

Moorlands Primary School

Winchester Road, West Bromwich, B71 2NZ

Inspection dates 18–19 June 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.

- Attainment is rising steadily across the school.
- Pupils make good progress from Reception onwards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects, especially the performing arts.
- Most teaching supports pupils well. The methods and resources teachers select, together with the interesting topics pupils study, ensure that pupils enjoy their learning.
- Teachers guide pupils' learning well. Pupils benefit from consistently good oral and written feedback and opportunities to comment on each other's work. This enables them to see clearly what they have done well and decide what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils behave well. They take pride in their work and their school. They relate well to each other and to staff. This ensures that lessons and activities run smoothly.
- Pupils feel safe and are well trained in how to stay safe when encountering potentially dangerous situations.
- A wide range of stimulating experiences adds breadth and depth to pupils' education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Leaders, managers and governors have played key roles in building highly effective local partnerships. Best practice has been used purposefully to improve teaching and to raise pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils sometimes do not make the progress they are capable of when the work they are set is too easy.
- Some activities in lessons are not focused sharply enough to enable pupils to develop their skills well.
- Reception children do not have enough well-planned, stimulating experiences in the outdoor area to enable them to extend their skills, especially in writing.
- Key subject and other leaders' understanding of data on pupils' performance is not sharp enough to enable them to help shape the school's long-term plans.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons taught by nine teachers or teaching assistants. Four of these lessons were observed together with senior leaders.
- Some pupils in Year 2 were heard reading.
- Samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics were analysed in detail.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 questionnaires completed by staff. There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, for them to be published. However, inspectors considered responses from parents and pupils to the school's own recent survey of their views about the school. An inspector spoke informally to a small number of parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants' reports; school improvement plans; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sarah Davey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This additional funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- Some key subject and other leaders have taken up post in the last year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by making sure that:
 - well-planned, stimulating experiences are provided for Reception children in the outdoor area to enable them to extend their skills, especially in writing
 - teachers always choose lesson activities carefully to enable pupils to make brisk progress in developing their knowledge and skills
 - teachers always provide the most-able pupils with work that makes them think hard and learn as quickly as they can.
- Improve the contribution new subject and other leaders make to the school's long-term action plans by making sure that they use data on pupils' performance sharply to review the impact of teaching in their areas of responsibility so that they can make clear decisions about which aspects of pupils' skills need further development and take highly effective actions to tackle them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising and is close to the level expected nationally for pupils' ages in all year groups.
- The levels of skills and attitudes of children when they join Reception are well below those expected nationally. Last year, overall, Reception children joined Year 1 with average attainment, although with some weaknesses in writing. The most recent assessments confirm that current Reception children have made good progress in most areas of learning.
- In 2013 an above-average proportion of children were successful in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make). Less-able Year 2 pupils sound out new words accurately and show a clear understanding of the texts they have read.
- In the last three years, Year 6 pupils' attainment at Level 4 has at least matched national averages and this represents good progress for pupils over Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, the attainment of Year 2 pupils was below average at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, standards overall have risen steadily over the last four years. The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2013 was a little below average. This was largely because of the circumstances of this unusually small year group, but also because too few pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Across the school, the progress of the most-able pupils is not consistently good as they are not always challenged enough to extend their skills fully.
- Year 6 pupils in 2013 eligible for pupil premium funding were working half a term behind their classmates in mathematics, one term behind in reading, but almost six terms behind in writing. However, during their time in school they also had made good progress. The school's current assessment data show that, across the school, these pupils' rates of progress are similar to those of their classmates, including in writing.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Some of these pupils with more complex needs do especially well due to the skilled, intensive support they receive; for example, to improve their early reading and writing skills.
- Attainment in the current Year 6 class is at the level expected for their age and these pupils have made good progress over the course of Key Stage 2 from their below-average starting point in Year 3. In all year groups, pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to apply their mathematical skills, not only in practical problem-solving exercises but in other subjects. For example, pupils' understanding of size and shapes is explored in their artwork and in their work on the Egyptian pyramids.
- The relative weakness in pupils' writing skills persists to some extent in Key Stage 1. However, pupils gradually catch up in Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, there is little difference between pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's rich curriculum enables pupils to achieve well in other aspects of school life, such as the arts and sport.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers are highly experienced and develop their expertise well through working with different year groups and through sharing and demonstrating good practice to colleagues in other schools.

- Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities, including through well-prepared resources and educational visits, to acquire knowledge and to apply their skills in a wide variety of exciting contexts and different subjects. Pupils are enthused by the topics and themes they study and they work hard.
- Teachers consistently provide pupils in lessons with regular, well-planned opportunities to assess their work and that of others. Consequently, pupils are very aware of how well they have mastered a new idea and develop the confidence to decide for themselves what steps they need to take next.
- Teachers' marking is of good quality and most pupils respond well to the useful tips provided to help them improve their work.
- The teaching of early reading is good. Teachers review systematically pupils' short sentences to check whether they have correctly applied their knowledge of new sounds. They correct any misunderstandings quickly and their praise encourages pupils to persevere and focus well when they move on to the next sounds.
- Teachers' questioning often encourages pupils to take imaginative leaps in their thinking. For example, the Reception teacher invited children to view bulky items of classroom furniture from a 'bird's eye' perspective. Children, looking at photographs, rose to this challenge well, identified shapes accurately and compared and contrasted them to the small building blocks on their table. However, the outdoor area does not provide children with a stimulating range of resources and experiences to enable them to extend their basic skills fully, especially in writing.
- Teaching in Year 6 is particularly effective as the teacher ensures that pupils are fully absorbed in learning. Activities are carefully chosen to enable pupils to practise their skills at a fast pace. This was shown in a Year 6 English lesson, when a 'pickpocket' was confronted with carefully prepared questions about his life history by his classmates. Pupils then used his thoughtful, detailed responses to illustrate and to enhance their own accounts.
- On a few occasions, tasks are less well chosen to enable pupils to make good gains in developing their understanding and skills. Teachers do not consistently have high expectations for the most-able pupils, especially in mathematics, where these pupils sometimes spend too long on tasks which do not extend their abilities.
- Teachers make sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included in lessons. Pupils with severe difficulties are aided especially well through one-to-one support while teaching assistants work effectively with pupils in catch-up lessons to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils are very responsible and self-disciplined. They listen attentively and respond well, nearly always with interest and enthusiasm, and make good progress as a result. Pupils take care to present their work tidily.
- Younger pupils are exceptionally friendly and very keen to share experiences and to learn about visitors. Older pupils are polite, mature and articulate.
- Reception children know the school's routines well and respond keenly to staff's questioning.

Their sense of security in the setting is reflected in their warm relationship to adults. They concentrate well in the outdoor area on their self-chosen activities. A few children, however, lack the conversational skills to enable them to share learning fully with others.

