

Mason Moor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116263
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	338777
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trefor Lloyd
Headteacher	Sian Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with the vice-chair of governors, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' written work, records of their progress, lesson-planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Inspection questionnaires were received from staff and from 59 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils make progress, particularly those in Years 1 and 2, those with identified special educational needs and disabilities and those who are gifted or talented
- how effectively the teaching supports pupils' learning and how well teachers use assessment and target-setting
- how successful the school has been in tackling behaviour issues and exclusions
- the effectiveness of school leaders ' including senior leaders, middle managers and governors.

Information about the school

This is a slightly larger-than-average primary school, with ten classes. The pupils are predominantly White British and the great majority speak English as their first language. A very small number of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage attend the school. Considerably more pupils are entitled to free school meals than in most schools. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of these have emotional and behavioural or speech and language issues. The school hosts a special unit for children with moderate learning difficulties. This currently has six pupils on roll, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the full-time Reception unit. There is a pre-school on the premises which is independently run and does not form part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. As a result of the hard work, vision and commitment of the headteacher and staff, it is also a rapidly improving school, which has some significant strengths. High-quality pastoral care has a high priority and the school goes to great lengths to support the well-being and personal development of its pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and feel safe there. The heritage of poor behaviour and high levels of exclusions has been all but eradicated. Pupils show good attitudes to learning, have good work habits and behave well. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. In spite of the school's best efforts, however, attendance remains stubbornly low. In this challenging inner-urban area, gains in attendance are quickly lost, as short-stay families join and leave the school.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with limited pre-school experience and with attainment well below that expected for their age. Although they make good progress, standards remain below the expected level by the end of Reception. Pupils now sustain a generally good pace of learning in Years 1 and 2, although standards at the end of Year 2 are slightly below average, particularly in reading. Further improvement could be expected at this point. Good teaching ensures that pupils are challenged and learn effectively. This is particularly evident in Years 3 to 6 where progress is now consistently good. Increasingly rapid learning is beginning to erode the legacy of low attainment which has been endemic until recently. Up to 2008, pupils routinely underperformed at the end of Year 6. In 2005, they were over four terms behind in their learning. By 2009 this had been reduced to a deficit of one and a half terms. Standards for the current Year 6 pupils are now very close to those expected nationally. Progress is also good for different groups, such as the few Gypsy/Roma pupils, who attend regularly and acquire sound basic skills, and for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has made a good start on developing a programme to support gifted or talented pupils. Pupils take part in a satisfactory range of activities that are well matched to priorities and a good programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. However, outdoor learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not sufficiently developed.

Teachers use day-to-day assessment well to check learning and to plan lessons. Work is marked regularly, although not all teachers give clear guidance as to what pupils must do to improve. The analysis of assessment data is rigorous and identifies underperformance promptly, enabling the school to improve pupils' progress through setting challenging individual targets. Self-evaluation by pupils is a strength.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership for the school. The school runs very smoothly and self-evaluation is realistic

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and accurate. Incisive action is being taken to tackle remaining weaknesses in reading in Years 1 and 2. The monitoring and improving of teaching and learning are rigorous. The engagement with partner institutions to enhance teaching and learning is outstanding. Governance is good. Governors are very knowledgeable and have an increasing involvement in shaping the school's future direction. On the basis of what has been achieved so far, the school has good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon current strategies to increase pupils' attendance, in line with the annual targets set by the local authority.
- Increase the pace of learning in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils attain higher standards by the end of Year 2, particularly in reading.
- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a well-resourced outdoor learning area, in line with the quality of the indoor provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement has improved significantly. Although the rate of progress is most consistent in Years 5 and 6, pupils now build well upon their previous learning across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have carefully targeted work and receive effective support in class. In Year 2 science and Year 6 literacy lessons, equally effective support for identified able pupils was evident.

Standards are rising steadily at Year 6 and are now broadly average. While standards had been below average in 2009, particularly in English, this still represented a considerable improvement on standards in the previous years. The school continues to focus strongly on the embedding of crucial basic skills. Low entry standards and limited pre-school provision mean that standards in Year 2, currently slightly below average, have been slower to shift. Nonetheless, evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows that progress from Reception is now mostly good, particularly where the teaching is stronger. In a Year 1/2 science lesson pupils were learning well as a result of well-organised, imaginative practical activities. One-to-one support for Unit pupils, for individual pupils in intensive afternoon basic skills sessions and for selected pupils in incentive programmes, such as those offered by the local football club, have all contributed to the improvement in pupils' progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong sense of inclusiveness and community. Pupils feel very safe, recognising that behaviour has improved. They have confidence in adults and show consideration for others. Routine events, as when Year 6 pupils bring their Reception 'little friends', hand-in-hand, to Assembly, strongly reinforce the sense of community. Improving social skills, leadership opportunities within school, together with increasingly secure academic skills, indicate that pupils are now adequately prepared for their future education. The school council is highly effective, spearheads projects around the school and liaises with the governing body. It provides an excellent forum for pupils' views. The promotion of community

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cohesion is satisfactory overall. While this is a significant strength in the school and local context, there is less engagement with other communities with different characteristics. This means that pupils' experience of the diversity of life in Britain is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A key feature of the teaching ' and most lessons were at least good ' is the very good use of effective behaviour management strategies. Teachers know pupils well. There is a good understanding of the need to match work to pupils' needs and lesson-planning is good. This was evident, for example, in the painstaking approach seen in the specialist unit. Available adults are deployed well to support learners, sometimes the more able. The best lessons have a lively approach and sustain a brisk pace, with an eye to time limits. In a successful Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson pupils were effectively motivated to focus their efforts and reach a conclusion. Resources, such as 'working walls' and whiteboards are mostly used well. Assessment is a strength. Teachers use questioning well to evaluate understanding. There is regular and effective use of individual targets and self-evaluation by pupils, particularly in their written work. While work is marked

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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promptly and thoroughly, the style is inconsistent and pupils often do not have clear guidance on how to improve their work.

The curriculum is satisfactorily matched to pupils' needs, though strongly focused on current key priorities. It supports generally good progress in reading and in writing. While there is some promotion of writing skills in other subjects, this remains spasmodic. There is satisfactory provision for developing information and communication technology skills. 'Fantastic Friday' is an effective vehicle for raising the profile of non-core subjects. The school recognises that more can be done to boost learning in the transition between Reception and Years 1 and 2. The school has a gifted and talented pupil register, although there is more to do to implement a meaningful programme. There is good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, supporting pupils' good personal development. The range of enrichment activities, visits and visitors, including two residential visits, is good.

Staff care for pupils well. There are satisfactory links with parents and carers, although parental response does not fully reflect the extent of the school's efforts. However, the school has been successful in gaining the trust of the families of the few Gypsy/Roma pupils. As a result, attendance of these pupils is generally good and progress and learning are better than is typically found. The Emotional Learning and Support Assistants provide valuable support for pupils with social or emotional needs. The school works extremely well with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Current exclusion figures are low, a radical improvement upon recent years.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher inherited a legacy of unstable leadership, very low standards and poor pupil attitudes and behaviour. It has demanded vision, resolution, drive and determination ' and effective support from the local authority ' to move the school forward. The leadership team has worked hard to gain the trust of the community. The school's support for pupils' personal and pastoral development and for the welfare needs of families is a key strength. There has been resolute action to tackle academic underperformance. This has included a range of initiatives to raise achievement. Since 2008 there has been a clear trajectory of improvement. Highly effective systems are in place to ensure that the school runs smoothly. The monitoring of planning and teaching is rigorous, as is the analysis of data and the setting of targets for improvement. The

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deputy headteacher, a highly effective practitioner, has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Expectations are high. Middle managers are effective teachers and have a high level of accountability for areas where they hold responsibility.

