



Old Moat Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131431
Local Authority Manchester
Inspection number 293751
Inspection date 8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Mike Hoban HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Old Moat Lane
School category	Community		Withington, Manchester
Age range of pupils	3-11		Lancashire M20 3FN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 4454208
Number on roll (school)	347	Fax number	0161 4450589
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jeff Smith
		Headteacher	Miss A McVeigh
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

The Old Moat Community Primary School is a larger than average school serving an inner city area of Manchester. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Although the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is lower than the average. Just over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and about two fifths have a first language other than English. Pupil mobility is high, with more than one third of the pupil population entering or leaving the school outside the usual starting or ending dates.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Old Moat is a good and thriving school, with strengths in pastoral support and leadership, and a few areas that need to improve further. The school provides a safe and nurturing environment where its pupils can apply themselves effectively to learning. Parents are pleased with the education and care provided at the school, and pupils' loyalty and enthusiasm for education was reflected in their behaviour in lessons, written work, and presentations around the school. Pupils have friends from other backgrounds within the school, and the diversity and celebration of cultures is a particular strength.

Pupils get a secure start in the Foundation Stage, where progress is evident from the low attainment on entry. Although standards fell back in 2006 in Key Stage 1, this was against a backdrop of a positive trend in results, and the particular circumstances of the group of pupils in that year. Work viewed and lessons seen by inspectors indicated that progress is now good within Key Stage 1. Standards were broadly at the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006, and progress was good overall. However, English was still behind the pace in terms of both standards and the progress pupils made, in comparison with the excellent progress made in science and mathematics, and the good standards achieved in those subjects. Again, this is against a background of a positive overall trend in standards over some years in Key Stage 2. The school has since strengthened strategies to improve attainment in literacy, and this is evident in an increase in pupils meeting their targets during Key Stage 2. Overall, lessons observed, the attitudes of pupils, and the work examined by inspectors indicated that pupils are achieving well.

The school's commitment to the learning and care of pupils is reflected in the attitudes and approaches of staff. The school has trained teaching assistants and other staff to appreciate the challenges that some pupils may face. Its support for the most vulnerable pupils is reflected in both the strategic oversight of their care by the school's leaders, and that two teaching assistants are trained to support these pupils academically and pastorally. This work has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to, and achievement in, their learning. Sustained efforts to improve attendance and punctuality are bearing fruit, although the work of the school still has a little further to go to ensure that attendance levels are improved.

Teaching and learning are good, and the best lessons demonstrate strong working relationships between pupils and teachers. There, respect and enthusiasm, coupled with good subject knowledge, support pupils' achievement. The school is working to improve teaching further by sharing best practice and ensuring that lessons consistently move along at a brisk pace. Pupils appreciate teachers' evaluative marking, and are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. They also comment that they can secure support from teachers and assistants when necessary. The school's good curriculum is being reviewed further to meet the needs of learners even more effectively. Activities such as internationalism week act as opportunities to enjoy and to learn about other cultures and backgrounds, and to involve parents.

The senior management team is cohesive and effective. It is rightly focused on higher standards for all, in the context of providing a safe environment for learners. The headteacher is unwavering in her advocacy of both aspects, and she is supported by a strong and skilled leadership team. The governing body offers a committed and knowledgeable steer to the school. The strong leadership indicates that Old Moat is well able to make further progress in supporting and educating its youngsters.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English to national averages at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Improve attendance to the local authority's average.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their learning at Old Moat, and reach standards that are generally in line with national averages by the time they leave school. Pupils enter the Nursery with low levels of attainment, and make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that they enter Year 1 with just below average skills. In the 2005 assessments of Year 2 pupils, standards were above the national averages; however, they declined in 2006, particularly in reading and writing. Evidence seen by inspectors signals that the performance of that group of pupils was untypical, and that progress within Key Stage 1 is now good.

Standards in mathematics and science in the 2006 national tests for 11 year olds were above average, but attainment in English was below the national average. This result was out of line with the overall positive trend up to 2005. Overall, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 despite the variation between subjects, whereby Year 6 pupils in 2006 had made excellent progress in mathematics and science, and satisfactory progress in English.

The school's determination to raise standards in literacy throughout Old Moat is evident and is now being felt. The inspection found that work to improve literacy is reducing underachievement; this, with pupils' enthusiasm for learning, and progress seen in written work, signals that achievement is good.

All pupil groups make satisfactory or better progress, and pupils whose first language is not English made excellent progress to the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils find life at Old Moat to be both fun and hard work. In lessons and beyond, they develop and retain good relationships with classmates from different backgrounds, and with the adults working in the school. Pupils feel safe at Old Moat. They know that the school will act with vigour if there is bullying and that culprits will be dealt with effectively. A feature of the school is its extensive cultural diversity, with pupils learning from each others' experiences - this strength is articulated through the school's

recent focus on internationalism and pupils' views. One commented 'I have found that my friends from different backgrounds help me to understand religious knowledge, geography and history better'. Overall, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.

Pupils respond positively to the school's commitment to high standards of behaviour; for example, in one class, noise levels fell precipitously as soon as the teacher indicated that silence was required. Attendance is satisfactory - the efforts of the school and the local authority, including targeted support for particular families, have improved attendance from a low base. However, the levels of attendance have yet to reach the local authority's average. Work to improve punctuality has also borne fruit, partly through effective cooperation with the local children's centre.

Pupils' contentment is expressed through their constructive relationships with adults. This is demonstrated in the classroom through their positive attitudes to learning. For instance, the keen interest and enthusiasm of pupils in a Key Stage 2 science lesson resulted in their clear understanding of the importance of observation and investigation.

The substitution of fruit for crisps, and with water now provided as the main drink, has led pupils to reflect carefully on eating choices. They demonstrate an awareness of the need for a healthy intake of fruit and vegetables, and make good use of the salad bar, where pupils can eat as much healthy food as they like.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Very good relationships across the school ensure that learners feel secure and cared for; teachers place a strong emphasis on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem through effective use of praise and encouragement. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their learning and are keen to do their best. Despite the limitations of the school building, staff strive to ensure that classrooms are purposeful, well-organised learning environments and attractive displays of photographs and pupils' work can be seen in classrooms and around the school. Where lessons are satisfactory, the teaching and learning is less enthusiastic and brisk, some pupils are not as actively engaged in their tasks, and higher attaining pupils are sometimes not sufficiently challenged.

Teachers use resources well, including information and communication technology (ICT), and skilled teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning through effective support in small groups during lessons or in separate intervention groups. Most pupils are aware of their targets and teachers refer to these when marking pupils' work. Examples of well focused marking can be seen in pupils' writing books, with guidance on what they need to do next in order to improve the quality of their writing.

There are examples of good practice in the way some teachers are linking subjects together to stimulate pupils' motivation and learning, and this is an area which the school has already identified a need to expand upon.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of most pupils well. There is a strong focus on basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and work to raise attainment in literacy is having a beneficial effect. The curriculum is responsive to local issues; for example, pupils have been involved in tree planting and litter gathering in the locality, and several have joined the school's gardening club. Pupils enjoy visiting a local home for the elderly. Internationalism week was a culmination of work across the school which enriched pupils' understanding of other countries and cultures, and was celebrated in a final assembly performance for parents.

Pupils are taught French and have a good range of opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities. Visits and visitors are used to enhance the curriculum and the school makes good use of the facilities available in its locality; for example, the museum workshops in Manchester and the ICT facilities at the city learning centre. Old Moat promotes good links with other schools in the locality for pupils' mutual benefit, such as in the sharing of resources and the provision of work placements for older pupils. A 'Jobs and Skills' day for upper Key Stage 2 pupils set many thinking about future careers. The school has rightly identified that more could be made of links between subjects when planning its curriculum, and work is underway to review and take this area forward.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Work on this aspect is a strength of Old Moat. Support to pupils is effective and proportionate. Parents view the school as a happy community, prepared to listen and respond to their particular concerns, although parents were concerned about traffic management outside the school. Old Moat knows its pupils well, and teaching assistants and other support staff have received training so that they can offer effective academic and pastoral support to pupils. The school is fully committed to the inclusion of all pupils and the removal of barriers to learning. To that end, it has gone one step further, and the assistant headteacher has trained two training assistants to offer support to vulnerable pupils. That work has resulted in those pupils demonstrating greater commitment to school and improved achievement. The progress of vulnerable pupils represents a priority at Old Moat - the senior management team reviews, on a six weekly basis, what progress these children are making, and deploys resources effectively to support them.

Strong links exist between Old Moat and other organisations, and work with the children's centre is effective in signalling to parents the value of education. One Year 6 pupil talked enthusiastically of an impending two day visit to a secondary school, illustrating that links and guidance had provided pupils with good levels of support

and self-confidence. Systems for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are in line with government guidance.

A feature of care is that new arrivals, in a school which experiences high mobility amongst pupils, receive unobtrusive and effective assessment of their needs, both pastoral and academic. Finally, pupils talk appreciatively of the benefits of the evaluative marking of their work in guiding them towards further improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team is a cohesive and effective force. The headteacher projects a compelling vision of the child at the centre of all activities, and implements that through ensuring that resources are deployed incisively and productively. This has led, for instance, to strengthening support for literacy still further, resulting in improvement in that subject, although there is still more to do. The highly effective deputy headteacher commands the respect of pupils and parents, and engages with staff to help shape improvements in teaching and learning. The assistant headteacher has harnessed the commitment of teaching assistants to support vulnerable pupils. Subject leaders make a contribution through conducting lesson observations that enrich the leadership team's knowledge base of strengths in teaching and learning, as well as supporting staff development. The governing body offers an informed and perceptive view, and is well placed to support the leadership team to move Old Moat further forward. Resources are used effectively, and the capacity to improve is good. The school provides good value for money.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

You may remember that two inspectors visited your school earlier this month to look at how well you were being educated and cared for at Old Moat.

First of all, we very much enjoyed our visit, and we particularly enjoyed our conversations and discussions. I was pleased to see that you were happy and keen to be involved in learning, and that you worked hard and tried to do your best for your teachers and other staff. I was impressed particularly by the thoughtfulness of your own School Council, which I know has a lot to offer Miss McVeigh and Old Moat.

Old Moat is a good school. We found that you are doing well, and the school offers you a safe environment in which to learn. Behaviour is good, and we were happy that so many of you knew what your targets were, and what to do next. Teaching is good overall. Some of the lessons we saw were satisfactory, some better than that, and we also saw how keen you were to be involved in your learning.

You do very well in science and in mathematics, but literacy could be improved. I know you would want that too, and we have asked Miss McVeigh and your teachers to push forward with work in this area. I would also like to say something about attendance. It is very important for your future life that you do as well as you can at Old Moat. Please make every effort to come to school, and to encourage friends to do the same.

I really enjoyed meeting you!