



Moorpark Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123985
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 292850
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Park Road
School category	Community		Burslem
Age range of pupils	7–11		Stoke-on-Trent ST6 1EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 234440
Number on roll (school)	252	Fax number	01782 234440
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Noden
		Headteacher	Jackie Pakes
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area where there is considerable economic and social deprivation. Most pupils are White British, with a few from a range of other heritages. A very small minority do not speak English at home, though all are coping comfortably with English in school. The school has set up a special class for pupils with significant learning difficulties in English and mathematics. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts two years ago and there have been many changes in staff in the last three years, with many staff retiring.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'Moorpark has improved remarkably in the last 12 months.' This is typical of comments made by parents. The school is now providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. When the headteacher took up her post, her first priority was to improve behaviour. The success of the systems introduced has resulted in a dramatic fall in the number of exclusions. While good progress has been made in this area, there is still some work to do to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils and to further improve the systems. For example, there is not sufficient recognition of good behaviour or encouragement of pupils to take responsibility for their actions. The school has had to cope with a lot of changes of staff and a high level of absence in recent years. The situation has now stabilised and it says much for the renewed motivation and commitment of the whole team that staff absences are now very low. The most important improvement has been in pupils' achievement. This was inadequate, but the tracking, started last year, shows that pupils currently in the school made good progress over the past year. This good progress is being maintained and has redressed the previous inadequate achievement. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory and they reach average standards. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in mathematics where progress has been slower than in English. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The advances the school has made indicate good capacity to improve and leaders clearly know what they need to do to move the school forward. However, many improvements are still at any early stage and the school recognises that there is still some way to go. Much of the reason for the progress in pupils' achievement is the improvement of teaching. This is satisfactory and pupils' learning is therefore satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully to provide work to suit the range of ability levels in their classes. However, they do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve. There are good relationships in classes and pupils thoroughly enjoy school and try hard. The curriculum is satisfactory, and some good work is going on to make it more relevant and interesting for pupils. For example, the number of visits and visitors that extend pupils' experiences and cultural awareness has been increased. Good links have been established with the infant school, the high school and other local primary schools, which provide a number of good opportunities to extend pupils' learning. Parents recognise the caring nature of the school. As one said, 'Teachers show great interest and care towards the children.' This is one of the major factors that has resulted in pupils' improved personal development, which is satisfactory. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although the school has good systems in place to track pupils' progress, setting of targets so that pupils know what they need to learn next is still at an early stage. Targets are not sufficiently precise and pupils are not clear about what they are aiming towards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.

