



Moorhouse Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105788
LEA Rochdale
Inspection number 283012
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Stephen Hardwick HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crossley Street
School category	Community		Milnrow
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Rochdale, Lancashire OL16 4DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 642742
Number on roll	264	Fax number	01706 642742
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	CLlr Swift
Date of previous inspection	1 February 1999	Headteacher	Mr R Lee

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Introduction

When Moorhouse Primary School was inspected in February 2004, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress. This inspection was carried out by HMI.

Description of the school

Moorhouse Primary School is situated in Milnrow, where it serves a local housing estate. It is slightly larger than average though the number of pupils on roll has fallen recently. Most of the pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is around twice the national average, reflecting social and economic hardship in the area. There are 55 pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; 5 of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. The pupils' attainment when they enter the school is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Over the last two years, much has changed for the better at Moorhouse Primary School. A new headteacher and deputy have brought determination and a strong sense of purpose to the school's work, supported by staff and governors. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, enabling pupils to make faster progress in lessons: it is good overall though stronger in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. The school's results in national tests have risen but remain below average. The curriculum meets requirements, and pupils benefit from a sound range of extra activities.

Pupils' behaviour was a matter of concern when the school was inspected in 2004, and there was a regular need to exclude pupils. As a result of a firm and consistent approach to managing behaviour, the pupils' conduct and attitudes have improved greatly and the need to exclude pupils has declined accordingly. The behaviour and attitudes of most pupils are good. The needs of the few who still show challenging behaviour are being dealt with through suitable and specific provision.

The school's overall plans have been rationalised to provide an appropriate way forward and there is a thorough regime for monitoring what has been achieved. Satisfactory and, in some respects, good progress has been made on the key issues following the inspection in 2004, though attendance has only recently begun to rise. The school has the leadership, staff and systems to continue to move forward rapidly, but progress is threatened to a degree by the need to make budgetary cuts. Nevertheless this setback is being tackled realistically and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school is well aware of its priorities. Nevertheless it should:

- continue to raise standards
- continue to raise the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2
- continue to raise attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage. They progress well towards the nationally set early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

The school's results in national tests have been below average, but they have risen overall in the last two years. The scores in 2004 were an improvement on those of the previous year at both key stages in all subjects; they were broadly in line with those

of similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. In the 2005 national tests, there was a further rise in standards at Key Stage 2: two thirds of pupils reached the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics and three quarters did so in science. An increasing proportion also reached the higher Level 5. At Key Stage 1 in 2005, the results in English fell back, but there was a strong performance in mathematics, with almost all pupils reaching the basic standard expected at Year 2.

Despite this generally positive picture, the oldest pupils last year did not make enough progress during Key Stage 2. Effective teaching in Year 6 did not compensate for the chequered quality of the provision they had received earlier. There was also some variation in what pupils achieved: the progress of boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was average, while the girls' was below average. Nevertheless, the overall progress made by pupils has increased over the last two years and this was strongly reflected in class work: pupils made good gains in almost all the lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. Their attitudes and behaviour are good, though there is some variation. This is a much-improved picture on that in 2004, when there were pupils who regularly disrupted lessons. A firm and determined approach, stemming from the headteacher, has proved successful: misbehaviour has been tackled on several fronts, involving parents and outside agencies. Initially a strict line over what would be tolerated resulted in a high rate of exclusion but this has reduced significantly. There remain a few pupils who have particular difficulty controlling their behaviour, but they are being dealt with appropriately, partly through specific provision. The improved behaviour in classes has been mirrored at break times on the yard, where there is a good deal more social play than previously, but under close supervision.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. It is strongest for the moral and social elements; work on spiritual and cultural education has rightly been accorded low priority, given the issues facing the school, but the profile of these areas is rising. Assemblies are well organised occasions that include prayers, opportunities to consider moral issues and encouragement to try hard and behave well. Pupils know right from wrong, and those with behavioural difficulties are taught how to manage aggressive feelings and react to others in a friendly manner. Matters related to different cultures and faiths are mostly handled within lessons in subjects such as religious education and history, but these are enriched by particular events, such as celebrating Divali in assembly. Pupils learn about their local heritage, for instance through visits to museums and the church.

Pupils' attendance has been below average for the last two years, but the figures for the autumn term 2005 have risen and are similar to the average. This is an area where the school needs to remain vigilant.

Satisfactory arrangements are made to promote a healthy and safe lifestyle. Sports feature prominently in the school's additional activities, fresh fruit is distributed each day, and there are water dispensers on the corridors.

A specific week is being devoted to highlight the consequences of bullying and discrimination. This approach is complemented by the successful efforts that have been made to increase games at playtime through providing equipment and organised areas on the yard.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching was good in eight lessons and satisfactory in three. The teaching is good overall: it is strongest in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where lessons are consistently good and with some outstanding features; as a consequence pupils make much better progress in lessons. This is a significant improvement since the school's inspection in 2004, when teaching was unsatisfactory.

