

Moorhill Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124220 |
| Local Authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 331580 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | David Rzeznik 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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 399 |
| 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 | Mike Taylor |
| Headteacher | Sandra Peck |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 June 2008 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Moorland Road Cannock WS11 4NX |
| Telephone number | 01543 510247 |
| Fax number | 01543 510243 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 June 2009 |
| Inspection number | 331580 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. When the school was inspected in March 2008, it was judged to require significant improvement so was given a notice to improve. Standards and the achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 were inadequate. In September 2008, an HMI monitoring inspection judged that the school was making satisfactory progress in addressing these weaknesses.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and is located on a split site. Most pupils are White British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Most have moderate learning difficulties or behaviour problems. The percentage claiming free school meals is above average. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school during the academic year is above average.

A pre-school and fun club provides out of school and holiday child care. The provision is not managed by the governing body and was inspected separately by a child care inspector. The school has gained a Health Promoting School award and an Active Sports award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The quality of education is satisfactory and improving. There is good capacity for the school to improve further. An improved curriculum, more effective teaching and better leadership of core subjects has brought about rising standards and an acceleration in pupils' progress.

Satisfactory leadership and management by senior staff, middle leaders and governors are moving the school in the right direction. The school has raised its game in the past year. There has been a concerted effort to successfully address the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. Systems for self-evaluation are appropriately rigorous and involve leaders at different levels. As a result, senior staff have a secure understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. They have used a variety of effective strategies to improve teaching and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6, and to maintain the good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception classes). The school is tracking pupils' progress but not robustly enough. Tracking data are not being combined effectively with the information gained from lesson observations to securely judge teaching quality and its impact.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Reception. Teaching is improving but it remains inconsistent. Consequently, pupils' progress is uneven within subjects and across years. This said, there is a greater proportion of good teaching than a year ago. A major factor helping to drive improvement is the recruitment of capable teachers who stay and give of their best. The school now has a stable staff and this is ensuring much better continuity in learning. Better use is made of assessment information to plan lessons. However, work is not always properly matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly the more able. Teachers do encourage pupils to communicate in class but they do not do enough modelling of language to improve pupils' vocabulary and grammatical skills. Reception activities taught by adults are effective and children make good progress in them. The activities that are not adult-led sometimes lack challenge and are not always resourced effectively.

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are significantly below average. In 2008, standards in both years rose after years of decline. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory and they make sound progress from their starting points. However, too few pupils reach the expected and higher levels of the National Curriculum. Pupils' speaking, writing and numeracy skills are insufficiently developed and this is hindering their ability to communicate and calculate effectively and succeed in national assessments. Leaders recognise that there is much catching up to do because past inadequacies in provision have resulted in pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

The curriculum is satisfactory and much improved. It is no longer narrow and there are sufficient opportunities for creativity and the practical application of basic skills. Pupils and parents love Fantastic Fridays. The linking of subjects into interesting topics makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well because pastoral care is good. Academic support is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children start school with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is effective and the curriculum is well matched to children's needs. On entering Year 1, most children are working within the expected levels for their age. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Children are happy and well behaved. They are well cared for in a secure and welcoming environment. Teaching by adults is effective and children learn well. A range of stimulating and worthwhile activities are provided and time is used wisely. The activities that are not adult-led sometimes lack challenge and are not always properly resourced. The structured teaching of letters and sounds is good and is improving children's reading and writing skills at a good rate. Outdoor provision is adequate and learning outside lessons is extended with visits to local places of interest. Leadership and management are good. Good induction procedures, including effective links with the pre-school, ensure that children settle quickly into school routines. Staff work well as a team and good links have been established with parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and science and increase the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher National Curriculum levels in both subjects.
- Improve pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills, particularly their spelling, punctuation and handwriting, and ensure staff effectively model language structures to improve pupils' vocabulary and grammar skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and all pupils are appropriately challenged, particularly the more able, and ensure non-adult led activities in Reception are productive and time is used wisely.
- Further refine the tracking of pupils' progress to determine the achievement of different groups and more closely align tracking data with the information gained from lesson observations to better judge teaching quality and its impact.

A small proportion of 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and good in Reception. Better teaching, improved subject leadership and a more effective curriculum have helped accelerate pupils' progress this academic year. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement remains inconsistent. For example, since September 2008, most Year 1 pupils have made good progress in mathematics but in Year 3 most pupils have made satisfactory progress in the subject.

In 2008, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were significantly below average. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics rose in both years after a period of steady decline. The school met the government floor target of the proportion of pupils reaching 65% Level 4 in English and mathematics. Current 2009 data indicate that standards in Years 2 and 6 will be similar to those reached in 2008. However, too few reach the expected and higher National Curriculum levels in core subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties are making the expected progress. The whole-school targets set for the oldest pupils are realistic and are suitably challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is satisfactory. They say that they feel safe and that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils' behaviour is good and teachers are much better at dealing with low level disruptive behaviour in lessons because good behaviour management strategies are adopted. Pupils understand the importance of being healthy. Many take advantage of the wide range of clubs and playground activities to exercise and keep fit. The school council's views are listened to and acted upon. For example, they have improved playground facilities. Pupils raise funds for good causes and the playground buddy scheme ensures older pupils look after the most vulnerable. Regular visits from the emergency services provide pupils with a suitable understanding of the world of work. The Young Enterprise project helped the older pupils gain an understanding of finance, in particular profit and loss.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is much more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection and this is contributing to pupils' accelerating progress. The splitting of classes into smaller numbers is a positive development. It means teachers can provide effective one-to-one support and quickly move pupils' learning on. Grouping pupils by ability is also enabling teachers to match work more securely to pupils' capabilities. This said, at times, work is not sufficiently challenging for individuals or groups, particularly the more able.

The strengths are that teachers have formed good relations with pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. Effective use is made of interactive computer technology to engage pupils' interest and increase their enjoyment. Assessment information is now being used more effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

In the effective lessons, work is challenging for all abilities and good use is made of teaching assistants to support learning, particularly among the less able. Expectations are high and a range of teaching methods are used to keep pupils on task and move their learning on. In the less effective lessons, not all pupils are appropriately challenged and on occasions, teachers move on too quickly, giving pupils insufficient time to consolidate their learning. At times, the resources that exist, such as dictionaries and word banks, are not readily to hand to aid spelling and written work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is much broader and better balanced than 12 months ago. Opportunities provided for creativity and the practical application of basic skills are much improved. Pupils say that Fantastic Friday activities, where subjects are linked together in a coherent and stimulating way, make learning fun and more enjoyable. The work is encouraging parents to become more involved in their child's learning with positive results. The investment in computer technology is paying dividends with the increased use of information and communication technology (ICT), alongside the development of literacy and numeracy skills, in other subjects. French is taught in every year. Provision helps develop pupils' linguistic skills

and their awareness of other cultures. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of clubs and visitors, including residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The child protection policy is satisfactory and procedures are implemented effectively. Appropriate checks are made on staff and others to confirm their suitability to work with children. Satisfactory risk assessments are undertaken for trips off site. The school has worked well with outside agencies and parents to improve attendance. The caretaker and cleaners do a good job keeping the school well maintained. Marking is inconsistent and does not always clearly indicate what must be improved. Insufficient support is provided to develop pupils' speaking and handwriting skills. The older pupils are aware of the National Curriculum level they are working at and what must be done to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A sound action plan was drawn up following the previous inspection. Actions taken are well focused and the right priorities have been addressed. Good use has been made of external expertise, particularly local authority subject advisers, to improve provision and accelerate pupils' progress.

The headteacher appropriately identified staff with potential and has 'given them their head' to lead initiatives to move the school forward. The quality of middle leaders is much improved. For example, core subject leaders are involved in evaluating teaching, scrutinising work, checking planning and training staff. Their efforts are raising standards. Good work has been done to ensure teachers have a secure understanding of the standards achieved in order that a secure baseline is established from which to judge pupils' progress. The school is tracking pupils' attainment and progress but it is not sharp enough. The deputy headteacher has done a good job improving the breadth and coherence of the curriculum and making it more enjoyable.

The role of governors in holding the school to account is much improved. They have attended training, been involved in formulating policy and have suitably monitored progress towards the targets set in the school action plan. They ensure the school meets statutory requirements and the school lives within its means. There is a considerable budget surplus and there are appropriate plans in place to spend the money wisely.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

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

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| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

Leadership and management

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

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moorhill Primary School, Cannock WS11 4NX

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found out. Thank you for talking to us and for making us feel so welcome. Inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and improving.

- We liked these things about your school.
- You enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Reception children are making good progress. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are making at least satisfactory progress and standards are starting to rise.
- You are well cared for and you feel safe and secure. Pastoral support is good and this is having a positive impact on your personal development.
- Teaching is satisfactory or better. There is much more good teaching than a year ago.
- The curriculum is much improved. You and your parents love Fantastic Fridays. You like subjects being linked together into interesting topics because it makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable.
- You like taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and residential experiences.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors are setting a clear educational direction for the school.

- The school must do four things to improve further.
- Accelerate your progress in mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6, and increase the number of you that reach National Curriculum Levels 4 and 5.
- Improve your speaking, reading and writing skills, particularly your spelling, punctuation and handwriting. We want your teachers to show you how to speak properly and for you to copy what they say. When you speak, try and talk in sentences.
- Ensure you are well taught and you do as well as you can, particularly the more able, and improve the activities that the youngest children do on their own.
- Get even better at checking the amount of progress you are making as you move through the school.

Best Wishes

David Rzeknik

Her Majesty's Inspector