

Moreton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115188
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311872
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Best

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Stacey Pether
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Bard
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Church Road Moreton Ongar Essex CM5 0JD
Telephone number	01277 890255
Fax number	01277 890127

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves local villages and the surrounding rural area, together with pupils from the nearby town of Ongar. The number on roll is slightly lower than that of other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is low. Attainment on entry is higher than expected for children's age in personal, social and emotional development, and similar to the expectations in the other areas of learning. There have been significant changes in the teaching staff since the previous inspection, including the headteacher and her deputy headteacher. At the time of this inspection, the Year 6 class was being taught by a temporary teacher, whilst another temporary teacher took over the Reception class at the start of the term. The school holds the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. This differs slightly from the school's evaluation of itself. Leaders and governors recognise that it is not as good as they had judged it to be because pupils' achievement is currently satisfactory rather than good. Nonetheless, the overall trend is one of improvement because effective steps are being taken to improve teaching and learning. Some of these actions, such as establishing closer links between subjects, are still at an early a stage of development.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average, but the more able pupils did not do as well as expected in the 2007 statutory assessments. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils who took the 2007 tests made satisfactory progress. This is an improved picture from previous years, when progress from Years 3 to 6 had been less than expected. However, some pupils still make uneven progress as they move through the school from year to year. Although teaching has good features, such as effective class management and the well-targeted support for pupils by classroom assistants, its overall impact on learning is satisfactory. Teachers' expectations are not high enough to challenge pupils consistently in some classes. This is reflected in teachers' curricular planning which does not provide sufficient activities to stretch the most able. Likewise, academic guidance does not give pupils a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe, they participate in a wide ranging of sporting activities and they eat healthily. Attendance in the last school year was above the national average. It has improved because the school discourages parents from taking their children on holiday during term time. Pupils play an active part in the community through the school council, participation in a range of local activities and charity fundraising.

The school's leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher successfully fosters the school's good quality pastoral care and support for its pupils. Plans are being implemented to improve the quality of teaching and learning. At present, the role of subject teams is underdeveloped due to staff changes. The governing body gives good support to the school and meets its statutory obligations, including those for child protection and safeguarding pupils. The school's partnerships with others are satisfactory. Most parents are supportive of the school but a significant number rightly express concerns that some children need more challenge to help them make better progress. The school has effectively addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection report. Its capacity for improvement and value for money are both satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children quickly settle into the daily routines and make good progress. By the time they move to Year 1, most meet the expected early learning goals, and many exceed them. This is evident in the confidence with which children participate in activities, the quality of their discussions with adults and each other and the way in which they sustain their interest and concentration.

Children have adapted well to the recent change of teacher and the staff work well together. Adults make good use of questions to help children develop their ideas and skills when they

