

Moss Bury Primary School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Better education and care

Unique Reference Number 117269

Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE

Inspection number 290777

Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006

Reporting inspector Martin Beale

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

Type of school Primary **School address** Webb Rise

School category Community Stevenage

Age range of pupils 3–11 Hertfordshire SG1 5PA

Gender of pupilsMixedTelephone number01438222300Number on roll (school)246Fax number01438222301Appropriate authorityThe governing bodyChairMr Neil Quinn

Headteacher Dr David Morton

Date of previous school 4 June 2001

inspection

 Age group
 Inspection dates
 Inspection number

 3-11
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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 with a part-time Nursery. Free school meal entitlement is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number have English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. An attached unit for pupils with hearing impairment means that the school has an above average number of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection endorses the school's judgement that its effectiveness is satisfactory and improving. The school's performance had declined but has shown significant improvement since the appointment of the new headteacher at the start of 2006. The school had marked time since the last inspection. The achievement of pupils had shown little improvement and other aspects had deteriorated. With the help of the local education authority, the school has made much progress over the last year and the priorities for the next stage are clear, appropriate and carefully planned. The emerging deficit budget has been tackled and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The concerns of staff and parents about behaviour have been tackled very successfully. Pupils' personal development is much improved and is now satisfactory. The wide range of activities now provided at lunchtime and after school has contributed to reducing problems and making the school calmer. Assemblies are generating a growing sense of the school as a community.

Provision is satisfactory and improving in the Foundation Stage, although in recent years standards have been below average by the time the children entered Year 1. The progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 6 had been falling, but this decline has been halted and reversed in some areas. Achievement is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning have improved over the last two terms and is also satisfactory, but with a low proportion of good lessons. Test results have been slightly below average in recent years. The recent attention given to mathematics has led to much improvement in pupil achievement and to rising standards. Raising achievement in English is proving slower and although satisfactory it lags behind mathematics.

Some shortcomings are taking longer to overcome than others. Provision of books and computers is very limited. This leads to few opportunities for the pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and to slower progress in reading. Changes to the curriculum are bringing about gradual improvements. However, there are shortcomings in provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, are gifted or talented, or are an early stage of learning English. Systems and procedures to identify individual needs and provide appropriate support are developing but are not sufficiently rigorous. Improvement is hampered by long-term staff absence. The intensive support and careful integration into mainstream classes for pupils with hearing impairment helps them make good progress towards their individual targets.

Much of the recent progress is down to the drive and experience of the new headteacher. He has high expectations of staff and is bringing together a strong team which is more focused on improving the pupils' learning. Governors are also having greater impact. Governance is satisfactory but improving. The governing body is well led and has a core of effective governors who have supported the school well through its recent changes. The school's honest and effective appraisal of its position is based on rigorous procedures to check and improve the work of staff. In spite of this,

leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve are no better than satisfactory as staff other than the headteacher play limited leadership roles.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English and provide more opportunities for the pupils to develop their reading and writing and skills in other subjects
- Improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion of lessons are taught well and ICT is used more effectively to support learning
- Develop the leadership roles of staff so that they can play a greater part in supporting the school's improvement
- Develop the curriculum so that it meets more closely the needs of the gifted and talented, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils at an early stage of learning English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school, although there is room for improvement particularly in English and the application of the pupils' ICT skills. Standards are rising as shown by test results and the current work of pupils, particularly in mathematics. Standards in both mathematics and science are average and so most pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education. More limited progress has been made in improving the pupils' reading and writing. The proportion of pupils reaching nationally expected levels in English has been consistently below average by Year 6, meaning that a significant proportion is not adequately prepared for secondary school with regard to their literacy skills. Pupils are now set challenging targets and more are reaching these than in the past.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are sound. The pupils' enjoyment in school activities is good and so attendance is improving. They say 'school is fun' because the headteacher has introduced 'New Deal' which makes the school a better place. They feel that lessons are more interesting and there are 'lots of great clubs at lunch time and after school'. A high proportion of pupils participate in lunchtime sports activities and in sporting events organised for local schools. Pupils speak knowledgeably and well about the healthy school lunches. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of life and different cultures because their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. Pupils are keen to accept responsibilities and are proud to take part in the school council. They play a positive role in the wider community and raise funds for local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and steadily improving. In part, this is a result of teachers starting to use the information from their more thorough assessment of pupils to modify their teaching. Teachers deploy support staff well to guide pupils when undertaking group and individual tasks and their use in whole class sessions is becoming more effective. Teachers generally ensure that pupils are aware of what they are expected to learn and why. Many teachers question pupils skilfully and encourage them to consider their responses carefully. Pupils talk ideas through with a partner, but some teachers do not develop their subsequent responses thereby missing opportunities for discussion that might extend their vocabulary and challenge their thinking and understanding. Lessons are made more interesting and the pupils' learning benefits as teachers become increasingly confident in the use of the electronic whiteboards. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers and other new technology to extend their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils in the partially hearing unit are catered for well. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English is barely adequate and results in these pupils making only just satisfactory progress. A wide range of clubs, educational visits and visitors to the school contribute much to the enrichment of the curriculum, to the development of a more positive approach to learning and improvements in pupil behaviour. Increasing emphasis is being placed on developing pupils' basic literacy, numeracy and speaking and listening skills, but these are not consistently reinforced through all subjects. Links between subjects are starting but have not had a significant impact on pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care and guidance in a supportive learning environment in which pupils thrive and are happy. Pupils have confidence in the support available if they feel at risk. Procedures are secure for ensuring pupils' health and safety and safeguarding their welfare. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is only satisfactory. Those with hearing impairment are cared for well and individual plans are put in place to inform all about how their carefully identified learning needs are to be tackled. Assessment data is used systematically to track the progress of pupils and adopt appropriate strategies if they are falling behind. Information is shared with teachers to enable them to target additional help and to guide them in their lesson planning. There are examples of good marking and most pupils are clear about their targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has driven through rapid improvement over the last two terms. This drive for change is increasingly shared by other staff, although much falls back onto the shoulders of the headteacher in the long-term absence of the deputy and the limited but developing leadership roles of others. Effective systems have been introduced to make sure that all members of staff do their jobs as well as possible and individual support is provided to help them to improve. The school knows itself well and has used this to identify how priorities for improvement are to be tackled in a manageable way. Governors have a clear and sound understanding of where improvements are needed. They challenge the school to do better and help to plan for its future.

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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 |
|---|-------------------|
|---|-------------------|

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? | 3 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |

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 | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |

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.

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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 |

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Moss Bury Primary and Nursery School, Webb Rise, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 5PA

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. You were all very kind, helpful to us and showed how proud you are of your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. There are several aspects of your school that we liked. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a school that is improving rapidly. We were also pleased to see how much you liked the 'New Deal' introduced by your headteacher.

You make satisfactory progress during your time at the school. In mathematics and science many of you attain or sometimes exceed the standards expected of you by the time you leave. You work hard and with enjoyment, attend regularly and your behaviour is getting better all of the time. You take part in an interesting range of activities at lunchtime and after school. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a considerable contribution to the life of the school and the community.

We are very pleased to see how your teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. There are some areas where we all agree that improvements could be made. Your reading and writing needs to improve as does the way you use your computer skills in many subjects. Some of you would benefit from activities that challenge you, while others of you need more support to help you to learn. We are sure you and your teachers will work hard to make this all happen.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector