

Moorlands CofE Primary Academy

Moorland Way, Belton, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 9PA

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment is too low. There are gaps in the older pupils' knowledge and understanding owing to weaker teaching in the past.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged enough to fulfil their potential.
- Teaching is too inconsistent to be judged as good overall. Teachers sometimes do not move pupils' learning on when they are ready for greater depth.
- Teachers' assessments last year were inaccurate. Teachers did not have a clear enough understanding of the new tracking system.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work vary.
- There are flaws in the way English grammar, spelling and punctuation are taught, leading to pupils making mistakes.
- There is too much focus on English and mathematics at the expense of other subjects. Pupils do not experience enough visits or visitors to broaden their aspirations.
- Many middle leaders are new to role and have not yet developed the confidence to have a considerable impact on their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have brought stability to the school and put in place the systems to bring about more rapid improvement.
- The school works well with families facing difficulties to help their children to become ready for learning.
- The provision in the Nursery classes is good. Children thrive in a safe and stimulating environment.
- The local governing body, under its new leadership, now challenges and supports school leaders effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that they are consistently good by ensuring that:
 - all staff have a shared understanding of the assessment system and apply it accurately
 - teachers challenge the most able pupils to reach the standards they should, including in the early years
 - handwriting improves and pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work.
- Raise attainment in mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation by ensuring that:
 - the new approach to teaching mathematics enables pupils to make rapid progress
 - teachers move pupils on in their learning to deepen their understanding as soon as they are ready, particularly the most able
 - teachers adopt a rigorous approach to ensuring that pupils acquire the necessary skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing a broad and rich curriculum that raises pupils' aspirations and enables them to apply their skills across a range of subjects
 - fully involving middle leaders in developing the confidence to bring about rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new leadership team recognises that there is still much to be done and that many initiatives are at an early stage of development. While there is a clear improvement in the ethos of the school and pupils' behaviour and attitudes, this has not resulted enough in raised standards and accelerated progress.
- The current headteacher and deputy headteacher have strong vision and ambition for the school and are committed to improving the educational opportunities for all pupils. They have shown this through leading by example and changing the culture of the school to one of mutual respect where all pupils are valued and cared about.
- They have built a dedicated staff team whose members are open to change and keen to improve. They have brought stability and a positive outlook to the school.
- The current headteacher and deputy headteacher have been successful in engaging parents and building relationships. The school is now outward looking and links effectively with the trust and the wider community. For example, the school's social media account has some 500 followers and keeps parents well informed about developments.
- Leaders are working closely with teaching staff to raise the quality of provision. Their high expectations have resulted in several changes of personnel, with new appointments making a positive contribution to the school's work. Extensive training is helping to improve teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics. This is beginning to make a difference to pupils' experiences, who reported that they find learning more enjoyable.
- There have been several changes in the roles of middle leaders. They have a growing understanding of their areas of responsibility and the part they play in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. However, because many are new to the role, they have not yet developed the confidence to bring about rapid and sustained improvement in their areas.
- There is inconsistent application of the school's feedback and marking policy, so pupils are sometimes not clear about how to improve their work.
- The school has focused particularly on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but sometimes at the expense of other subjects. This means that pupils have not had enough opportunities to practise their skills across the curriculum, or to develop their understanding of other subjects in sufficient depth. There are too few visits and visitors to raise pupils' aspirations, and this means that they do not benefit enough from those wider experiences that enrich the curriculum.
- Pupils are learning about British values, such as democracy, through the school council and the school's 'book council'. Members of the book council invite authors to visit the school and choose a selection of books for the new school library. The youngest children show their understanding of freedom of choice through the decisions they make together. Pupils are aware of different family groupings that are reflected in modern British society.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness effectively. Pupils show empathy for others, such as what life was like for members of the Scott expedition to the South Pole, or for soldiers in the trenches during the first world war. Attractive new murals reflect the school's core values in the hall.
- Pupils understand these values and can give examples of when they have witnessed or exhibited them. For example, when a mother duck gathered her ducklings under her wings in the cold, wet weather, a six-year-old remarked, 'She is showing compassion!'
- Most parents have welcomed the improvements the current headteacher has brought in, although a few still have issues with the school. Some felt that communication could be better and others felt that incidents of bullying were not dealt with well. Largely, however, parents recognise the significant change in the culture of the school and its desire to engage with them positively.
- This year the school has adopted an effective strategy for using the pupil premium and leaders are following the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely. A recent external review of the spending of this funding was helpful for the school and it has implemented recommendations such as canvassing pupils' views.
