

Moorlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103908
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308449
Inspection date	4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Windmill
Headteacher	Hayden Moss
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	Winchester Road West Bromwich B71 2NZ
Telephone number	01215 560352
Fax number	01215 052677

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' rate of progress; whether aspects of curriculum provision are good; and the effectiveness of the school's academic guidance in improving pupils' achievement and standards. Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors. Observations were made of teaching and learning. Parents' responses to the questionnaire, pupils' work and school documentation were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as shared in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Moorlands is smaller than average in size. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also a little above average. Children start school with knowledge and skills that are well below the levels expected for their age. The school has had an acting headteacher since September 2007 who was appointed to the substantive post in the week before the inspection. The school currently has an acting deputy 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 satisfactory and improving school is friendly and welcoming. It is currently going through a period of transition but a very large majority of parents hold it in high regard and have confidence in the new headteacher. Recent data for pupils' performance at the end of Year 6 indicate that not all pupils have been doing as well as they should have. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to address this issue and greater emphasis has been placed on regularly checking the progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils who may not be making enough progress are now quickly identified and provided with additional support. Consequently, the school is in a better position to prevent any underachievement. Currently, all pupils are achieving satisfactorily, although standards are below average at the end of Year 6. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, but this quick rate of progress is not continued through the rest of the school. Staff are strongly behind the drive to improve pupils' achievement and raise standards. Teachers have been made more accountable for the progress their pupils make by using challenging, but realistic, academic targets. Another reason for pupils making sound progress is that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers manage behaviour well and classroom relationships are strong. Pupils are positive about learning and talk enthusiastically about their work. Teachers share the purpose of lessons with pupils so that they have a good understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it. Despite a number of good lessons being taught, effective practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. Different groups of pupils are given work that is related to their ability and understanding but, on many occasions, the activities provided do not stretch or challenge pupils fully. On occasions, teachers' expectations of their pupils are not high enough. The school's satisfactory curriculum is organised through topics that encourage the natural links that exist between subjects so that subjects are not taught in isolation. This thematic approach is popular with the pupils, who appreciate the trips and visitors to school which enhance their learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, spoke enthusiastically of their trip on the Severn Valley Railway as evacuees as part of their work on the Second World War. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted effectively across the curriculum. Music, dance and drama activities are developed well during Art Weeks and the pupils are given a chance to start to learn a foreign language. Aspects of the curriculum are successful in promoting the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils work and play well together. During the inspection it was impressive to see the Year 4 pupils holding mature discussions about their work on the Tudors while Year 6 pupils worked successfully in pairs on coordinates. Pupils have a strong sense of their school as a community. They carry out a wide range of responsibilities well, from the 'Eco Warriors' collecting waste for the compost bin, to the school council planning a Trim Trail for Key Stage 2 pupils to enjoy. Pupils raise funds for a range of charities and make other contributions to the wider community, such as donating harvest gifts to a local home for the elderly. Pupils contributed to, and signed up for, the school's Code of Conduct. Behaviour is good and older pupils believe that the Code of Conduct has contributed to this. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves and others safe through activities that promote understanding, for example, of firework safety and awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. They have a good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are keen to get to the top of the weekly healthy snack chart, as well as taking advantage of the school's healthy dinners. Now that pupils are making better progress in developing their basic skills, they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. Over the last few years, the school has been successful in improving attendance. Most pupils attend regularly and enjoy school.

Pupils are provided with a caring and supportive environment in which to work and play. Comments from parents such as, 'My child is happy to go to school each morning' and 'It's a lovely school to be at,' sum up the views of many. The academic guidance, however, does not make a significant contribution to improving pupils' achievement and standards. Teachers' marking is often supportive but provides little information for pupils on how to improve their work or move to the next stages of their learning. Individual targets for learning in reading, writing and mathematics are not used consistently with pupils. There is no coherent approach to academic guidance and this is recognised as an important area for development by the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have an accurate and realistic view of the school's performance and the areas in which improvement is needed. Key members of staff, such as those with responsibility for English and mathematics, know what to do to improve their subjects as a result of a thorough analysis of pupils' work in their subjects carried out with local authority staff. Governors are very supportive of the school and share the headteacher's ambitious vision. They are now looking at ways to improve governance, particularly in monitoring the school's effectiveness and in challenging it to raise standards. Recent improvements, such as those in the successful tracking of pupils' progress, indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Despite making good progress in relation to their low starting points, many children do not reach the nationally expected standards for their age by the end of Reception. A good emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development results in them being confident, behaving well and getting on with each other and the adults who work with them. During the inspection, many children were keen to explain that the theme for the day was the colour red and how this affected the work they were doing. Many parents are rightly complimentary about how well their children settle in to the Reception class and make good progress. Teaching is good and there is an effective balance between activities that children get on with by themselves and those led by adults. Good attention is paid to the different ability groups found in the class. Adults encourage the children to listen and speak carefully. However, in recent years, the children have made slower progress in communication, language and literacy skills than in other areas of learning. This has been a development priority and children are beginning to benefit from the new programme to teach phonics.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress so that standards are raised.
- Ensure that activities always challenge all pupils fully and raise teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Make sure that literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well through work across the curriculum.
- Provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their performance through marking and a consistent approach to the use of individual targets. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 March 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of Moorlands Primary School, West Bromwich B71 2NZ
Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I particularly enjoyed talking with the Year 6 pupils (I still remember what to do if I get caught in a fire) and the school council about their work. It was good to see you all working so hard in your classrooms. I was particularly impressed with the Reception children telling me about their work with the colour red and the discussions you were having in Years 4 and 6 about the Tudors and coordinates. You go to a satisfactory school. It does some things well, but could also improve in other areas. You are making satisfactory progress but I have asked the school to help you learn even faster to help you to reach higher standards. You enjoy your lessons and most of you behave well. In lessons, you are given work that reflects your ability and understanding. At times, however, some of you find your work too easy so I have asked the school to make sure that you are all given work that really challenges you. You all know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. You all enjoy the extra activities provided for you to make learning even more exciting. The staff care for you well and you are good at helping each other. I have asked the school to make sure that teachers' marking is better at helping you improve your work and to give all of you targets to aim for in your reading, writing and mathematics. I have also asked them to do more to help you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. Your new headteacher and the other adults who lead and manage the school have already thought of ways to improve the school. You can help by continuing to behave well and working hard, and by coming to school regularly. Best wishes for the future. Chris Kessell Lead inspector

5 March 2008



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Best wishes for the future.

Chris Kessell
Lead inspector