

Moorlands Primary School

Church End Lane, Reading, RG30 4UN

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not a good school because:

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been good enough, particularly in writing.
- There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to make sure that pupils make consistently good or outstanding progress.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations about the quality and quantity of the work that pupils produce, particularly through opportunities to write at length in all the subjects pupils learn.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not good enough because they are not taught consistently how to form their letters correctly or how to present their work neatly.
- Pupils do not always come to lessons with the attitudes and qualities they need to learn well.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in working directly with their colleagues to support improvements in the quality of teaching and in raising standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement is improving rapidly. Pupils of all ages are now making good progress which is helping them to catch up.
- The quality of teaching is improving. Some teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Throughout the school, marking is exemplary and pupils are given challenging targets. As a result, they are clear about what they need to do in order to improve.
- Pupils feel safe. Behaviour and attendance have improved because pupils want to come to school.
- The executive headteacher, other leaders in school and governors all have a clear understanding of what needs to improve and they are making a big difference to the effectiveness of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons and parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, parents, carers and pupils.
- The inspector took account of 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as views of parents and carers from discussions in the playground and two letters received from parents.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of their performance management were examined.
- The inspector analysed 36 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jacqueline Lawson	Additional inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Moorlands Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (those eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces) is higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- Moorlands is federated with Park Lane Primary School. The schools have the same executive headteacher and governing body.
- Both the executive headteacher and the head of school have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The executive headteacher is a local leader of education.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - raising the expectations of all teachers to match those of the best, particularly regarding the quality and quantity of pupils' work
 - helping pupils to develop their personal qualities of aspiration, curiosity and perseverance so that they develop a more conscientious approach to their learning
 - using the expertise of middle leaders more consistently to raise standards and to support others to improve.
- Raise standards in writing by:
 - teaching pupils how to form their letters correctly and present their work neatly
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in all the subjects they learn so that they can practise their English grammar and presentation skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the past, achievement has not been good enough, particularly in writing, which has resulted in too many pupils leaving the school without the basic skills they need for the next stage of their education.
- Achievement in writing has been held back because pupils do not form their letters correctly. This means that they do not have the skills to enable them to write smoothly and neatly.
- Pupils have not had enough consistent opportunities to write at length in all the subjects they learn so that they can practise their handwriting and apply the punctuation, grammar and spelling skills they are learning in their English lessons.
- Achievement is now improving in all subjects. During the last academic year, and so far this year, pupils of all abilities have made much better than expected progress and their attainment is catching up rapidly. The achievement of the most able pupils compares favourably with that of similar pupils nationally.
- Over the last two years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen from significantly below to slightly above national averages in all subjects. Challenging targets have been set for the pupils currently in Year 6 and their attainment in reading and mathematics is on track to be in line with national averages. However, their attainment in writing is likely to lag behind because of the inadequate progress they made in the past.
- When children enter the school in Nursery and Reception, their skills are below those typically found for their age. Their progress is carefully tracked so that teachers are able to provide them with experiences that help them to learn well. As a result, they make good progress and, by the time they start in Year 1, their skills are broadly in line with those of their peers nationally.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. They are taught the skills they need in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and they use these skills well in their writing. This was exemplified by a pupil in Year 1 who wrote: 'Grace Darling rood the boot to get them out the water because she dint want them to digh.' Pupils have many opportunities to read to adults, both on their own and in groups, and they are encouraged to read at home.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve well from their starting points because their progress is carefully tracked and they are given good support, sometimes on their own and sometimes in small groups. At the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment is better than national averages. At the end of Key Stage 2, they are about a term ahead of their peers in reading but about a term behind in writing and mathematics because of underachievement in the past.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well from their starting points because of the precise help they are given. Regular checks are made on how well they are doing and the support is changed if it is not making enough difference. By the time they leave the school, they have caught up with their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Though no teaching over time is inadequate, there is not yet enough good and outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good or outstanding progress.
- In a minority of lessons, the work is either too easy or too difficult and when the pupils lose concentration, teachers do not always step in quickly enough to get the pupils back on track. As a result, pupils do not produce the best work of which they are capable and progress suffers.
- Some teachers have high expectations of the pupils. They make sure that the work they set provides the right level of challenge, including for the most able. Their clear explanations mean that pupils can get on with their work so that no time is lost.
- The quality of marking is exemplary. Pupils say that the comments teachers write when they mark their books help them to improve their work. Pupils are often given 'fix-it' time when they

have the opportunity to redo parts of their work to practise the next steps that have been identified.

