

Mortimer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108673
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	309763
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Shepherd

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeremy Cripps
Headteacher	Mr Geoffrey Seagrove
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
School address	Mortimer Road South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 0RW
Telephone number	0191 4554504
Fax number	0191 4271959

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the features of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 leading to the significantly high standards by the end of Year 2, the progress pupils make in Key Stage 2 and the evidence to support the school's judgement of outstanding personal development. Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons, playtimes, lunchtime arrangements and pupils leaving the school. Discussions were held with pupils and staff. Pupils' work, key documents and data including the school's self-evaluation were scrutinised. 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 given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Mortimer Road Primary School is much larger than average. The majority of pupils come from the area around the school, but several come from further away. The social and economic circumstances are broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minorities. The school has a Nursery class. The rest of the school has three parallel classes in each year group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents overwhelmingly appreciate its provision, especially in the excellent opportunities for personal development which enable their children to be happy in school.

Achievement is good because teaching is effective and leads to pupils leaving school with standards that are significantly above average. The smoothness of the transition between Reception and Year 1, together with the emphasis on investigative and practical learning, well focussed teaching and good development of basic skills in Years 1 and 2, ensures that pupils progress well. High standards are sustained in Key Stage 2 and most pupils make good progress. However, the school's data shows that some pupils could make better progress. To enable all pupils to make the best progress, the school has introduced more challenging targets for individual pupils. It has also increased the amount of additional support for individuals and groups and these strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. Progress in mathematics is better than English and science. In mathematics, teaching and the curriculum are more closely matched to pupils' needs because they are taught in groups according to their ability. In writing, the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and in science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate and record the full scientific process in their own words. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have only a very general understanding of how to improve their work because teachers do not always remind them of their targets. Work is marked regularly but comments do not always tell pupils how to make their work better. Teachers throughout the school use computers effectively to add interest to lessons. Teachers and support staff work very well together which results in pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities making good progress.

The school sets a high priority on personal development which is outstanding. Older pupils take their responsibilities extremely seriously. The sports leaders and playground buddies give younger pupils excellent support in using the playground equipment correctly to develop their physical skills, such as catching balls and skipping, and in finding friends to play with if they are lonely. Members of the school council are very effective in carrying out their role of representing the school, making key decisions together and letting the rest of the school know why they made them. Pupils have an excellent understanding of keeping safe and healthy. Not only do they know the key features of how to carry this out but they try hard to put this into practice. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many different clubs operating out of lessons. These extend their experiences extremely well. Pupils are very proud of their achievements, such as reaching the national finals in engineering or in making £100 from the business and enterprise club. The many opportunities to express their views, both in and out of lessons, results in pupils developing their speaking skills very effectively. These features, together with a high level of other basic skills prepare pupils extremely well for their future lives. The school builds excellent partnerships with external specialists and the community. This results in pupils making confident contributions to the local and international communities and understanding their responsibilities as citizens. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils respond extremely sensitively to the excellent range of opportunities for this, such as listening spellbound to a visiting wind quintet or playing a musical instrument within a class orchestra. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils show great consideration for each other and for adults.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and works well with senior leaders. Leadership and management are good. Staff with management responsibilities work well as a team, enabling

pupils to move happily between the different key stages. Effective collaboration is also seen in joint curriculum planning which enables pupils to have equal access to the curriculum. The focus on sharing and discussion leads to staff knowing the pupils and the community well. This information is used effectively to provide high levels of care and support for individuals. Safeguarding systems are in place. Governors know the school well through strategies such as their monitoring of lessons and their involvement in the activities that enrich the curriculum. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is collaborative and most effectively produces a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a shared commitment from staff to develop the school's work resulting in a good capacity for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

This is a key strength of the school and provides an outstanding start for children's academic and personal development. Children enter school with standards that are typical for their age and make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage. They reach standards that are higher than expected by the time they start in Year 1. The focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills and personal development lead to children being extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. The co-ordinator has an excellent knowledge of this age group and organises the teaching team and additional adults extremely well. Teaching is of a high quality. There is a finely balanced combination of independent learning, initiated by children's needs and interests, and the meticulous teaching of basic skills. Children's individual progress is recorded very efficiently. The curriculum is lively and challenging and covers the different areas of learning most effectively. There is a very high level of care, support and guidance with a clear focus on meeting each child's particular needs. The outdoor learning is exemplary and adds to children's enjoyment of the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

In Key Stage 2 extend:

- the guidance for individuals about how to improve their academic work
- the consistency of the challenge in writing for more able pupils
- the investigative aspects of the science curriculum.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mortimer Primary School, South Tyneside, NE34 0RW

Thank you for being so very welcoming to me when I came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering my questions. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

You receive a good education at your school. When you are in the Nursery and Reception classes you make excellent progress. You learn how to be independent and to concentrate on what you have chosen to learn. You get really good at your writing, reading and number work. You continue to learn well in Years 1 and 2 and your standards are higher than average by the time you leave Year 2. You keep the higher standards by the end of Year 6, but here are some things that you could do even better in the junior classes. You could work harder to understand what you have to do to improve your work and remember your targets. Some of you will be getting more challenging work in writing and you can do your best to get it right. In science, you need to carry out more investigations and write up what you thought might happen before you began the experiment and what you noticed about any differences about what really did happen.

Your personal development is excellent. Your school council works very hard for you and discusses any issues you raise very carefully. Your sports leaders and playground buddies are very effective in helping you to use the equipment correctly and in helping you to find your friends. You have an excellent understanding of keeping safe and healthy. You respond extremely well to events like your woodwind concert and the Year 6 pupils all play musical instruments very skilfully. Your headteacher and staff and governors all work hard together to make your school an interesting place to learn. They make sure that you have lots of chances to do exciting things in all your different clubs.

I will remember all the remarkable things that I saw in my visit to your school and I wish you every success in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd

Lead inspector