are engaged in whole-class or adult-led activities. However, when children are working independently, adults sometimes miss opportunities to extend children's skills and help them improve their understanding. Procedures for checking children's progress are effective. These highlight where planning needs to focus their next steps in learning, for example, in boosting children's calculating skills and elements of their knowledge and understanding of the world. The accommodation issues highlighted in the previous report have been successfully addressed and recent work has further improved the space available for outdoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' rate of progress as they move through the school to ensure that they all achieve their potential, especially the more able.
- Increase the involvement of pupils in their learning by guiding them on how they can improve their work.
- Develop the role of subject leaders and other managers in implementing improvements in the curriculum and rigorously checking pupils' progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 2 have been broadly average for the last three years. The proportions of pupils reaching the standards expected in reading, writing and mathematics have increased during this period and were above average in 2007. However, the proportions gaining the higher levels fell and were below the national averages. In tests at the end of Year 6, standards rose from average in 2005 to above average in both 2006 and 2007. The school's targets were exceeded in 2007, with similar proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. There are no significant differences in the standards and achievements of boys and girls. Pupils who have difficulties with learning make similar progress to other pupils because of the extra help they receive in order to keep up.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils effectively develop their understanding of feelings and build strong relationships with adults and each other. They adopt healthy lifestyle choices, feel safe at school and are not fearful of bullying or other forms of discrimination. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are considerate and have positive attitudes that are reflected in their enjoyment of all aspects of school. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They participate willingly in many events within and outside school, which enable them to contribute to the school and the local community, as well as partnership links with Kenya. Pupils develop good collaborative skills, and are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are attentive, keen to learn and they work well together. Staff share the purpose of the lessons with pupils at the outset and explain what they will need to do to meet them. However, these goals often apply to the whole class and do not take sufficient account of pupils' differing abilities, especially the most able. Information about what pupils know and can do is not used well enough to challenge pupils to reach out for the next level in their work. Pupils say that they could work harder. Staff make good use of praise and encouragement in lessons but marking, particularly the use of comments to help pupils improve, is inconsistent and is not linked closely enough to learning goals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. Most pupils are served well by a broad and balanced curriculum, which successfully encourages their personal development and thinking skills, and meets statutory requirements. However, planned activities are not varied enough to provide the challenges necessary to extend the pupils so that they make the progress of which they are capable. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is good. It is responsive to local needs, as seen when pupils contribute to the community and take on responsibilities. Through visits, visitors, and a wide range of after-school activities, the school provides many varied enrichment activities that are well attended and enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school is a caring community. This is illustrated well by the high level of commitment amongst staff to encouraging pupils' enjoyment and providing a supportive environment in which pupils feel safe and secure. As a result, pupils feel valued and respond accordingly. Child protection procedures are robust. Pupils who have difficulties with learning or getting around the school and those who looked after by the local authority are supported well by staff. However, procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and helping them to improve their work are inconsistently applied. For example, although children have personalised 'target cards', the assessment of pupils' work in some year groups does not provide them with sufficient guidance on how to improve the shape and structure of their writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school that is based on pupils achieving well within a caring, supportive and attractive environment. Staff contribute to school self-evaluation, although the main thrust of this work lies with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The implementation of plans resulting from this evaluation has been slowed by changes in staffing. Procedures for checking pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching are fit for purpose. However, they have yet to be used effectively in ironing out some pupils'

uneven progress and producing consistently good teaching. Results of the statutory assessments indicate that target setting is not sufficiently rigorous or challenging.

Internal remodelling of the school has provided improved facilities for pupils and staff. The school is well kept and day-to-day routines are well managed. The governing body meets regularly and is successfully developing its role as the school's critical friend. Governors, drawn from different parishes, bring valuable professional expertise to their work.

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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?	3
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	2
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moreton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ongar CM5 0JD

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school last week. We greatly enjoyed looking at your work and hearing about all the different things you do at school. We are pleased to hear that you enjoy school and to see how well you get on with adults and each other. We are particularly pleased that you feel valued by the staff and are happy to ask them for help and advice. You behave well in lessons and around the school, and settle down to work quickly and without fuss. Well done! You have a good understanding of keeping healthy and we congratulate you on gaining the Healthy Schools award. You know how to stay safe, and take a good part in the life of the school and the local community.

You get off to a good start in the Reception class. As you move through the school, some of you do well but we think those of you who could get on faster than others could do better. We found that you make more progress in some classes than others so we have asked your teachers to make sure that they always give you challenging work. In particular, when they are marking your books we have asked all your teachers to refer more closely to the aims of the lessons and provide you with comments on what you need to do next. We think that you could play a bigger part in your learning so that you can more successfully improve your work.

Mrs Bard has already done much to improve the school and she has plans to do more. She needs help from all the staff in making these plans happen, and then checking that teaching is going well and that you are making good progress. You can also help by working hard and doing your best. Read the comments your teachers make when marking your books and talk about these with each other, with the staff and when you are at home. You showed us that you are confident and capable learners who want to do well - that is so important. Finally, may we wish those of you in Year 6 all the very best for when you move to your new schools in September.

Keep working hard and enjoying yourselves.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead inspector