

Moorside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114050
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378787
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Herd
Headteacher	Janet Wrightson
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Petts

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by four class teachers and a nursery nurse. He also observed a range of intervention activities for small groups of pupils; talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. In addition, the inspector held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the school's designated local authority Education Development Partner. The inspector observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's information records relating to pupils' achievement, leadership and management monitoring and evaluation evidence, behavioural records and safeguarding. He also took into account the questionnaire, returned by 23 parents and carers, 44 pupils and 10 staff. No responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available to aid inspection planning.

Information about the school

Moorside is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a few at the early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to double the average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is close to five times the average, with very few with a statement of special educational needs. There is a much higher than usual proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The incidence of pupils arriving or leaving at other than the usual time, sometimes late in a Key Stage, has risen significantly in the last two years. Over that time leadership has become much more settled following a period of instability immediately following the previous inspection. The school has met the government floor standards in each of the last three years.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Moorside is a satisfactory school which has made a number of significant improvements since the previous inspection, as a result of the headteacher's very clear vision for school improvement. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, coupled with the safe and welcoming environment for learning, promote good behaviour.
- Pupils' progress is quickening and their attainment is rising from their low starting points, as a result of the positive action taken to systematically address the legacy of underperformance and underachievement. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach below average attainment by the end of Year 6, but the pattern is variable. Pupils' enjoyment of reading and writing is promoted increasingly effectively.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory with the proportion of good teaching increasing. Occasionally, teaching is inspiring when approaches are stimulating and thought-provoking. An emerging strength is the use of talk and questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Despite this, teaching is not yet relentlessly challenging and the pace not yet brisk enough in all lessons. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns that learning is sometimes disrupted in lessons. The inspector found that any disruption was managed promptly and highly effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities, those potentially vulnerable and those at the early stage of learning English, also make satisfactory progress. Children make a good start in the nursery, settling quickly and confidently in the happy, friendly and nurturing atmosphere. Pupils feel safe and report that any concerns or worries they have are dealt with swiftly.
- Leadership and management are good. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled senior leaders to drive improvement strongly. A cohesive staff team shares its ambitions and expectations. As a consequence, the quality of learning is improving. The good curriculum, with significant strength in the provision for pupils' personal development, contains a broad range of interesting experiences to extend learning opportunities.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Quicken the school's drive for consistently at least good teaching in order to further accelerate pupils' progress and boost attainment by:
 - using and building upon the existing thought-provoking practice in the school to inspire and challenge pupils to improve their skills and broaden their experiences
 - making use of the school's progress information at all times to match activities closely to the age, ability and interests of all pupils
 - relentlessly practising the pupils' blending of letters and sounds and the decoding of words, especially in reception, in order to improve their early reading and writing skills
 - making certain teachers' written guidance in books provides well-defined steps for improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils settle calmly and quickly to their tasks responding well to the high expectations on arrival. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have significantly improved. As a result, progress is quickening and attainment rising. Thorough monitoring ensures that individual needs are identified early and effective programmes of support provided. Decisive action to increase the richness of the curriculum is capturing the pupils' interests, increasing their enjoyment and raising achievement. For example, a group of pupils were observed totally absorbed working out the lock number combination for the treasure chest on Wildcat Island.

Children settle confidently in the happy nursery atmosphere and their keenness and curiosity to learn is thoughtfully nurtured by staff. From low starting points, often with underdeveloped speech and language and a lack of readiness to cope with classroom routines, children make good progress. A range of enjoyable activities, both in and outdoors give children opportunities to explore and investigate the interesting world around them. Children are encouraged to practise their early speech and language, for example, singing number songs for Moss, the class furry Meerkat. Good support is given to those at the early stages of learning English. Despite the regular practice to develop their early reading and writing, the teaching of the blending of letter-sound relationships and the making sense of words, is not carried out systematically and reinforced well enough to promote rapid progression.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach below average attainment by the end of Year 6. Those arriving at short notice also make satisfactory progress from their often exceptionally low starting points, although their attainment lags behind those who joined at the start of the Key Stage. However, the pattern of pupils' progress over time, although improving, is variable. Attainment in reading by the age of six and at the end of Key Stage 1, is below and sometimes well below average. Although the rate is picking-up as a result of the school's imaginative approaches to promote reading, such as the regular family

reading breakfasts, progress in early reading and writing to enable independent working is not fast enough. By the end of Year 6, positive progress is made developing an enjoyment of reading, but there are times when pupils lack confidence when developing higher-order reading skills, such as describing an author's style and use of a theme.

