

Moorhill Primary School

Moorland Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 4NX

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| 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 requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over time pupils in Key Stage 2 have not made good progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils gaining higher levels of attainment is improving but is still below average.
- Instability in staffing during the past two years has led to disruption in learning for some pupils in the school.
- Teachers do not always extend pupils' learning and thinking through highly challenging activities and probing questions, especially for the most able.
- There is not enough use of technical language in English and mathematics lessons.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting and spelling is variable
- Attendance is below average which affects progress for some pupils.
- Pupils do not always show each other enough respect and this leads to minor behaviour problems.
- Too much responsibility for improving the school rests with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and other leaders do not play a strong enough role in moving the school forward.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is good. Progress in Key Stage 2, whilst not yet good, is improving.
- Marking across the school helps pupils understand how to improve their work.
- Good classroom management routines help many lessons run smoothly.
- Teaching is improving. Staff are keen to improve and many actively seek advice on how to do so.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear idea of the weaknesses that need to be tackled and are active in improving the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and they learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons and looked at work in pupils' books. They listened to children read, visited an assembly and observed playtime activities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, two members of the governing body, key staff and with pupils. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the school's view of its own performance, information on pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding, school management and the curriculum.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 20 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), meeting parents on the playground and the school's most recent survey of parents' views. The inspection team considered 27 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mary Le Breuilly, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Michael Bucktin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Moorhill Primary School is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Almost half the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and others).
- There are no pupils with special educational needs at school action level but there is a higher proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs than is seen in the average primary school.
- The numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school outside normal times is similar to that seen in the average primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is due to retire shortly and the current deputy headteacher has been appointed to take up this role.
- The school is part of a Co-operative Trust with two other primary schools. The Trust provides support for Moorhill Primary School and its partner schools and facilitates joint working between them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching and achievement in English and mathematics to good by:
 - providing tasks and asking questions that stretch pupils and extend their understanding, especially for the more able.
 - making better use of technical vocabulary, particularly in English and mathematics, so that pupils understand and use these words more fluently.
 - insisting on good handwriting and spelling, particularly of technical vocabulary.
- Increase levels of attendance so that pupils are in school more often and can make better progress.
- Ensure that pupils treat each other with respect in class and around the school so that learning is not disrupted and exclusions continue at a low level.
- Give more responsibility for improving the school to school leaders other than the headteacher and deputy headteacher so that capacity for improvement is strengthened.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time pupils in key Stage 2 have not made good progress and as a result the standards reached in Y 6 have been below average. Current school information indicates that pupils are now making better progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Only a small proportion of pupils gain the higher levels in English or mathematics. However, the most recent results indicate that the numbers reaching higher levels are improving.
- Children make a good start to school in Reception. Many start with skills below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress and the majority reach standards that are at or just below those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. They do not make outstanding progress because adults do not always ask questions or model conversations that extend their understanding and vocabulary.
- The quality of handwriting is variable across the school which limits progress in writing for some pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. They show positive attitudes to learning and acquire skills of reading and writing with many catching up to levels expected for their age. An example of this was seen during the inspection when Year 1 pupils were eager to get down to writing and rushed across to their desks to pick up their pencils as soon as they could. The systematic teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) helps many pupils to learn to read quickly and accurately.
- The school has used the pupil premium funding to accelerate the progress of eligible pupils in both English and mathematics by providing additional support for mathematics and investing in reading schemes. The gap between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates narrowed last year, particularly for mathematics, and school information shows that pupils eligible for free school meals were about a term behind their peers in English and slightly less for mathematics by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement on previous years and is broadly similar to gaps seen nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs generally make similar progress to their classmates and some make good progress. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics because interventions in these subjects are more effective.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been good enough, particularly in Key Stage 2. There has been a significant change of teachers and instability in staffing has led to some disruption to classes which has affected progress.
- Teachers do not make frequent and consistent enough use of technical terms and key words, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not have a good understanding of these terms which sometimes hampers their progress. This is particularly true for pupils with special educational needs where the use of this language would help them with their written work.

- Teachers across the school do not always extend the thinking of pupils through questioning and through the tasks they set so that pupils are challenged and their understanding deepens. This sometimes limits progress, particularly for the more able.
- Marking in books consistently tells pupils what they need to do to improve, and in the best examples pupils routinely respond to extra work or comments that teachers write in their books. Pupils say they find this helpful.
- Teachers think carefully about ways to engage pupils and to make lessons enjoyable. They are keen to improve their teaching and many are reflective about their teaching. Their commitment to their pupils is obvious.
- In many classrooms there are well-established routines that help lessons flow smoothly. Teaching assistants play a positive part in supporting learning and managing behaviour.
- The school works hard to promote enjoyment of reading. New reading books have been purchased to lend them and there are reading corners in every classroom. This has had a positive impact and many pupils say they love reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- When teaching is good, behaviour in lessons is also good. Both teachers and teaching assistants use good strategies to reduce behaviour problems in lessons. At times, however, problems arising from pupils' poor attitudes to each other affect their behaviour and slows learning down.
- A number of pupils come from families in challenging circumstances and the school recently appointed an Every Child Matters coordinator to support these children and their families. Her efforts have been successful in making recent reductions in the numbers of pupils who persistently stay away from school. This improvement is of recent standing, and below average attendance continues to hamper the progress of a small number of children.
- Pupils are usually keen to learn and most engage very well with learning, particularly when lessons are interesting and there is appropriate challenge. In a Year 1 lesson pupils could hardly wait to begin writing and settled down quickly, taking pride in their work.
- Pupils show respect to adults in the school but they do not always show respect to each other, for example telling tales unnecessarily or pushing each other in queues. This leads to minor disruption from time to time.
- The school has taken effective action to improve punctuality and lateness to school has been substantially reduced.
- The number of exclusions is higher than in many primary schools and is often due to pupils losing their tempers. The school is working hard with partner schools in the Trust to reduce exclusions and to provide a fresh start for those who are finding it hard to behave appropriately. An educational psychotherapist is employed part time to help pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. This and other pastoral work in school has had an impact and there have been no exclusions in the past two terms.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They say that bullying is infrequent and that when it arises the school deals with it well. Pupils are aware of what constitutes discriminatory language

and they understand that it is wrong.

- There are good strategies to teach children how to stay safe including teaching about on-line safety, road safety and swimming.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The well-respected headteacher and her deputy provide a strong direction for the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and of those aspects that need improving. However, too much of the drive for improvement is dependent on them.
- Subject leaders and others with responsibility for aspects of the school are not always given enough time, information and opportunity to lead change in their subjects and they are generally limited to managerial and administrative tasks. For example, responsibility for interventions for special needs pupils rests with the deputy headteacher. This leaves the special needs coordinator to manage the interventions and deal with administrative matters rather than take a more proactive role, such as training newer and less experienced members of staff in techniques to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Provision for pupils in Reception is well thought out and the curriculum meets the needs of those pupils who need to catch up, enabling them to make good progress.
- The school has a good track record of improvement in some aspects, for example progress is improving, punctuality is better, exclusions have reduced. Staff and parent questionnaires show high levels of confidence in school leadership.
- School leaders have been prompt to tackle weaknesses and improve the quality of teaching. Teachers say they are receiving feedback on their work and that they have appropriate training. As a result they feel that they are improving, and improved pupil progress confirms this view.
- The school has developed a creative curriculum in order to improve the engagement of children in wider learning. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of completed work showed that pupils enjoy many subjects and the school curriculum meets legal requirements.
- Provision for spiritual, moral and social understanding is good. During the inspection the school was celebrating Black History Month and pupils were reflecting on aspects of human rights. There are many opportunities to visit places outside school and visitors provide useful insights into wider social and cultural aspects. Assemblies provide an opportunity for reflection and prayer.
- The school has not yet received its Primary school sports funding but already employs sports coaches to increase levels of pupils' sporting activity. Planning is well advanced to consolidate these opportunities when funding is received.
- The Local Authority provides a school adviser who supports the school to evaluate its own performance. Most of the developmental support comes from outside consultants and through the Trust. The use of advanced skills teachers has had a positive impact on improving the teaching of mathematics, particularly for pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and they play an active part in the life of the school and interpret data about standards accurately.
- They provide a balance of support and challenge for the school and hold it to account for pupils' achievement and personal development.
- Governors know what the quality of teaching is. They link teachers' performance to rates of pay and they have adopted appropriate policies to ensure this applies to staff across school. They have acted to support the headteacher in dealing with issues of poor staff performance.
- Governors take their roles seriously and regularly attend training. Health and safety concerns, finance and pupils' progress are carefully monitored through meetings, visits and reports. They are aware of the use and impact of additional funding such as that for the pupil premium.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 124220 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 426998 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 384 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | George Adamson |
| Headteacher | Sandra Peck |
| Date of previous school inspection | 03 October 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01543 510247 |
| Fax number | 01543 510243 |
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