The governing body is resolutely committed to the school. Governors meet frequently and have a good knowledge of the school and of pupils' learning. They are representative of the local community, but also include members with specialist expertise. Governors support the leadership well and ensure that statutory requirements are met, including the good procedures for safeguarding pupils. They understand the school's strengths well and are fully involved in shaping its future direction and driving improvement. The school engages well with local community interests and with parental needs and expectations. Potential discrimination is tackled resolutely. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted. The school tackles community cohesion issues satisfactorily. Significant strengths on local issues are counterbalanced by lesser activity in relation to the national or international aspects.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge which are well below the levels expected for their age. A significant number have had limited pre-school experience. Children settle rapidly because of the good induction arrangements and the good level of adult support. They are well cared for and build good relationships with staff. They feel safe and secure, settle readily into the routines and behave well. Good teaching

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helps children, including those with additional learning needs, to make good progress. Attainment by the end of Reception is typically below the national average. It tends to be strongest in children's personal development, in elements of mathematical development and in creative and physical development. In these aspects, progress is good. The regular focus on sounds and letters and on role play is supporting a steady improvement in literacy and oracy skills. While there is an outdoor learning area, it is vulnerable to vandalism and is not, consequently, adequately resourced, nor is its use sufficiently integrated into the daily provision. Leadership and management are good. Planning is thorough and both assessment and record-keeping are very detailed and focused on a close knowledge of the children and their needs. The school recognises the need to extend access to Early Years Foundation Stage learning to less mature children in Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers have very positive views of the school. There were relatively few written comments, but most were positive. Typically, parents and carers were appreciative both of the way the school has developed and of their children's progress. A few praise the school's support for pupils with additional learning needs, although others feel that more could be done. Inspectors feel that these children are, overall, supported well. Other comments related to perceived failings in communication between the school, parents and carers, and to the time spent managing pupils' behaviour. The team considered all points carefully. Observations suggest that the school has done much to boost the relationship between the school and parents and carers. Not all regard education as a shared responsibility, for example in the matter of regular attendance, and the school does not always get the support from parents and carers that it deserves. The school has had a history of behavioural problems arising from a small minority of pupils. Changes in the school roll, together with the school's excellent skills in managing pupils' behaviour, mean that incidents have considerably reduced. Behaviour seen during the inspection was never less than good. Overall, the consensus suggests that this is a caring school where pupils are well supported in their personal development. Inspection findings generally endorse parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mason Moor Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 253 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	63	17	29	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	38	64	17	29	4	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	47	23	39	7	12	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	53	22	37	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	36	61	19	32	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	54	20	34	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	49	28	47	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	44	25	42	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	58	21	36	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	37	24	41	6	10	5	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	36	28	47	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	49	21	36	4	7	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	54	24	41	2	3	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mason Moor Primary School, Southampton SO16 4AS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that, while yours is a satisfactory school, it also has a great many strengths.

Our main findings are these:

- You behave well and work hard.
- Standards are now average in Year 6 and have improved a lot in the last two years; most of you make good progress.
- Teachers work hard and really support you well in your learning.
- The school works outstandingly well with other providers to ensure that you get really good opportunities.
- Children in Reception make good progress, and do particularly well in their personal development and in their mathematical and creative development.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for well.
- You conduct yourselves safely and have a good understanding of how important it is to eat healthily.
- The curriculum is satisfactory, although you have a good number of clubs, go on a good range of visits and have interesting visitors to school.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well provided for with extra help.
- Those who lead the school work extremely hard and are really keen to make it succeed.

We are asking the school to make the following changes so that you do even better:

- Renew efforts to ensure that all children attend school as regularly as possible.
- Ensure that all the progress already made in raising standards is sustained, particularly in English, and that pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn at as rapid a pace as possible.
- Make sure that the Reception children have regular opportunities to use the outdoor learning area and that it is well resourced.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan

Lead inspector

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