- The quality of teaching has improved because information about the progress pupils are making is collected systematically and there are regular meetings between teachers and leaders to make sure that pupils are not falling behind.
- Pupils are very aware of their targets and they refer to them when they are doing their work so that they can check for themselves whether the quality of their work is improving over time. This is particularly helpful for the most able pupils, who enjoy challenging themselves to reach their targets.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage understand how young children learn. They make sure that children have opportunities to develop in all areas of the curriculum, both in the classroom and outdoors. Children's communication skills develop well because of the way in which the adults talk to the children about their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities. They work with pupils on an individual basis and in small groups and their explanations help pupils to develop their understanding effectively.
- In an outstanding lesson in Year 6, the teacher very skilfully and sensitively uncovered pupils' misconceptions about clauses and then taught them the new learning they needed. This resulted in them being able to manipulate and compare clauses in a very sophisticated way and all pupils made exceptional progress. They were keen to learn and were not afraid to make mistakes in front of their peers because they recognised that making mistakes helped them to get better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because their attitudes to learning do not always help them to learn well. They do not always show curiosity in their learning or concentrate well enough in lessons and they sometimes give up too easily when they find the work challenging.
- Pupils understand the behaviour policy and they say that behaviour has improved because the rewards and sanctions are fair. Their views are supported by the school's records of behaviour, which shows a reduction in the number of incidents over time. Parents and staff also recognise that behaviour has improved but they are less positive about behaviour than about other aspects of the school.
- Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are very well supported through the positive links that the school has made with both parents and external agencies. Exclusions have been high in the past but they are now reducing, showing that the school's systems are working well.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and helpful. They are friendly towards each other, adults and visitors.
- In the playground, they play well together. They enjoy the large amount of open space and the equipment and adventurous climbing apparatus available. They have good opportunities to take on responsibility through a variety of different roles and jobs around the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because, in the past, attendance has been below average, particularly the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent. Attendance has improved because the school makes sure that pupils understand the importance of being in school. They attend more regularly because they enjoy coming to school and their good attendance is recognised and rewarded.
- Some parents expressed concern about the safety of the site. This was investigated as part of the inspection and inspectors are assured that the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure pupils' safety and that the incidents which concerned the parents were due to particular circumstances at the time.
- All adults who work in school are very aware of the procedures for reporting concerns about pupils' safety or welfare through the regular training that they receive. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are not worried about bullying and that they know who to go to if they need

to talk about anything that concerns them.

- High priority is given to making sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are on the internet. The school's website reminds parents and pupils about this important aspect of safety.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The executive headteacher, governors and other leaders have resolved past difficulties and have brought about significant changes, resulting in rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and in achievement.
- Teachers say that the targets they are set as part of their performance management are very challenging and they feel that the process is having a positive impact on the quality of education the school is providing. Parents also recognise the improvements being made and all parents who responded to the online survey (Parent View) say that they would recommend the school.
- The executive headteacher provides very strong leadership. She leads both Moorlands Primary School and the nearby primary school with which Moorlands is federated. The partnership has benefited both schools and teachers recognise the increased opportunities for training and sharing good practice which are now available.
- Other senior leaders make a strong contribution. They have a clear understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and that the plans that they have developed for improving the school further focus on the right areas.
- Middle leaders are also developing their skills well. They see themselves as 'enablers' and they know about achievement in their areas of responsibility. However, they do not yet have enough opportunity to have a more direct impact on the quality of teaching by sharing their good practice and involving themselves more actively in raising standards.
- The gaps in the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs compared with their peers have closed rapidly, showing that the school is promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that there is no discrimination.
- The topics pupils learn are broad and give them a good understanding of a wide range of subjects. The oldest pupils produced some very mature work, comparing the work of Monet with that of Renoir, while younger pupils explored their understanding of faith. There are opportunities for learning music and to develop skills in information and communication technology and these opportunities contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The school has made good use of the additional funding received for the improvement of physical education and sport. Basketball has been introduced and pupils of all ages have more opportunities to take part in sports such as gymnastics, dance, tactic football and tag rugby. More pupils are now involved in sport and coaches are working with teachers to ensure that the improved opportunities and levels of fitness can be sustained.
- The school's systems for the safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and is providing good support, especially in improving the quality of writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Over time, the focus of the work of governors has been diverted from raising standards, due to the challenges faced by the school. Since the formation of the federation, the governing body has raised levels of accountability and challenge, including through effective performance management. The work of committees and the full governing body complement each other well and governors have a very good understanding of the school's effectiveness, including what data are telling them about how the school compares with similar schools nationally. Governors regularly attend training to improve their skills further and they use their skills well when they make their monitoring visits to the school to check on the quality of teaching. As a result, they know what is done to challenge underperformance and to reward good teaching through progression through the pay scale. They monitor spending carefully. They know about

the difference that the support provided through the pupil premium is making to raising standards and in supporting pupils' social and emotional development.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109799
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	431047

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	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Wall
Executive headteacher	Nicola Browne
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2012
Telephone number	0118 9015505
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