

Moat Farm Infant School

Brookfields Road, Oldbury, B68 9QR

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Pupils' good progress in Nursery and Reception is built on successfully in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is mostly good. Reading skills, in particular, are taught very effectively in Key Stage 1. Specialist teaching in the performing arts enhances pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Teachers guide pupils' learning in lessons well. They plan lessons which interest pupils and they encourage them successfully to work hard and to become self-reliant.
- Strong classroom relationships promote pupils' consistently enthusiastic attitudes to learning.
- The good progress which children in Nursery and Reception make in their speaking and listening skills, and in their personal and social development, lay firm foundations for their growing self-confidence and maturity in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils behave well. They feel safe and valued by adults and their peers. They know how to stay safe and avoid danger. Attendance rose sharply last year.
- The school is well led by senior leaders and governors. They have ensured that, in spite of some recent instability in staffing, the quality of teaching has continued to improve.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have made a positive start in their new roles.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is average. Actions taken to support vulnerable pupils are not always effective in closing gaps in attainment with their class-mates.
- Teachers sometimes do not question pupils well enough to extend their learning.
- More attention needs to be given to aspects of pupils' writing skills in order to raise their achievement. In particular, teachers need to ensure that writing tasks are sufficiently demanding for the most able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching through visits to classrooms to check on pupils’ learning. On some visits, they were accompanied by senior leaders.
- A range of pupils were heard reading.
- Samples of pupils’ work in writing and mathematics were looked at.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 questionnaires completed by staff, parents’ responses to the school’s own recent questionnaires and 10 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector spoke informally to a few parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants’ reports; the school improvement plan; the school’s own data on pupils’ attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Shahin Fazil-Aslam	Additional Inspector
Sarah Davey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools and the number of pupils on roll is increasing.
- Forty per cent of pupils are from White British backgrounds; 20% are from Indian backgrounds and the remaining pupils are from various minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is average at 25%.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average at one in six pupils. The proportion who are supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well below average at one in 30 pupils.
- The school has its own part-time nursery which operates in the mornings and afternoons. It also works in partnership with the children's centre where the daycare provision, Lavender Farm Nursery, together with extended services provision for children, is managed by the governing body. This provision is separately inspected.
- The school experienced some instability in staffing last year.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and reduce gaps in attainment for vulnerable pupils by ensuring that:
 - all teachers question pupils consistently well to extend their learning
 - all support programmes and actions taken are rigorously evaluated to judge how effective they have been and to decide what needs to be done next.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by ensuring that:
 - writing activities stimulate Nursery and Reception children and encourage them to spend time developing their mark-making and writing skills
 - pupils have good opportunities to write at length in other subjects
 - teachers check carefully that pupils' presentation of their work is consistently good or better
 - teachers set the most able pupils challenging writing tasks.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by senior leaders, who include the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the staff with allocated responsibilities for subjects. The new headteacher's drive and determination has quickly acquired the staff's respect. He knows clearly what needs to be done to improve the school further and is steadily building a productive partnership with the deputy headteacher. Their plans for raising pupils' attainment are well focused.
- The school experienced some instability in staffing last year. Robust action was taken to tackle any underperformance in teaching. Coaching and mentoring by skilled, experienced phase leaders have helped to secure improvements and to develop the expertise of newly qualified teachers. In these ways the school has been able to ensure that the quality of teaching has not been undermined and that standards of achievement have been maintained.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. There are plenty of useful opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills in new and interesting ways. Broader themes are explored, for example dealing with problems in relationships and considering questions of hygiene. These help pupils understand the needs of others and develop responsible attitudes to looking after their health and well-being.