- Ensure that clear targets are set for individual pupils' future learning so that teachers have clear expectations of what they should achieve and pupils themselves are clear about what they are working towards.
- Reappraise the behaviour management systems so that inappropriate behaviour continues to be tackled, good behaviour is recognised and pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their actions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are reaching broadly average standards by the time they leave. This represents a considerable turnaround since the position two years ago, when pupils' achievement was inadequate. Good gains have been made across the full age and ability range, with some pupils of all abilities making exceptional progress in all year groups. Pupils' progress in mathematics has not been as good as that in English and the school has only recently identified and started to address weaknesses in mathematics. Pupils with significant learning difficulties are making particularly good progress in English and mathematics. This is due to the very well focused teaching they are receiving because they are taught separately for these subjects. Other pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are making good progress due to the careful plans made for their learning and the good levels of support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils are enthusiastic about school. Hence their attendance is improving and is now broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils benefit from a wide range of cultural experiences, which give them a strong sense of their place in their own community as well as in a multicultural society. For example, pupils know exactly why it is important to raise money to build a well in Africa. Most pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and behaviour is satisfactory. However, there is occasionally too much chat in lessons and there is a significant minority of pupils whose behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory, particularly in the playground. The pupils are very appreciative of the school's procedures to keep them safe and they adopt these practices well. They have a good knowledge of the requirements for a healthy lifestyle, and take plenty of exercise and eat healthily. The school council and 'buddies' make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school community. Events such as the Christmas lunch, which pupils serve, and entertainment put on for senior citizens are much appreciated and are examples of the good contribution made to the wider community. Pupils are developing independence, for instance by organising their own charity fund raising. They are making sound progress in acquiring basic skills and their preparation for future life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers make sure that pupils understand the purpose of each lesson and are clear about what should be achieved by the end. Teachers use resources well to make lessons practical and interesting. Pupils are fascinated by the way computers and whiteboards make teachers' explanations clear and show them amazing new things, with a consequent boost to progress. Occasionally, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations, for instance in relation to the way that work is presented, or when pupils do not make use of spellings displayed. The special class gives good support to pupils with significant difficulties. The pupils feel secure in these lessons; they say, 'The groups feel like a family, with the teacher as mum and the assistants as aunts.' They progress well in this encouraging environment, growing in confidence and skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is soundly planned to provide a broad range of learning opportunities to meet the interests and needs of pupils. Effective links are being made between subjects, which engage pupils' interest and involvement. This makes the curriculum more practical by, for instance, encouraging pupils to use their computer skills as a means of finding out new things. The school has recognised that pupils' calculation skills are relatively weak. Planning to address this is at an early stage. The increasing use of role-play, such as in the lively 'Victorian Factor' assembly, is valuable in allowing pupils to experience new learning in a memorable way. Much thought is given to personal, social and health education activities to enable pupils to grow in maturity. The staff are eager to expand the pupils' horizons by enlarging the range of their experiences through an enriched curriculum. This brings poets and artists into school, and takes the pupils into the outside world of technology and history. Teachers draw well on these experiences to add depth and variety to class work. The arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very effective in building up their skills, confidence and enthusiasm. A good project has been started with the feeder infant school, where both schools have worked together so that Year 3 pupils carry on work started in the infant school. This, along with good links with the local high school, is further improving provision for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils say they feel safe and able to share problems happily with staff. Pupils are valued because teachers treat them fairly and are kind and respectful in lessons. Child protection procedures are thorough. The headteacher has set up rigorous procedures to address issues of bullying. These are having an impact and pupils say that most incidents are now tackled quickly, but that a small number still occur, mostly at

lunchtimes. Procedures to improve attendance are satisfactory and have turned round the decline of recent years. Pupils receive satisfactory guidance in lessons and from teachers' marking about how to improve their work. Most have broad targets for literacy and numeracy but these are not sufficiently specific to meet their differing academic needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a strong sense of the school moving forward. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear vision of priorities and what they want pupils to achieve. The work on improving behaviour has created stable conditions where the leadership team is now developing strategies to raise standards. The staff wholeheartedly share the new direction and purpose and are enthusiastic in adopting systems which engage pupils and have increased their rate of progress. However, many of the new systems have not yet begun to have a full impact on raising standards and improving provision for pupils. The governors are well organized and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They challenge the school well, but are not yet getting a clear view of provision and standards. Staff are very committed to inclusion and are proud of the improvements in their planning and the start they have made at setting targets. Leaders have accurately identified that improving pupils' vocabulary is key to raising standards in English and are monitoring teaching effectively with this as the main focus.

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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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	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.

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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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 so much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing how hard you work and how well you are doing. We enjoyed hearing about the lunch and entertainment you put on for senior citizens last week. You told us how much things have improved at your school and you are right to be proud of this. Your school has improved a lot and now provides you with a sound education. Here are the things that are best about your school:
- Your headteacher and other staff are very clear about how to continue to improve your school.
- Your behaviour has improved a lot and is good in lessons.
- You are enjoying school because the teachers organise some really interesting visitors and visits for you which help you to learn.
- Those of you who find work difficult are making good progress, particularly those in the special class for English and mathematics.
- Most of you are doing all the right things to stay healthy and safe and you help run the school well. These are the things that could be better:
- You are not doing as well as you could, particularly in mathematics, as your teachers do not always expect you to work hard enough or to present your work neatly.
- You need clear targets to work towards so that you know exactly what you need to do to improve your work.
- Those of you who struggle to behave as you should, particularly in the playground, still need help to improve, while those of you who behave well need to be rewarded. I am sure you will play your part in helping the school to get better by working hard. Good luck for the future and best wishes.