

Moss Lane School

Moss Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EF

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils achieve well because they make good progress from their starting points and reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are keen to learn and make every effort to improve. Their attendance is above average.
- Pupils feel entirely safe within the warm, welcoming and purposeful environment.
- School leaders and governors work very well together. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has made many improvements since her appointment. Staff share her high expectations and drive for improvement.
- Very good partnerships, including with parents and carers, support pupils' well-being and learning very well.
- The governing body is confident and carries out its statutory duties well. Governors provide fair and robust challenge and methodically hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a very small amount still requires improvement.
- The progress of some lower-attaining pupils in reading and writing is hindered because of a lack of confidence in phonics (the knowledge of letters and their sounds). Occasionally, phonics work is too hard for them.
- A few pupils do not spell well enough. Not enough is done to show these pupils how to apply phonics when spelling.
- Very occasionally, teachers do not settle pupils to their work as quickly as they should after being shown what to do. This slows the pace of pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons and over a half were observed jointly with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. They listened to a sample of pupils read from Years 1 and 2.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's data on attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and teachers. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered the 131 responses to the online Parent View survey. They also spoke informally to parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered responses to the 15 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lee Selby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Moss Lane School is smaller than most schools of the same type.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with 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 average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority groups is below average. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is below average.
- There have been many changes in teaching staff in recent years. The headteacher took up post two years ago.
- The breakfast club on the school's site is separately managed and was not inspected at this time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing by:
 - improving pupils' spelling by ensuring teachers consistently show pupils how to apply their knowledge of phonics when writing
 - developing lower-attaining pupils' confidence in using phonics when reading and writing and making sure phonics activities always build well on their existing skills
 - ensuring reading records show parents and carers their children's phonics targets
 - ensuring teachers settle pupils to work as quickly as possible after whole-class teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's attainment on entry, while broadly as expected overall, varies. A minority join the school with more advanced skills while some children have weakness in their personal development and communication skills, and a few are at early stages of speaking English. Children in Reception make good progress overall and pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 has been consistently above average for several years.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 so that they leave the school with well above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment data, lesson observations and pupils' reading heard by inspectors show that, in the current Year 2, almost all pupils are attaining at least the expected standards, with over a half reaching the higher levels.
- In the end of Year 2 national assessments in writing in 2013, boys did less well than girls. In the current Year 2, the school's strong drive to improve writing, including stimulating boys' interest, is leading to both boys and girls attaining equally well; and there are no significant differences between the achievement of girls and boys in reading and mathematics.
- By Year 2, pupils are keen readers. More-able pupils read avidly and are equally adept when reading for information or when reading stories. However, a few lower-attaining pupils do not always use phonics as confidently as they should when reading new words. This prevents them making faster progress.
- New systems for teaching phonics throughout the school are having a good impact on ensuring most pupils make good progress in learning their sounds and letters. However, at the start of lessons when the whole class is taught together, progress occasionally slows for lower-attaining pupils because the activities provided are too hard.
- Progress in writing is also a little uneven in Reception and Key Stage 1. By Year 2, most pupils write well for different purposes and their handwriting, sentence construction and use of vocabulary are particularly good. However, a few pupils have weaker spelling because, occasionally, staff in both Reception and Key Stage 1 do not help them to apply their phonics skills well enough.
- Pupils learn well in mathematics and successfully apply their calculation skills when solving real-life problems. This was observed when Year 2 pupils accurately calculated their change in pounds and pence after 'purchasing' items. Many were able to perform these calculations mentally.
- Pupils of different ethnic groups, including those with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make progress similar to their peers. Specialist teaching arrangements for those pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills ensure they make good progress.
- The few pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well. Their good progress is the result of the good support they are given and wise use of the pupil premium funding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is lively and engaging. The curriculum, through visits and practical work, is well designed to help teachers broaden pupils' experiences and develop their communication and thinking skills. It is generally well structured and enables teachers to securely build pupils' basic skills in lessons and over time.
- Lessons capture pupils' attention and motivate them to learn. For example, following a visit to the local church in Year 1, the teacher enthusiastically encouraged pupils to write captions explaining the purposes of some key features of church buildings. Pupils progressed very well because they were captivated by the way the teacher's explanations enabled them to understand new vocabulary and helped them to apply phonics skills when writing words.