All the lessons were underpinned by good planning, preparation, and clear learning objectives that were shared with pupils. The teachers checked that the pupils could recall the learning from previous lessons before moving on, and they ensured that all the pupils contributed when the class was being taught as a whole. Work was set at different levels, according to the needs of different groups. The stronger teaching was marked out by high expectations over the quantity and quality of work and a relentless focus on securing the learning objectives.

The quality of learning is good, overall. Pupils settled to work quickly, were attentive to the teachers and organised their equipment and materials without fuss. The pace of their learning has been raised, for example, through a demanding start to the day, reminders about the need to implement basic skills such as punctuating sentences, and well-rehearsed routines.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The programme of work for the Foundation Stage pupils is good, providing an appropriate balance of activities that are led directly by adults and those that allow pupils a degree of choice. The curriculum, overall, is broad and balanced, and meets requirements. Proper regard is given to literacy and numeracy, but there have been particular initiatives to promote enjoyment in learning. In the summer term, a 'festival week' involved, for instance, artists, sculptors, actors, coaches from different sports, and staff from the emergency services. Lessons on social skills and problem solving have also been introduced. There is a sound range of activities on offer beyond the school day. These include breakfast and after-school clubs, as well as different sports.

The school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was criticised in the inspection report of 2004. However, the system and procedures for these pupils have been overhauled and their needs are now met well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Since 2004, the school has introduced good systems for measuring pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. The resulting information has been analysed to determine which individuals or aspects of English and mathematics need extra support, and appropriate programmes such as booster classes have been arranged. The information also provides the basis for each pupil's targets. These are set down in the pupils' 'planners', along with other matters that are valuably shared with parents.

Proper regard is paid to pupils' safety and welfare. The school received praise for its work in these areas within a recent appraisal by the local authority. There are carefully laid out procedures, for example, to deal with medicines and risk assessments. The older pupils are taught about the dangers of drug abuse but the governors have chosen not to provide sex education in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

When the school became subject to special measures, the local authority arranged for an associate headteacher to take temporary charge. She provided good interim leadership, setting the school on the road to recovery and restoring morale. In January 2005 a highly experienced headteacher took up the permanent post and later in the year one of the staff was promoted to deputy headteacher, thus completing the senior team.

The headteacher has provided good leadership and management, and has been well supported by the staff. He has shown drive and determination in successfully tackling a backlog of issues that threatened progress, such as a lack of policies, a lapse in performance management, some weaknesses in teaching and concerns about pupils' behaviour. More recently, a fall in the number of pupils on roll has necessitated a cutback in spending; the resulting proposals, while not welcome, are realistic and recognise priorities.

The school's overarching plans have been rationalised and drawn together, and responsibilities have been clarified and redistributed to harness the staff's expertise. The senior team has combined well, with members taking charge of key aspects of the school's work. The coordinators have also devised action plans for each subject. For their part, the governors have fulfilled their responsibilities to the school. Overall, there is a shared sense of purpose to see the school move forward.

The school has made satisfactory and, in some respects, good progress on the key issues arising from its inspection in 2004. There is a continuing need to raise standards and attendance, but there have been good gains over leadership and management,

the quality of teaching and provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Despite the difficulties over the budget, the school is well placed to improve further and there is a thorough regime for monitoring what has been achieved.

Considerable efforts have been made to forge better links with outside agencies and parents, particularly with respect to vulnerable pupils and those whose behaviour has caused concern. The improvements in pupils' conduct and the good provision for pupils with learning difficulties reflect the success of this approach.

The local authority has provided satisfactory support to the school, meeting the commitments within its statement of action. The work of improvement officers and consultants has been much valued by the school but there have been times when other help has not been as forthcoming as it might in dealing with the issues that the headteacher inherited.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	No
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Congratulations, your school no longer requires special measures. Thanks to your efforts, and the hard work of Mr Lee and the teachers, it has improved a great deal in the last two years.

Mr Lee has been determined in leading the school forward, making sure that everyone does their job and follows the rules. The teachers have set some challenging and interesting tasks for you, so you learn more in lessons. There are also other activities for you to enjoy, such as the festival week last summer.

You have played your part in what has happened. Your behaviour has improved, so school is safer and lessons are not disrupted.

The standard of your work has also risen, but it isn't yet as good as it might be. Similarly, most of you come to school everyday but there are a few of you who have taken too much time off and this affects your progress. The school agrees with me that your standards and attendance need to improve further.

I have enjoyed each of my four visits to your school. I have had some interesting conversations and it has been good to see you working harder in lessons and becoming keen to answer questions and do well. I wish you all the best for the future, at Moorhouse and when you move to secondary school.