- The school is in the early stages of working towards full implementation of its preferred approach to assessment following removal of National Curriculum levels. It is adapting the skills ladder used in Nursery and Reception to promote continuity, but is not yet using it to track pupils' achievement in science and the foundation subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Specialist tuition in music is particularly successful in providing pupils with exciting experiences and moments of 'awe and wonder'. This was observed, for example, when Reception children, wielding colourful streamers and in perfect time to the accompanying music, mimicked the tempo of a 'fizzing' Catherine wheel firework.
- These experiences are supplemented by trips, for example to the Gurdwara temple, and theme weeks, which deepen pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils understand diversity and accept differences, as is shown in their warm relationships with each other. At the same time pupils demonstrate a growing awareness of the institutions which play a central part in British history, for example the monarchy. They also make useful contributions to the local community through fundraising, for example for the local food bank.
- Systems to track pupils' progress are regularly updated, but this is not yet leading to fully effective action in accelerating progress for all groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are quickly identified to receive additional support. However, the progress data and other information are not used sharply enough to judge whether the actions taken have been effective and what needs to be done next.
- Pupils premium funding has been used suitably. Staffing improvements have made valuable contributions to raising rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils and in raising their performance in the Year 1 phonics tests to be close to that of their classmates. However, leaders have not yet succeeded in closing gaps for eligible pupils in Year 2 and some actions to tackle this are not fully developed.
- National primary sports funding has been spent suitably, for example to tackle identified weaknesses in the school's provision for gymnastics and dance. Observations have indicated improvements in pupils' coordination during physical education lessons.
- The local authority, recognising that the school has consistently been able to direct its own improvement, checks the school's work on a termly basis. It has provided useful, targeted support for the school through training programmes for newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are well aware of the school's key priorities, the gaps in pupils' attainment that remain to be closed and the skills that pupils need to improve upon. They know about the strategies used to support disadvantaged pupils and where the use of this extra funding has had most impact. They broadly understand how well other groups of pupils are performing, compared to similar groups nationally.
- Governors know where the strengths of teaching lie in the school and the strategies the school has used to maintain its overall quality and to improve the performance of individual teachers. They know whether senior staff have achieved their targets. They ensure that pay awards are only approved where staff show that they meet these targets and that their performance is consistently good.
- Governors ensure that current government requirements for safeguarding are met and that they are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Nursery and Reception children are happy and secure in their well-organised classrooms. They know the routines well, take responsibility for tidying up and comply quickly with staff's requests. Children know they are well cared for and trusting relationships are established.
- These positive features are built on successfully in Key Stage 1. Pupils' eagerness to learn and enjoyment of their work underpin their good achievement. They demonstrate a growing confidence in their ability to make decisions for themselves and to work either independently or with their classmates, without needing undue guidance from staff.
- Pupils' consistently good behaviour ensures that lessons are very rarely disrupted and that all pupils can sustain their concentration. They listen closely to staff's questions and explanations, knowing that their responses are valued. Most pupils are very keen to contribute their ideas and some do so with evident excitement.
- Pupils mostly play well together in the playground. They make good use of the static equipment, such as the climbing frame, to exercise actively. They also show initiative in using mobile equipment, for example hoops, to entertain themselves and some pupils organise their own team games. Pupils have a strong regard for healthy eating and know how important it is to keep fit.
- Rates of attendance rose considerably last year and this increase is currently being maintained. The school has taken robust action, including the employment of a family support worker to reduce rates of persistent absence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are well supervised at break times and any incidents or minor injuries are properly recorded. Robust internal gateways and key-coded access doors enhance the security of the school site and staff and visitors are suitably vetted.
- Staff and parents equally are very positive about pupils' well-being in school. There have only been four fixed-term exclusions in the last three years and no permanent exclusions. Incidents of bullying or racist name-calling are very rare. The school's good links with outside agencies ensure that at-risk pupils are well looked after.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are well informed about road safety and the hazards of fireworks and bonfires. They know how to stay safe on the internet and how to use other forms of social media appropriately. They feel that they are treated equally and fairly and value the contributions they have made to the school rules.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, with a few outstanding elements provided, for example by highly skilled

