

Moorlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109799
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	377985
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2012
Lead inspector	Ted Wheatley

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	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Powers
Headteacher (Interim)	Shelly Hancock
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ted Wheatley

Additional inspector

Bob Arnold

Additional inspector

Deirdre Crutchley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 teachers teaching 30 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, pupils and parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at achievement information, development planning and self-evaluation records. They took into account 61 returned parental questionnaires, and responses from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Moorlands Primary is a larger than average-sized school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school has experienced significant changes in staffing in recent years. There is an interim headteacher, and an executive headteacher has been appointed for September 2012. The school is in the final stages of attempting to become part of a local federation of schools.

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	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Moorlands Primary is a satisfactory school. It is satisfactory rather than good because teaching is not always challenging enough. Sometimes pupils’ writing lacks clarity and detail, and their mathematical problem solving skills are underdeveloped. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils’ attainment is broadly average in Key Stages 1 and 2, and it is rising. Whilst pupils’ progress is satisfactory, it is fast improving. However, pupils’ writing is often untidy and spelling is sometimes careless. Pupils do not consistently use the complex sentence structure and the wide range of vocabulary that they use in their speech and this stops their progress from accelerating further. Pupils speak and read well and have broadly average calculation skills. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving, with some that is good. While lessons are often challenging, sometimes work is not matched to pupils’ learning needs. Occasionally the pace of learning is slow and questioning does not fully engage pupils. Marking is often good but sometimes does not tell pupils how to improve their work, and teachers do not always ensure pupils follow guidance when it is given.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. Whilst most pupils behave well, occasionally pupils’ attention wanders in lessons. Bullying is rare and is dealt with well. The school takes good care of pupils and ensures they are safe.
- Senior leaders accurately identify the school’s weaknesses and act rapidly to deal with them. They have eliminated ineffective teaching and concentrated effectively on improving achievement. The headteacher and senior staff manage teachers’ performance thoroughly and provide a wide range of professional support to help them improve their teaching skills. The leadership and management of middle managers is satisfactory overall and improving.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment by ensuring that pupils:
 - use complex sentences and a wide range of vocabulary in their writing
 - improve the quality of their handwriting
 - spell carefully and accurately
 - improve their mathematical problem solving skills.
- Improve teaching to being mainly good by December 2012 by ensuring that:
 - work is always matched to the needs of all pupils
 - the pace of work is fast
 - questioning and discussion engage all pupils so that their attention does not wander
 - marking consistently tells pupils how to improve their work
 - pupils follow the guidance teachers give in their marking.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Since the school's previous inspection, attainment fell and pupils' progress deteriorated significantly, due mainly to the disruption caused by frequent staffing changes in recent years. However, attainment is rising and is now close to average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents satisfactory progress for these pupils, and fast improvement in a short space of time. Pupils throughout the school reach average levels of attainment in reading in Years 2 and 6. They use phonic approaches to recognise new words and to spell out unfamiliar words competently, and this contributes effectively to their wide vocabulary. Pupils read a wide range of books and this plays an important part in how well they explain themselves and use complex sentences in their speech. However, this does not consistently translate to their writing. Their written work is sometimes brief, with little of the sophisticated explanations they use in their speech. In addition, spelling of common and new and frequently displayed words is often careless. Similarly, handwriting is untidy and occasionally hard to read. Pupils have broadly average numeracy skills. They carry out mental calculations competently, though occasionally hesitantly. This is because in the main they do not engage in enough problem solving activities to build their confidence in handling numbers and carrying out calculations.

Over time, pupils make satisfactory progress from starting points that are typical for their age. Their progress is improving quickly, and is good in those lessons where work is challenging and fast paced. For example, in a lesson where pupils were looking for evidence to describe the character of a particular pupil in a story, they worked together well in pairs to extract information from texts and excerpts read by the teacher. They identified the main features and then described them well in discussion, using a wide range of descriptive words and complex sentence structures that gave a clear picture of the character. Pupils of all abilities did well, and enjoyed the opportunities to describe the character. Pupils collaborated well, and the subject

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matter helped pupils develop sympathy and understanding for those who might consider themselves a misfit in a social situation. However, in too many lessons, learning dips because pupils are not sufficiently challenged or engaged in activities.

Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and many of them make good progress. They gain the skills to work independently, and are well supported in this by teachers and classroom assistants. The small numbers of pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory and improving progress. They work well with other pupils and are effectively supported by adults.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good, and increasingly better, progress. In recent years, progress has steadily improved, and the great majority of children now exceed the expected levels in all areas of the early years curriculum.

Overall, parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children make.

Quality of teaching

Teaching overall is satisfactory. However, the quality is improving and the proportion of good teaching is rising. In many lessons, planning is good and based on newly introduced accurate assessment, so that work is closely matched to pupils' learning needs. The pace of work in these lessons is fast, and teachers ask questions and initiate discussions that involve all pupils so that their learning is good. For example, in a lesson on area, the teacher provided a wide range of activities for pupils of different abilities, had high expectations of pupils explaining their understanding and ensured all pupils had opportunities to discuss their answers. Pupils' learning was good. However, in some lessons, the pace of learning is sometimes slow because pupils do not spend enough time on learning activities themselves and teachers do not make sure that all pupils are engaged in discussion activities. Occasionally work is not challenging because assessment information is not used skilfully to match activities to pupils' learning needs.

