 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - marking gives pupils a clear understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work
 - clearer guidance is given to teaching assistants so they are aware of how to fully challenge and engage the pupils they are supporting during whole-class sessions
 - pupils do not spend too long sitting on the carpet and any inattention is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Make fuller and more effective use of the data collected on how well pupils are doing to be sure that all groups of pupils continue to make good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception Year with skills and understanding that are below the levels typically expected for their age. They make good progress during their Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. Children concentrate well and are given many opportunities to gain independence in their learning.
- In 2012, standards achieved in reading and writing in Year 2 were in line with national averages and above in mathematics. Pupils were a term ahead of pupils nationally in mathematics. The school's data for this year is showing good progress and pupils are on track to achieve standards above the national averages in reading and mathematics and in line for writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to read new and unfamiliar words. They can answer simple questions about the text and are able to predict how stories might end. In 2012, the proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the government's screening check for reading in Year 1 matched the national average. Based on school data this year, the proportion has increased as pupils are more confident in their reading skills due to the introduction of a new way of teaching phonics.
- Pupils are able to show good improvement in their writing skills because the tasks are enjoyable and interesting. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils acted out the story *'Going on a Yeti Hunt'* and then had the opportunity to write their own story, correctly using positional language.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress. In a Year 1 lesson, many pupils confidently told the time using analogue clocks and were able to share their knowledge with their partners. In Year 2, pupils were able to read mathematical problems and could explain their mathematical thinking in order to successfully solve division questions.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to others. Support is given within class, and teachers adapt their lesson plans so that all pupils can fully access their lessons.
- The small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and who are from minority ethnic backgrounds make equally good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve standards similar to pupils nationally.
- In 2012, pupils who were eligible for support through the pupil premium were two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and around a year behind in reading and writing. They, nevertheless, make good progress and the attainment gap is narrowing as a result of the additional support provided for these pupils in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. Teaching is generally lively, engaging and encourages pupils to take an active part in lessons. The large majority of parents and carers agree that their child is well taught.
- Parents of Reception children say that their child settled quickly into school. This is because teachers listen to the children, take account of their interests and provide opportunities for them to choose tasks which will develop independence. Adult-led sessions are carefully planned, and

good use is made of both the inside and outside areas to practice and extend their skills which are taught through a variety of engaging activities.

- Teachers in years 1 and 2 have good subject knowledge, plan activities which match pupils' needs and use a variety of strategies to promote good learning. Lessons are generally well organised, move along at a brisk pace and pupils are motivated and engaged.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this helps to build self esteem and confidence. Expectations are high and pupils want to do well. Pupils respond well to praise and are rewarded for good work and behaviour through the allocation of time when they can choose an activity.
- In an outstanding Year 2 Literacy lesson, the teacher used high-quality questioning to challenge pupils' thinking whilst checking that they understood what to do. The teacher also provided detailed and accurate feedback so that pupils knew how well they were doing and how to improve.
- Marking highlights for pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve, but pupils do not actually understand what is so good about their work or how to improve it. Staff do not ensure that all pupils read and understand their purposeful comments.
- Teaching assistants are mostly deployed effectively and provide good support to individuals or groups of pupils within the classroom. However, their input is not always so effective, for example, during whole class teaching time. More guidance would ensure that the child or group would be fully stretched instead of being a supportive presence by their side.
- Generally, time in lessons is used well. However, occasionally, during whole-class teaching, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet. When this occurs, some begin to lose interest or get overexcited about the content of the lesson and they begin to talk to one another or call out. This, in turn, distracts others and some pupils cannot hear parts of the lesson. Consequently, learning time is lost.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in the Reception classes, have good social skills. They speak with confidence and are able to take turns. They look after each other and share resources. During a music lesson, children followed instructions carefully in order to take turns using beaters to play sets of notes on chime bars and perform a rhythmic piece of music.
 - Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident in talking to adults and their peers. They are friendly, polite and get on well together. They say they have 'plenty of friends' and 'falling out' is rare. If an upset does occur they are confident that it will be dealt with by an adult quickly and effectively.
 - Pupils say they feel very safe at school. They have a good understanding of the right and wrong types of play and are very aware of internet safety. Parents, including those spoken to during the inspection, feel very confident that their children are safe and well cared for at school.
 - Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school. Persistent absence is rare.
 - Pupils play happily together in the playground and are able to discuss and explain the different
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types of games they play and how they look after each other. There is a range of play equipment available for the pupils, and teaching assistants were observed helping to model games so that all pupils were included.

- Pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave are well supported. The school has developed the 'nurture room' which provides a calm, well-resourced area where pupils can develop social skills and undertake, successfully, mathematics and English tuition in a small-group environment.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and is ably supported by the leadership team, staff and members of the governing body. All leaders are clear about the strengths of the school and are fully aware of the areas where improvements are needed.
 - The school development plan is focused on raising standards and self-evaluation is based on gathered evidence.
 - The rich curriculum incorporates a range of themes and topics, makes good links between subjects and provides the pupils with memorable experiences. It is enriched by a wide variety of clubs, opportunities to learn a musical instrument and a range of special days. Pupils are aware of the wider world and are able to talk eloquently about rights and wrongs, the children they support in other areas of the world and how to help one another.
 - Partnerships with parents are good. There are many opportunities for parents to get involved with their child's education through open afternoons, learning workshops and open assemblies. Parents receive information in a variety of ways including the school website and electronic newsletters. Most feel they receive valuable information on how their child is progressing at school.
 - The headteacher and senior staff monitor the quality of teaching regularly. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and this leads to effective professional development to further improve the quality of teaching. Leaders' closely relate teachers' performance management to the progress of pupils, but no direct link is made to teachers' pay progression.
 - School leaders and staff collect a great deal of data whilst checking pupils' achievements and progress but they do not organise it in such a way that it is readily available to all staff and governors. Therefore subject leaders and staff are not fully aware of how groups of pupils are progressing. Clearer analysis is required to assure governors that all pupils are making the good progress they are capable of.
 - The pupil premium has been allocated to provide additional support for pupils within lessons, resources to support learning and access to additional activities in Year 2. The impact is monitored and can be seen in the good progress these pupils are making.
 - The local authority has become less involved with the school since it has been an academy.
 - Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and all staff have received training in child protection procedures.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows their school well. Governors are ambitious for the school's success, and realistic about its strengths and weaknesses. They have actively recruited members that extend their areas of expertise so that they can provide the best possible support and challenge to the school. They are fully involved in evaluating and monitoring the school's performance. They oversee the budget well. A governor regularly monitors the school's expenditure, including the pupil-premium funding, and then reports back to the governing body. Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and the performance management of all staff. They are looking into options for linking this more directly with pay progression. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.
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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	136855
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	413354

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Taylor
Headteacher	Lorraine Cannon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01245 352742
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