



Mason Moor Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116263
Local Authority Southampton
Inspection number 290476
Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006
Reporting inspector Janet Sinclair

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Helvellyn Road
School category	Community		Millbrook
Age range of pupils	4–11		Southampton SO16 4AS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02380390140
Number on roll (school)	246	Fax number	02380390150
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Howard
		Headteacher	(Acting) Mrs Susanne Ottens
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006	Inspection number 290476
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school whose pupils are mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Attainment on entry is low. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is much higher than average as are the number of pupils with learning difficulties. There is an attached unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupil mobility is higher than average. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and some who are at an early stage of learning English. The school has been through a difficult time recently due to the sudden illness and subsequent retirement of its headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with good potential for further improvement. The school has been through a difficult time recently however, the acting headteacher and her deputies have provided stability and continued development. The acting headteacher has given a strong lead in the school's drive to raise standards, promote inclusion and improve the quality of teaching.

Parents think that the school is well managed and are pleased that they are kept well informed.

Provision is good in the Foundation Stage and children achieve well across the areas of learning given their low starting points. Standards are improving at Key Stage 1 so that they are close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupil achievement is good. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 2 remain below average in English, mathematics and science, pupil achievement is accelerating and is close to satisfactory given their capabilities and starting points.

One of the reasons for the accelerated achievement is the better use of assessment to track pupils' progress. This is especially effective for providing immediate support for those pupils who are making limited improvement. This increased progress in recent times has gone a long way to addressing the backlog of underachievement. However, boys' achievement in writing remains unsatisfactory.

The school provides well for pupils with learning difficulties including those in the unit. Pupils enjoy coming to school and there is an effective school council which has supported the school well in its drive to improve attendance, which is currently unsatisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Very good support staff make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. There is a good range of clubs and visits to enhance the curriculum and increase pupil enjoyment. Care of pupils is good and they feel safe and well supported. Vulnerable pupils and their families are given very good guidance. Governors are very supportive. The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. Overall improvement since the last inspection is also satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by improving the quality of teaching to ensure that all lessons are stimulating enough to fully engage pupils.
- Improve boys' achievement in writing by ensuring they have plenty of opportunities to write, especially about things that interest them.
- Improve attendance by ensuring all parents are clear about the impact that non-attendance has on their child's progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is low. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, due to good provision. However, children's attainment remains below the expected levels across most areas of learning on entry to Year 1. Standards across the school were low over a three year period up to 2005. Pupil achievement was below average.

In 2006, standards at the end of Year 2 showed significant improvement being broadly in line with the national average. This represents good achievement overall. There was also a slight improvement in standards at the end of Year 6, although they remain below average. However, achievement was close to satisfactory given pupils' capabilities and starting points. The main area of underachievement was in boys' writing and the school has a number of effective strategies already in place that address this well. The school has been dealing with a backlog of underachievement and has been given a great deal of support from the local authority. This coupled with the strenuous efforts of staff over time and the clear direction and rigour of the acting headteacher has almost eliminated it. The targets set for the current Year 6 are challenging but the school is implementing a range of strategies intended to ensure they are met.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans and the unit provides well for pupils with moderate learning difficulties ensuring they make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well being are satisfactory. Attendance is below the national average but improving due to the school's efforts including the school council's suggestion of rewards for good attendance. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy school. One said that "lessons are imaginative and fun". Behaviour is satisfactory and often good, although there is some deterioration after lunch. Good use is made of an achievement coach to help pupils with challenging behaviour. Although there are occasional instances of bullying, pupils feel they are dealt with promptly. Pupils feel safe in school and know there are adults who will help them. They know about healthy eating through involvement in the 'sticky fingers' club where they prepare and eat healthy food.

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, through the good emphasis placed on respect for their own and others feelings, the school promotes pupils' moral and social development well. An example of this was the good lesson where pupils discussed the effect that negative and positive comments had on their self-esteem. The school's caring ethos helps pupils to develop concern for others and they learn about other cultures in lessons.