- Pupils mix well together. They thoroughly enjoy active play and make full use of playground resources, including the trim-trail, to test out their balancing skills. Older pupils treat younger ones sensitively and Year 6 'buddies' are always ready to find a playmate for younger pupils if they need one at lunchtimes.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their accomplishments in the arts and sports. They respect their school councillors, who often take a leading role in assemblies, gather their views and meet regularly with staff to plan improvements to the school grounds and facilities.
- The school's orchestra involves all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 and a few staff. It is a powerful symbol of the school's spirit of togetherness, successful commitment to equal opportunities and pupils' enjoyment of the wider parts of school life. It also reflects the school's commitment to encouraging pupils' interest in the performing arts, as recognised in its Artsmark Gold Award.
- Pupils and their parents have very few concerns about behaviour and bullying. Pupils say that sanctions rarely need to be used. There are very few recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour. There have been no exclusions for nearly four years.
- Pupils behave well in public areas inside school, such as the dining hall and during assemblies.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are especially vigilant while supervising younger pupils or those who need extra help with their movement. Pupils appreciate the rota system which allows all pupils to play games safely at lunchtimes and say they always have someone to confide in if needed.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying. They know the difference between bullying and the temporary 'fall-outs' which sometimes arise. They are confident in their ability to sort these out quickly, with or without adult help.
- Pupils keep each other safe because they have benefited from numerous opportunities to show consideration for others on team-building exercises; for example, on residential visits and during joint activities with pupils from other schools.
- Pupils are well trained in how to stay safe in potentially hazardous 'first-hand' situations, such as near busy roads, on bicycles and on foot. Staff also encourage pupils to consider their responses to wider safety concerns, such as the recent floods in southern parts of England. Pupils' training in e-safety has recently been enhanced through a school project which included pupils designing an app to heighten the importance of internet security.
- The nurture group and close links with external agencies make useful contributions to the school's work in ensuring pupils' well-being.
- Attendance dipped last year but has risen this year to its former level. Staff maintain close contact with pupils who have long-term medical problems to minimise any disruption to their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have used partnerships and training very successfully to improve teaching and to increase the range of exciting opportunities pupils have, such as the school orchestra, to equip them with useful life skills and to nurture their creative talents.

- Leaders are far from complacent. They are outward-looking, open to new ideas and promote continuous school improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher help staff to develop their expertise by providing them with opportunities to work with different age groups.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. Systems are well established. Stable staffing helps to ensure that procedures – for example, for managing pupils’ behaviour and assessment – are consistently followed. This promotes a good spirit of teamwork. Staff morale is strong.
- Senior leaders check teaching regularly and suitable action is taken to support new teachers. Procedures for monitoring the impact of the school’s work, including the progress of pupils who need extra support, are timely and thorough. Data on pupils’ achievement in individual year groups are analysed accurately and senior leaders use this information purposefully to direct teaching and to hold staff accountable for the progress of pupils in their class.
- Staff rise to challenges well; two subject leaders are currently engaged on research projects into aspects of pupils’ learning. However, new subject leaders have not acquired a thorough overview of their key areas of responsibility or a detailed understanding of data. Consequently, they do not pinpoint sharply weaknesses in pupils’ skills across the school and construct well-focused plans to tackle them.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively; for example, to provide extra one-to-one help for eligible pupils to improve their early reading skills and to enable them to improve their social skills by taking part in residential visits.
- The curriculum serves pupils well. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered exceptionally well in lessons, projects, arts and sporting programmes. Regular reinforcement of themes such as self-esteem, creativity, respect for others and diversity encourage pupils to be confident and reflective in their outlook. However, although there are useful, planned activities for gifted and talented pupils outside lessons, the most-able pupils are not consistently challenged well to enable them to achieve at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The first instalment of the national sport funding for primary schools has been spent appropriately. It has been used, for example, to increase the amount of time pupils spend on physical activities and to provide expert coaching in gymnastics, in which pupils have recently enjoyed success in competitions.
- The local authority, knowing that the school can, and does, direct its own self-improvement, monitors the impact of the actions it takes effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Key governors are experienced and are keen to ensure the school’s continued success. They take their duties seriously and hold leaders to account effectively. They receive regular reports from leaders about the actions the school takes to improve pupils’ learning. They check the impact of these actions through their links to individual classes and discussions with staff. They also undertake focused learning walks and take part in book scrutinies. In these ways, they acquire a clear overview of how well pupils are doing.
 - Governors know which strategies have been most successful in raising the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and check that this funding is used well.
 - Governors are suitably involved in making decisions and in managing staff’s performance. They use the information which they receive appropriately to check whether the headteacher and other teachers have met their targets before agreeing to pay rises.
 - Governors ensure that current government requirements 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	103908
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	444072

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Miller
Headteacher	Haydn Moss
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2011
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