- The school spends its physical education and sport funding well on coaching for pupils and professional development for staff. As a result, pupils have more opportunities to take part in sport and staff are becoming more skilled at teaching a wider range of sports.
- The trust has become more effective in supporting the school over time. It has helped with equipping capable leaders and holding leaders to account for driving improvement. The trust's own officers and advisers work closely with the senior leadership team and have become a valuable resource.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body knows the school well and is very supportive of the leadership team. Under new leadership, governors increasingly challenge leaders and test out the information they receive from them.
- Governors have undertaken an audit of their skills and look to plug gaps when new governors are appointed. By these means, governors have a wide range of expertise to offer the school.
- Governors are keen to improve their effectiveness and regularly attend training to hone their skills. They link well with the trust as they plan for the longer term future of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders follow procedures carefully and ensure that all pupils are kept safe. They keep detailed records of any incidents, the actions taken and the outcomes. They make sure that all staff are fully trained in keeping pupils safe.
- The pastoral staff of the school work well with families to assist them when they experience difficulties that may have an impact on their children and their education. They know the pupils as individuals and cater effectively for their different needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is inconsistency in provision. Teachers' expectations on occasions are not high enough to ensure that pupils make good progress over time.
- In mathematics, for example, pupils sometimes spend too long practising a skill when they have already mastered it. Teachers do not move them along quickly enough to deeper learning.
- The most able pupils, in particular, are often not challenged enough. Rather than being given demanding work from the outset, they are expected to do similar work to other pupils, which they finish quickly. For example, a most able disadvantaged pupil was completing calculations that were well within his grasp and there was no provision to extend his learning further.
- Teachers' assessments were not secure in 2016. In mathematics and reading, in particular, their judgements were too generous and at odds with subsequent test scores.
- The quality of handwriting varies. While some pupils are developing a neat and tidy script, many do not form their letters correctly or take pride in their presentation.
- There has not been sufficient emphasis on improving spelling, punctuation and grammar. This shows itself in pupils making too many simple spelling errors and forgetting to add punctuation.
- There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils based on mutual respect. Pupils said that teaching had become more interesting. One pupil said, 'We learn more and more every day.' Another commented, 'The teachers make the lessons more fun.'
- Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and often share with them the features that will show that they are making a success of their learning. For example, Year 2 pupils were finding interesting adjectives to describe vegetables.
- Both teachers and teaching assistants often question pupils well to find out what they know and to probe their thinking. In the early years, stimulating activities are linked to children's interests. For example, during the inspection three- and four-year-old Nursery children had set up a 'heartbeat surgery' which they had named and organised themselves.
- The new approach to teaching mathematics is helping to fill in gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding from weaker teaching in the past. This has made learning more purposeful.
- The teaching of reading is more effective than that of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Pupils have a clear grasp of phonics. They said, 'Everyone in the school loves reading,' and 'The new library is great.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- When work is not matched to their needs some pupils struggle and they lose motivation. This is when their concentration wanders. Many pupils lack strategies to remain focused in these circumstances.
- At times, pupils do not take a pride in their work. The presentation of their writing is sometimes too untidy.
- Training in life skills is helping pupils to understand how to be a successful learner and more are developing good learning habits. They are more willing to 'have a go' and consequently are now becoming more resilient learners.
- Mostly pupils are happy in school and feel safe. They know whom to go to if they have any concerns. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and have reduced since the headteacher joined the school.
- Pupils said that behaviour has improved a lot and that they liked the new behaviour system with its rewards and consequences. They felt that people were polite to one another.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some children were seen to be talking among themselves in assembly, which did not show respect to the speaker. There was some lively behaviour from pupils in the dining hall, which showed a lack of consideration for others.
- Some pupils are not regulating their own behaviour yet, but rely too much on adults to guide them.
- Staff manage the behaviour of pupils with particular difficulties well. They are consistent in their approach and treat pupils with respect. This models the positive behaviour they expect from the pupils.
- Pupils said that they like coming to school because they learn new skills. This is evident in improved attendance, which is now average. Persistent absence has fallen to close to the national average. It is carefully and effectively monitored.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The outcomes of national tests at the end of 2016 for pupils in key stage 2 were disappointing. This was because of historical underachievement and a legacy of poor teaching. While pupils made accelerated progress when in Year 6, there was not enough time to fill the gaps in their learning.
- Owing to the many changes in leadership, the school was late in adopting the new national curriculum. This meant that pupils were not prepared well for the learning they would be tested upon. Pupils lacked stamina and failed to complete the test papers. Their outcomes in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling were particularly low.
- Outcomes were more positive for younger year groups, reflecting improvements in the provision. For example, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year shows a rising trend. In 2016 this was broadly average.

