

Moorlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109799
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	325029
Inspection date	2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Nye HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	439
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Ellis
Headteacher	Mr D Lees (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church End Lane Tilehurst Reading RG30 4UN
Telephone number	01189 015 505
Fax number	01189 015 504

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the quality and impact of teaching and academic guidance on pupils' standards and achievement
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in raising standards
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the acting headteacher, assistant headteachers and other senior staff, pupils and a governor, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, and the school's self-evaluation and other documentation and samples of pupils' work were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own judgements, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and includes nursery provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pupils come from wide-ranging backgrounds, and the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and whose home language is not English is similar to other schools, although in some year groups this is larger. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The school has been led by an acting headteacher since January, and a permanent headteacher has been appointed from the autumn term 2009. The school has been awarded the Silver Artsmark, Activemark and Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education and care for its pupils. This is because leadership and management are good at all levels. Teaching is good throughout the school and is supported by an imaginative curriculum. Pupils are very well cared for and supported and, as a result, their personal development and well-being are good. 'Teachers make lessons fun' was the comment of one pupil and this view is supported by many. The majority of parents are very positive about the school and are particularly appreciative of the individual support that pupils benefit from. 'They spend a lot of time individually with each child' and 'teachers know the children well' were two comments that expressed the views of many. Some parents feel that the school needs to take more account of their views and suggestions, and others expressed concern about behaviour. Inspection evidence suggests that, although there have been behaviour issues in the past, these are now largely resolved and generally pupils behave sensibly in class and around school.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start school with skills and understanding slightly below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy, and make good progress, although reading and writing remain weaker areas when they transfer to Year 1. During their time in Key Stage 1 they make good progress and in the past almost all achieved expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current Year 2 cohort standards are above average in reading but average in writing because fewer pupils have achieved the higher levels. However, because there is a higher than average number of pupils who speak English as a second language in this cohort, this still represents good progress. In Key Stage 2 standards have been too low in the past, especially in mathematics. However, due to very well-planned and well-delivered intervention strategies, there has been a considerable improvement and standards are now at least satisfactory overall. In mathematics a much greater proportion of pupils have achieved the higher level of attainment. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils are now making good progress overall, and this can be seen in very effective assessment and tracking systems which are securely in place. Reading is an area of particular strength and progress has increased considerably because of a whole-school focus on raising standards in this area. The school recognises the need to now focus on raising standards further in writing. Pupils who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress relative to their starting points because their needs are identified early and they benefit from well-focused and good quality support by teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils enjoy school, and this is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Attendance is a weakness for a few pupils who are persistently absent, and the school is working closely with outside agencies, such as the education welfare service, to try to resolve this issue. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Bullying and racist incidents are appropriately responded to and all safeguarding procedures are in place and rigorously applied. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example through being play leaders and serving on the active school council. However, some are less clear about how they contribute to the wider local community. Pupils are developing good workplace skills, a strength being the way in which they work as teams and use information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and are supporting the school's drive to raise standards. This is because lessons are imaginatively planned to meet the needs of pupils

and a particularly strong feature is the way in which teachers ensure that pupils are clear about the learning intentions of the lesson and how these link to clearly explained success criteria. Behaviour is very well managed in lessons and relationships between adults and pupils are good. As a result, the lessons have pace and pupils make good progress. In the best lessons very imaginative and well-explained tasks motivate pupils. For example, in one lesson pupils were excited by a real-life challenge when they were asked to research a suitable venue for a school trip and prepare a presentation to the headteacher. Teachers' good subject knowledge was illustrated in a modern foreign language lesson which included conversational Polish as well as French. Work is matched suitably to pupils' needs because teachers use ongoing, accurate assessment methods to ensure that they are suitably challenged. In lessons that were less effective, planning was not as well thought through and questions to pupils were not sufficiently open-ended to encourage in-depth thinking, and the pace of learning was less effective as a consequence. Marking systems are very effective in ensuring that pupils are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. These are having a positive impact on learning in the classes where they are being fully applied. In these classes pupils are starting to assess their own learning and teachers' comments are clear and helpful, providing good links to success criteria and the pupils' targets. However, in a few classes guidance and marking are not yet sufficiently well embedded, opportunities for pupils to assess their own work are missed and teacher's marking, while positive, is not sufficiently focused on improvement.

The curriculum is designed carefully to meet the needs of pupils and support teaching and learning. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Art is a strength, and the quality of pupils' work around the school, and particularly as a result of a recent 'Art Week', is good. This has been recognised by the award of the silver Artsmark. ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection, and is now a strength. Curriculum enrichment activities such as cultural, sporting and environmental clubs, residential weeks and school trips help to encourage pupils' enjoyment of their learning.

The leadership and management of the school at all levels are good. Although this has been a challenging year for the school with difficulties in appointing a permanent headteacher, the acting headteacher has kept the school focused on its improvement targets. In this he has been extremely well supported by the two assistant headteachers and other senior staff. There is a very clear awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, together, senior staff have led a united drive to raise standards. Their success in achieving impressive improvements in reading and mathematics is testament to the effectiveness of their leadership and, together with the good quality improvement planning, confirms that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Overall, the school contributes well to wider community cohesion, but it recognises that more can be done to develop closer links with the local community. Governors have been proactive in supporting and challenging the school, and, through such activities as reviewing each curriculum area's action plan, have a good understanding of the schools' work. They recognise that more can be done to develop their involvement in the school, but they nevertheless discharge their responsibilities well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is of good quality. When they enter, children have weaknesses in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, reading and linking letters and sounds, although progress in early writing is less strong. Adults

are well qualified, have a good understanding of the children's needs and provide a good range of stimulating and relevant activities both within the classrooms and outside. The development of children's independence is a notable strength and results from the emphasis placed on this, the appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities, and the free flow between the inside and outside areas.

Children's personal development is good. They behave very well because adults have high expectations. A safe and secure environment has been established where children are encouraged to care for each other and adopt safe practices. For example, children need little reminding to put their sun hats on before going outside because they have been well trained. The children's welfare is well promoted. They feel valued by adults and each other and enjoy coming to school. The recent appointment of a transition mentor has been successful in developing links with parents, and plans to develop further links with the community are in place.

The leadership and management of the Early Years and Foundation Stage are good and the leader has successfully developed a shared vision of how to improve further. Adults work as a very effective team and the contribution of everyone is equally valued. As a result, children are making good progress and the school's self-evaluation accurately identifies future development areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.
- Ensure that the best practice regarding the guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work is consistently applied throughout the school.
- Further develop links with the local community.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

14 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moorlands Primary School, Reading, RG30 4UN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to your school this week. We really enjoyed chatting to you and the adults, looking at your work and sharing your lessons. We thought that you were very polite and well behaved, which is an improvement on how things were in the past. Well done!

I am sure that you will be keen to hear what we thought of your school. Yours is a good school and your teachers are doing a good job of teaching and looking after you. The things that are particularly good about your school are:

- you are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school; because you are well taught, you make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics
- the youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a really good start to their schooling
- you are given plenty of interesting and well-planned things to learn and do
- the adults who are in charge of the school do a good job in running it and in trying to make it better.

Even though yours is a good school, there are always things that can be done to make it even better. To help this, we have suggested three things to focus on:

- helping everyone to improve their writing; you can help by trying really hard to write well in every subject
- making sure that the really good advice that some of you are given about how to improve your work is given to everyone; you can help by asking if you do not know how to improve your work and telling your teachers how well you think you are doing
- focus on links with the local community; you can help by looking at ways you can contribute to the community outside school.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection. I wish you all the very best for the future and I hope that you have a lovely summer holiday.

Yours faithfully

Chris Nye

Her Majesty's Inspector