

Moor First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124061
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314794
Inspection date	12 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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	3-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Foster
Headteacher	Susan Mayes
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
School address	School Lane Biddulph Moor Stoke-on-Trent ST8 7HR
Telephone number	01782 512350
Fax number	01782 511354

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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' progress in mathematics, how well teachers use information about pupils' progress and how effectively leaders and managers are driving school improvement. Evidence was gathered from observations, discussions and the school's assessments of pupils' progress. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected 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 in this report.

Description of the school

This small first school serves an area in which the socio-economic factors are generally favourable. Fewer pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools, although this proportion varies widely from year group to year group. Nearly all pupils from a White British background.

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. It is a friendly and welcoming place in which pupils are well prepared for the future. Pupils' good rate of attendance reflects their enjoyment in coming to school. One parent's view reflects that of the overwhelming majority that, 'Moor First provides children with a happy, safe, stimulating and caring learning environment.'

Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their independence, confidence and respect for each other. Pupils behave well and work and play happily together. They put into practice what they learn about caring and sharing and make an excellent contribution to the community. Younger pupils value the work of older pupils who act as Playtime Pals. Pupils make important decisions about conserving the environment. They ensure, for example, that the principles of 'reduce, recycle and re-use' are part of the school's daily life. Good partnerships with other schools and parents support pupils' well-being and their excellent sense of how to stay fit and healthy. Parents actively support the school's drive for healthy eating by providing healthy snacks. Pupils' awareness of how to make the right choices was very well demonstrated in a session when pupils in Years 3 and 4 examined food packaging to establish levels of protein, carbohydrates and fat.

Good teaching ensures that pupils' achievement is good. Children's attainment when they start school is as expected for their age. Nursery and Reception children make a good start. Their good progress means that standards are above average by the time they start Year 1. This good progress is built on through to Year 4 and so the picture of above average standards is maintained. Pupils' reading develops well because they get a very firm grounding in the basic skills. The good opportunities to talk about their ideas enhance their understanding of what they read. Pupils make rapid progress in writing and standards well above average. Teachers use the information they have about pupils' progress in writing very precisely to challenge pupils of different abilities. Additionally, pupils know exactly what they are aiming to improve and what they need to do to reach their targets in writing. Pupils' progress in mathematics is satisfactory, but the work lacks challenge at times. This is because teaching in this subject does not make the best use of assessments to establish the right starting point in work for pupils' different abilities. Consequently, pupils sometimes spend time consolidating previous learning in mathematics rather than forging ahead. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what will be learned in each mathematics lesson and check that pupils understand the purpose of activities at frequent intervals. However, pupils lack a longer-term view of what they are aiming for because the system for setting targets is not as well developed as in writing.

Pupils are keen to start the day because they are excited about learning. The good curriculum promotes their creativity particularly well. The environment is rich in displays of pupils' highly individual work in art and design and design and technology. Pupils' knowledge of different cultures is well developed through activities such as African drumming and dancing. Teachers plan for pupils to use and expand their skills in writing very effectively in other subjects. Consequently, pupils adapt their style of writing to suit the purpose, for example in using bullet points to organise their note making. Opportunities are not as securely planned for pupils to develop their mathematical skills and knowledge as widely in different subjects and this limits their progress. Pupils say how much they enjoy taking part in the wide range of extra activities. They are proud of their success in competitive sports. Clubs, such as 'Tradcraft' where pupils learn sewing and cooking, are very popular.

The effective level of care and support given to pupils means that they feel secure. Pupils have a good sense of how to keep themselves and others safe. They say that 'sticking to the rules' benefits everyone and they use the playground equipment with due regard to others' space and safety. They know that adults will listen to their concerns and quickly offer support to overcome any problems they may meet. There are firm procedures for safeguarding pupils. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they make good progress towards their individual targets.

The headteacher provides a good lead for the school and the staff are enthusiastic about their work. Good leadership and management mean that the school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and knows what to do next. The right priorities are established for improvement because of checks on what is happening. The success of the school's initiatives to raise standards in writing gives a clear indication of its good capacity to improve. The staff's consistent approach to boosting pupils' writing has been supported by effective leadership and management. Frequent checks have been made to find if initiatives are working. Through monitoring of pupils' progress, the school's emphasis has rightly shifted to improving mathematics. Suitable planning is in place to bring about change, but initiatives such as target setting are not yet firmly embedded. Governors play a full part in school life and discharge their responsibilities well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into the routines of the school day because of warm support from adults. Parents and teachers work together so that children have security and confidence. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception years and so standards are above average by the end of Reception. Children enjoy their first experiences of school because good teaching ensures that their curiosity is harnessed and they busily explore the world around them. The curriculum securely balances what children want to do and what they need to do to make good progress in learning. Good leadership and management have ensured that the right areas are being worked on. As with the rest of the school, mathematical development is the area identified for improvement, particularly in ensuring that children use numbers in practical contexts.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching makes better use of assessments so that pupils of different abilities have suitably challenging work in mathematics and know how to improve.
- Check that what is put in place to improve pupils' progress in mathematics is working and that pupils use their mathematical skills across other subjects.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
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?	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	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

13 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moor First School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 7HR

Thank you for being so welcoming when I spent the day at your school. It was lovely to see you enjoying working and playing together. I can understand why your parents and the staff are proud of the way you are growing up. Moor First School is giving you a good education. I am writing to tell you what else I found out about your school.

- Those of you in Nursery and Reception get a good start that sets you up well for the future.
- You do well in your work and reach good standards by the time you leave. This is because of the good teaching.
- Your writing develops really well because your teachers have high expectations of you and you know how to reach your targets.
- You help to make your school such a happy place by behaving well. You are making an excellent contribution to your community through things like recycling and conserving energy. Well done everybody!
- There are many exciting things for you to do in sport and clubs like Tradcraft.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit. You are good at keeping yourselves and other people safe.
- The staff take good care of you and help you if you have any problems.
- Your school is led and managed well. People check how things can improve. Everyone wants the best for you.

The staff have rightly noticed that you do not do quite as well in mathematics as in reading and writing. I have asked them to make sure that the work in mathematics is more challenging for you and that you know what to do to improve. I noticed that you are very good at writing in subjects like science and design and technology. You do not get the same chances to use your skills in mathematics in other subjects, so I have asked the staff to think of more ways for you to do this. Keep on working hard and enjoying your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane Lead inspector

13 May 2008

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Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane
Lead inspector