Since the previous inspection, a trend of improvement in attainment by the end of Year 6 has been established for those pupils who join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Levels of attainment in mathematics are higher than those in English, with writing a weakness. More engaging approaches to the teaching of writing, for example using opportunities such as observing snakes and a lizard at first hand increase interest, stimulate ideas and motivate pupils to apply their writing skills more imaginatively. This is narrowing the gap with attainment in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. In individual cases, pupils make good progress as a result of the carefully targeted support that they receive. Often excellent support is provided for those pupils who are potentially vulnerable, to ensure that there are no barriers to their progress and development. Parents and carers are happy with their children's achievement and inspection evidence, confirmed by school current information, indicates that good progress is an increasingly regular feature of lessons, especially in Years 5 and 6.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching over time is satisfactory but is now steadily improving. Teachers set high expectations for behaviour and enjoy good relationships with pupils, whether in the classroom or at social times. All of the parents and carers responding to the questionnaire express the view that their children are taught well. Staff work collaboratively to make learning interesting, for example, pupils were seen engrossed in thinking of words that rhyme when writing a short poem. Lessons are consistently planned to motivate pupils and exploit opportunities to challenge their thinking, such as when older pupils were observed analysing an Ordnance Survey map to trace the path of a river and interpret features along its course. Learning opportunities are normally appropriately matched to the age and ability of pupils, although not always consistently enough to promote the increased challenge and pace that will sustain a consistent pattern of faster progress. The best teaching includes thought-provoking questioning which captures pupils' interest, with their views and ideas freely exchanged with a partner or group members. Increasingly, lessons are more absorbing and enjoyable, with pupils displaying increasing confidence to apply their skills to problem-solving contexts. Their keenness and increased willingness to work together, helping and supporting each other, are good features of teachers' effective promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Intervention and support for pupils' personal development is well targeted not only to encourage enjoyment but to encourage self-belief, develop resilience and independence to complete challenging tasks. The teaching of early speech and language skills, however, is not always sufficiently systematic and demanding enough to ensure that pupils can use their skills confidently when reading and writing. Teachers' marking is completed frequently and is helpful and constructive, but it does not always provide well-defined steps for improvement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' helpful and considerate attitudes make a good contribution to the positive climate for learning in classrooms. All pupils are included and given the opportunity to achieve success.

Pupils report that bullying is rare and the very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively. Typically their behaviour throughout the school day is thoughtful and sensible. Pupils are well aware of the boundaries that are set for them, listen carefully to staff guidance and direction and enjoy the rewards and positive encouragement for their good behaviour. The occasional challenging behaviour of a very few, is managed highly effectively and with sensitivity. Increasingly, pupils demonstrate a growing maturity to resolve any disputes themselves. They enjoy good relationships with staff and their respect and trust of them is evident.

The school promotes the benefits of good attendance and punctuality well and this results in a large majority of pupils with above average attendance. The positive engagement of families, often those in challenging circumstances, is reducing the level of persistent absence over time. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and this is apparent in daily school life, such as in the preparation and delivery of assemblies. The school council is proud of its achievements in its active role in helping the school to improve, such as, at the time of the inspection, interviewing candidates for the post of new headteacher. Pupils are safety conscious and talk confidently about how to avoid danger, for example, when cooking at home. Their willingness to learn is evident in their enthusiasm to participate in a range of sporting, cultural and community activities. They value the contribution to their learning that visitors can make, such as when police community support officers visited and discussed with pupils the events surrounding the death of Stephen Lawrence. All parents and carers who expressed their views to the inspector were assured that their children were safe in school, and the vast majority agreed with the inspection findings that behaviour is good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher displays much quiet determination in steering and sustaining school improvement. Accurate self-evaluation and robust monitoring and evaluation help to identify correct priorities for improvement. Plans have appropriate actions in place. More settled subject leadership shows that leaders are developing confidence and increasing their sharpness and accuracy in evaluating the impact of improvement initiatives. The rigorous checking of pupils' development enables all staff to quickly identify groups and individuals who require additional support to close any gaps in their learning. Well-targeted professional development and shared best practice are positively supporting improvements in the quality of learning. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and tackles any discrimination effectively. The high quality of care and support provided by the school enables staff to pinpoint pupils' and families' needs swiftly, including those arriving at short notice. This ensures that all pupils are provided with every opportunity to make good progress. The pattern of quickening progress and rising attainment demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to sustain improvements.

The curriculum provides creative approaches to learning and a broadening range of memorable experiences to motivate pupils. It contributes strongly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a firmer focus on themes and basic skills, especially in reading and writing across all subjects, such as the Egyptian and Anglo-Saxon themed weeks. Increasing opportunities are planned for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems, often in fun ways. The effective use of partnerships not only adds to the range of opportunities for good learning, it provides essential specialist support for both pupils and their families. A developing range of experiences promotes pupils' awareness of the diverse world around them, both nationally and globally. The governing body is extremely supportive and under the leadership of a perceptive chair holds the school to account in

helpful ways and contributes positively to the shaping of the school's future. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements with recommended good practice adopted. The school's highly positive engagement of parents and carers, including the sometimes hard to reach, ensures that they are well-informed about all aspects of school life. This is reflected in the encouraging attendance at family learning workshops.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moorside Primary School, Consett, DH8 8EQ

I want to thank you all for the cheerful and friendly welcome that you gave me when I inspected your school to see how well you were learning. I really enjoyed my time talking to you.

Moorside is a satisfactory and steadily improving school. I was really impressed with the extremely positive relationships your school has with your parents and carers and the way your staff constantly urge and support you to do as well as you can. I was pleased by your good behaviour and the high-quality staff support that you receive, especially for those who arrive at short notice. You clearly feel safe and happy as a result. You take pride in helping your school to improve and your recent contribution in helping the governing body to appoint a new headteacher was impressive.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking positive action to ensure that the school continues to improve and this can be seen in your improving progress and better skills, including your writing. I have asked the school to reduce the variations in the rate of your progress. I have asked your teachers to provide more activities which interest you and test your thinking and understanding. Also, for the best practice to be shared amongst all staff to make certain all of your activities are well-matched to your needs and interests. I have asked staff to provide you with more details on how to improve when they mark your work. Also, for younger pupils to repeatedly practise blending sounds and letters together to form words, and to make sense of new words when they are reading and writing.

You can all play your part by attending regularly and continuing to work as hard as you can. All the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Petts
Lead Inspector

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