Pupils assume responsibilities willingly and work well with others, for example, through the School Council. Links with the community such as the police and local football clubs prepares pupils well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Recent rigorous monitoring of teaching has led to improvements ensuring that there is now no unsatisfactory teaching in the school. Across the school, very good teaching assistants effectively contribute to pupils' learning. Additionally, group and paired work is helping pupils to work collaboratively. In Reception, the good range of relevant and often exciting activities and very good relationships ensure children are engaged in their learning. An outstanding lesson in Year 2 was typical of the very good attention given to pupils' individual needs and challenging work that stimulates and engages pupils in their learning in Key Stage 1.

In Key Stage 2, all lessons are well planned, relationships are good and a variety of approaches and resources are used. In the good lessons, work is challenging and there is a good pace that fully involves pupils in their learning. However, sometimes lessons are not well matched to pupils' needs and some lose interest. Also, too much time is spent on teacher talk and there is not enough whole class involvement so pupils are not sufficiently stimulated or engaged. Assessment procedures are good in the classroom and teachers adjust their lesson planning when they find that individuals need more time or support - pupils contribute to this in Year 2 by using the thumbs up or down signal to evaluate their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is planned and organised to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and subjects such as history are used well to support progress in literacy. Pupils use lap tops in their classrooms twice weekly for lessons. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and very relevant to the children's needs. The unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is particularly effective in ensuring that its pupils access the full range of activities in the school.

There is a good range of extra curricular opportunities, particularly in sport. The flourishing school garden indicates the success of the gardening club. There are some well-planned visits, which pupils enjoy. The good provision for personal social and health education, good links with other schools and clubs as well as the good range of additional curricular activities, support pupils' personal development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and pupils are learning in a safe and healthy environment. The school promotes healthy eating and pupils are given lots of opportunities to find out about healthy living through visitors promoting healthy eating and in science lessons. Younger children are very well cared for and settle into school well. Health and safety procedures and child protection measures are fully in place and the monitoring of behaviour and attendance is good. Pupils are well supervised at break and lunchtime. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are cared for well and effective links with parents, partner schools and outside agencies are used to ensure their well-being. Parents say that their children settle into school well and enjoy it.

Assessment procedures are improving and the increased rigour in tracking and target setting is accelerating the progress of all pupils. This is especially effective for those who are making limited progress as they are immediately targeted for extra support. There are good systems to monitor how well reception children are doing and to ensure they are appropriately challenged.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher is particularly effective in continuing to develop the work of the school through rigorously monitoring teaching and learning to secure improvement. This, alongside the increased focus on tracking pupils' progress and addressing underachievement, is raising standards. This has already improved the quality of teaching and ensured residual underachievement is being tackled.

The acting headteacher is supported well by the senior management team who are developing their roles so that they all have a clearer view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a whole. They have helped to identify the key areas for improvement and are fully involved in evaluating the effectiveness of actions. Subject leaders, although satisfactory overall, are also taking greater responsibility for standards and provision in their subjects. New subject leaders are enthusiastic about their roles and clear about what needs to be done.

Governors are passionate about the school and committed to supporting its continued development. They are fully involved through their committees and have a good understanding of the financial implications of their decisions. However, they are less sure about standards over time and the resultant implications in terms of achievement. Parents are very supportive of the school and are kept fully informed.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed with your friendliness.

We found your school to be satisfactory overall, and getting better. We liked your work as a school council and how you are helping to improve the school. We could see how you enjoy school and how kind and helpful your teachers are.

You are mainly doing well at school but older pupils need more help from their teachers to improve their work and boys particularly need help with their writing. You are well cared for by all the staff in the school and you have good clubs to attend and many visitors to help you.

What we have asked your school to do now:

Help those of you in Key Stage 2 to do even better in English and mathematics.

Help boys to improve their writing - the boys could help by practising more too.

Improve attendance - your school council is already trying to help with this.

Mrs J Sinclair

Lead inspector