- Leaders have worked hard with staff to promote good teaching of reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils build up their skills as they progress through classes. This year, the school has revised the way it teaches phonics and teachers now follow a consistent approach.
- Reading skills are mostly taught well but, on a few occasions in Reception and Key Stage 1, phonics tasks are too hard for lower-attaining pupils. There are also a few instances when teachers do not demonstrate clearly enough how pupils should apply phonics when spelling words.
- In mathematics, teachers focus sharply on developing pupils' number skills through systematic daily teaching. Attractive resources and activities engage pupils' interest. For example, practical activities in Reception enabled children to develop their calculation skills well and to start to write number sums involving subtraction.
- Very occasionally, teachers do not ensure there is a brisk transition from whole-class teaching to group and individual work. This slows the pace of pupils' learning.
- Teachers and learning support assistants plan well to meet the needs of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak limited English. Adults provide work in class and small groups that is often demanding yet always achievable.
- In Reception, adult-led learning involves practical activities to broaden children's experiences and capture children's interest before they undertake tasks such as writing. For example, this was seen when, after dressing up, children eagerly chose which hero or other story character they wished to write about.
- Teachers rigorously check on pupils' progress and provide helpful comments in their marking. Pupils respond to these well and are eager to improve their skills.
- Teachers keep careful assessments of pupils' developing phonics skills and pupils are heard to read on a very regular basis. However, lower-attaining pupils' home-school reading records do not include sufficient information about the key sounds and letters they should know. This limits parents' ability to help their children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has a very positive and caring ethos. Pupils feel well looked after and they show respect and kindness to each other. Pupils from diverse backgrounds get on extremely well together. This is because the school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that they have few concerns about bullying. They know what bullying is and what to do if they think it might be happening. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when playing on the outdoor equipment or when using the internet.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or completed Parent View agreed their children are well looked after and kept safe.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful towards adults and each other. Their positive attitude to learning makes a strong contribution to their learning. Pupils enjoy learning and cooperate well with each other, for example when discussing ideas with their classmates or sharing resources in Reception.
- A few pupils who find it hard to regulate their own behaviour are well supported and show good improvement over time. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration when activities are too hard or when teachers do not ensure there is a brisk transition from whole-class work to group work.
- The school has taken effective steps to ensure that pupils attend very regularly so that attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations and provides a clear direction. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher and they have worked closely together over the past two years to

build and develop a strong staff team. Staff are united in supporting the headteacher's drive to ensure pupils receive the best teaching and care the school can offer.

- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching rigorously by regularly observing lessons and examining pupils' work. Leaders have successfully addressed relative weaknesses in teaching and recognise there is more to be done to ensure phonics teaching is consistently good.
- The systems used to check how well individual pupils are doing have been refined and ensure that teachers are now fully involved in these reviews. This enables leaders and staff to evaluate how different groups and individuals are achieving and to improve provision where necessary.
- Leadership has been shared more widely and middle leaders' roles are developing well. They provide good help to other teachers and check pupils' progress and work. They are beginning to observe lessons across the school so they can have a stronger impact on helping to raise achievement.
- Leaders manage staff performance well, including those who are new to teaching or to their positions of responsibility. Teachers are helped to improve their teaching through clear guidance, well-selected professional training and coaching.
- Teachers are set challenging targets, such as raising the achievement of pupils and improving the quality of their teaching. Teachers' movement up the pay scales is linked to pupils' good progress.
- The school ensures the accuracy of its assessment of pupils' performance by agreeing standards with the local authority and other schools. Partnerships with other schools are well developed and those with a local junior school are having a positive impact on enriching learning opportunities in English for the most able pupils.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are also strong. The school has many formal and informal channels of communication that enable parents and carers to be closely involved with their children's education and make a positive contribution to their learning.
- The local authority provides light touch support to the school, but gave extra support at the headteacher's request by providing training courses to improve teachers' subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy. The school found the local authority's support helpful.
- The primary school sports funding is being used to employ more coaches and to increase professional training in physical education for staff. There are clear plans to evaluate the impact of this work on improving pupils' skills, health and well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious, knowledgeable, well trained and know the school well, including its strengths and areas for development. This is because they often visit the school, receive detailed reports from the headteacher and understand assessment data. They evaluate these to determine how well pupils are doing, including those pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding. This enables governors to ask leaders challenging questions as well as provide them with support. They know the actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and how teachers' pay is being linked to their performance. Governors set robust targets for the performance of the headteacher and monitor financial decisions, such as those regarding the use of pupil premium funding and primary sports funding. They ensure that statutory arrangements for safeguarding are met.

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	125049
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	431447

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dewi ab Iorwerth
Headteacher	Victoria Abbott
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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