Marking is frequently good, with details of how well pupils are performing and what they need to do to improve their work. Most pupils know how well they are doing and what their targets are. However, on some occasions, pupils do not follow the advice teachers give when they mark work. In most classrooms, teachers display new vocabulary and frequently used difficult to spell words, and draw pupils attention to them to encourage accurate spelling. Nevertheless, some pupils do not copy accurately. Classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils with disabilities and for those with special educational needs and, where needed, for pupils with English as an additional language. They ensure pupils know what is expected of them, provide clear explanations and guidance for pupils and encourage them to work independently. The curriculum is wide and has well-established literacy and numeracy activities that are helping drive up attainment in English and mathematics. It includes a strong personal, social and health education programme that focuses on tolerance and understanding. This contributes effectively to pupils'

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spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, providing children with a wide curriculum and many opportunities for independent learning and to develop their language and communication skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils enjoy school. Their attendance is above average and some pupils' attendance is excellent. A small number of pupils are persistently absent, but this is reducing because the school's rigorous approach to dealing with absence is very effective. Pupils are friendly and welcoming, and most have positive attitudes to work. The attention of some pupils wanders occasionally, but it is rare for them to disrupt other pupils' learning. Although some pupils, and parents and carers, report that there is some unacceptable behaviour, most say behaviour is good and improving. Inspectors endorse the view that behaviour is satisfactory but improving, because of a renewed vigour in applying school policies consistently and setting high expectations for how pupils should behave. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together. Bullying is rare. Pupils are fully aware of the range of actions that constitute bullying. They report, as do some parents and carers, that there was some racism, and that occasionally incidents still occur. Inspectors agree, and records show that incidents have reduced significantly and that the school deals with all bullying swiftly and effectively. The curriculum promotes understanding of different social and ethnic backgrounds well. The school takes good care of its pupils and supports families whose circumstances could make pupils vulnerable. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents agree.

Leadership and management

The interim headteacher and the executive headteacher appointed to lead the school from September 2012 provide direction for the school's improvement. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. Despite significant changes in leadership and other staffing, leaders are driving improvements in attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour, and they have successfully eliminated inadequate teaching. All staff are committed to raising levels of attainment, and their morale is high. They are well supported with a secure programme of professional development. Staff new to leadership roles do not yet have all of the skills they need to evaluate the school's effectiveness and to help promote improvements, but are rapidly gaining them. The gap in performance between different groups of pupils is narrowing rapidly, and the school is working effectively to improve pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics. The governing body has had many changes in membership and newly appointed inexperienced governors are fast gaining the skills and expertise to provide effective support and challenge for the school. The governing body has responded well to past concerns about racism and has established formal procedures to deal with any complaints about racist incidents. It ensures that safeguarding requirements are met. The school makes sure pupils from all backgrounds have opportunities to do well, and it deals with all forms of discrimination vigorously. The school is demonstrating a sound capacity for further

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improvement.

Most parents and carers support the school. While a small number express some concern at disruptive behaviour, others recognise that the school is improving and that behaviour problems, including bullying, are increasingly well dealt with. The school has improved communication systems to keep parents well informed and organised several activities to support parents in helping their children's learning. Improvements to the curriculum are managed effectively and supported by an increasing range of out of school activities, and enriched with themed days. For example, during the inspection, the school provided a Roman day for Year 3 pupils, in which they dressed up and experienced aspects of Roman life. The school has a particularly strong focus on tolerance for each other and understanding the values and traditions of other cultures. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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 www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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 June 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Moorlands Primary School, Reading RG30 4UN

Thank you for making us so welcome, and for sharing your views with us, when we inspected your school. We think your school is satisfactory and improving. Your progress is satisfactory and improving.

The follow things are particular strengths of your school.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good and, when it is, you enjoy learning. The school provides many stimulating activities to make learning interesting.
- Senior staff and governing body know what the school needs to do to improve further, and they are taking action to make things improve quickly.
- Most of you behave well. You know how to stay safe, and although you know bullying occasionally happens, you know that it will be sorted out rapidly.
- Your attendance is above average.
- The school takes good care of you.

In order for the school to continue to improve, we have asked your teachers to do several things.

- Help you to use complex sentences in your writing.
- Make sure your handwriting is neat and legible, and you spell correctly.
- Improve your problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Ensure work is hard enough for you and the pace of lessons is fast.
- Involve all of you in answering questions to help keep your attention on learning.
- Mark your work in a way that tells you how to make better progress and make sure that you follow the directions given on how to improve your work.

You can help by saying if you find work too easy, by following advice on how to improve your work and by making sure you stay attentive to work. You can try to write neatly, spell accurately and write in greater detail than you do.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley
Lead inspector

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