- The outcomes in 2016 for pupils at the end of key stage 1 were generally in line with the national average. This group of pupils made good progress over time. Their outcomes from Reception were below average. The proportions of most-able pupils reaching a greater depth were not quite as large. This was because they were not sufficiently challenged at times.
- In other year groups, attainment is below where it should be, particularly in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Some pupils have had many changes of teacher and this has slowed their progress over time. For example, the present Year 6 had 11 teachers when in Year 4.
- Girls historically have not done as well as boys in mathematics. This situation is changing as their needs are being identified and met.
- The numbers of pupils supported by the pupil premium are quite small in each year group so there are no reliable patterns of achievement over time. Their progress is generally similar to that of other pupils and there are no great differences or gaps in their knowledge and attainment when compared with other pupils in the school or nationally.
- The school draws on a wide range of support to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their progress requires improvement, especially in key stage 2. While there are good systems to identify pupils' needs, the school's assessment of their progress is at an early stage. Some teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils to make more rapid progress. On occasions when pupils are not receiving individual support, the general class teaching sometimes does not meet their needs precisely enough and they do not do as well as they could.
- The most able pupils are not achieving their full potential. This includes most-able disadvantaged pupils. Too few are reaching the higher standards at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2. There is often not enough challenge in many classes and subjects. For example, in history, all pupils may be given the same work sheet to complete, which restricts what the most able can produce.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The provision is not yet good in Reception because the most able children are not being sufficiently challenged, especially in expectations of their writing. At the end of the summer term, for example, children with a good level of development in writing were not routinely being expected to write in sentences even though they were capable of doing so. This did not prepare children well for learning in Year 1.
- The acquisition of skills in mathematics is widely promoted in the early years. However, this is not so much the case with the acquisition of early literacy skills. Children are not as exposed to written words in the classrooms and in the outside space as they are to numbers.
- There is good provision in the two Nursery classes. Adults understand the needs of very young children and have created a safe and stimulating learning environment where two-year-olds thrive.
- Routines are well established. For example, children in the older Nursery class were tidying up to the 'Mission Impossible' music really quickly and were sitting on the carpet ready before the music had finished. Children behave well and are kept safe.

- The early years 'champion', a member of staff who promotes consistent practice across the early years, is having a positive impact, especially in Nursery. She has ensured that two-year-olds have a curriculum that is tailored to their individual interests and needs.
- Teaching staff interact with children effectively, especially in Nursery classes. They intervene sensitively to develop children's ideas when they are playing.
- There is a spacious and well-equipped outside area. It includes an impressive interactive water feature that captures children's imagination.
- Leaders engage with parents well. They keep them informed about what is happening and welcome them into the early years. Parents were positive about their children's experiences.
- The tracking of children's progress is detailed and parents can access their records online. Parents are encouraged to make contributions drawn from children's achievements at home. This builds up a clear record of how children are doing across the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	140189
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10019586

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust
Chair of the local governing body	Maureen Eade
Headteacher	Kevin Lee
Telephone number	01493 780007
Website	www.moorlands.dneat.org
Email address	office@moorlands.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There are two Reception classes and two Nursery classes, one for two- to three-year-olds, and one for three- to four-year-olds.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although fewer have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what schools should publish.

- The school became a sponsored academy on 1 November 2013. The predecessor school was judged by Ofsted to require special measures because it was not providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The school is sponsored by the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since it became an academy, the school has had eight different headteachers or acting headteachers. The current headteacher was appointed to the permanent post in June 2015.
- There have also been many changes of teaching staff over the past three years.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 30 parts of lessons, many of them jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They looked closely at samples of pupils' work saved from last year with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of the school's documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports and safeguarding records. They considered evidence of the school's partnership work and the information provided for families.
- A meeting was held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff on a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements and their professional development. The lead inspector talked to the chair of the local governing body and another governor. He also met with four representatives of the trust.
- The inspection team considered 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke informally to some parents in the playground, interviewed one parent by request and received one letter from a parent about the school.
- Inspectors took into account free-text responses from parents and the views of pupils through the Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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