specialists in music and drama.

- Teachers have strong expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage them skilfully. They make sure that all pupils stay alert and have equal chances to provide answers. This promotes very positive attitudes and relationships. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard and train them to make choices for themselves.
- Teachers know their subjects well and set pupils interesting and enjoyable tasks which keep them fully occupied. They choose topics carefully to help pupils understand the purpose and relevance of their learning and provide them with interesting contexts in which they can develop and apply a range of skills.
- Teachers' careful planning and clear guidance ensure pupils share their ideas regularly with their classmates and explain accurately and confidently what they have learnt as lessons proceed. This is very effective in sustaining pupils' concentration and motivation.
- Mathematical skills are mostly taught well. Teachers ensure pupils regularly reflect on their work by jotting their thoughts down before tackling their calculations, which helps them avoid unnecessary mistakes.
- Reading skills are taught well. Staff are used skilfully to direct and to review pupils' work. Their carefully timed tasks and useful verbal feedback help pupils learn to read confidently and quickly and derive enjoyment from their reading. However, the quality of presentation of individual pupils' work in writing is variable and opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects do not always provide them with enough scope to write increasingly in depth.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are mostly helped to learn well, but on a few occasions do not receive the right type of work they need to accelerate their progress.
- On occasion teachers miss opportunities to make the best use of time available, for example when they do not review pupils' learning at the end of lessons with really probing questions to help them structure and extend their thinking.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The attainment of Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has been exactly in line with national averages for the last three years. Given their below-average starting-points on entry to Year 1, especially in reading and writing, this represents good achievement for these pupils. Indian pupils do especially well.
- Results in the Year 1 screening test for phonics (the sounds that letters make) have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of phonics work and the good progress they make in developing their reading skills in Key Stage 1. Less-able readers in Year 2 use their phonics knowledge well to split up and blend new words quickly and this helps them improve the fluency of their reading.
- Pupils also do well in mathematics as was shown, for example, in a Year 1 mathematics workshop, where pupils accurately counted, matched and slotted numbers into a program on their tablet computers.
- The most able pupils achieve well in reading. In Year 1 they respond well to the challenge of identifying words and of using them quickly in extended sentences of their own choosing. In Year 2 they demonstrate a clear understanding of words when they are used in non-fiction texts and draw on their general knowledge to make interesting observations and comparisons. However, teachers expect less of these pupils in writing, as is reflected in the provisional results for 2014. This was shown, for example in a Year 2 lesson, where the most able pupils spent too much time drawing pictures about their ideas, and not enough time writing about them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in mathematics, but do a little less well in reading and writing. Individual pupils with severe difficulties are intensively supported and close monitoring enables them to achieve well.

- The attainment of all groups of Year 2 pupils is similar to their national counterparts. The starting-points of disadvantaged pupils are usually lower than their classmates. While all groups make good progress gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally have not reduced significantly over the last three years.

The early years provision is good

- Children's skills and knowledge, especially those of boys, are well below those typical for their age in nearly all areas of learning on entry to Nursery. Baseline assessments show that levels have dropped a little over the last few years as the school roll has increased and many children join school with weaknesses in their communication and language skills.
- The percentages of children who reached a good level of development have improved in the last two years and in 2014 the percentage was just below the national average, although girls continue to achieve better than boys. Children make most gains in their speaking and listening skills, their personal and social development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children learn well because their enthusiasm and curiosity are skilfully directed by the teaching staff. Staff anticipate where they need to intervene and extend children's speaking skills expertly through individual discussion or focused group work. Snack times are used productively to reinforce children's basic skills.
- Number recognition and counting are encouraged through creative planned activities in the outdoor area, where for example children count the contents of their baskets attached to tricycles.
- The environment and routines are purposefully organised to encourage children's independence. Children respond suitably, choosing resources to work with and putting on indoor and outdoor clothing with little prompting from staff. They understand when to listen and when to observe, because staff use praise and encouragement well to reinforce expectations for their behaviour. Children concentrate well, both in activities led by staff and those they choose for themselves.
- Children use the different learning areas effectively, which are well equipped to help them develop their creative and gross motor skills. This was observed, for example when they were dressed as firefighters, pretending to use phones, hose pipes and other equipment to put out the 'Bonfire Night' fire. However, children are sometimes not clear what to do when they are writing. These areas often do not engage their interest so that opportunities to extend their mark-making and writing skills are often missed.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Assessments are used carefully to support children's learning. The close links between the Nursery and the day care provision are commended by parents. They judge rightly that this helps the children who join the school at the Reception stage to settle in well and forge warm relationships with their classmates and staff.

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	103949
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	448252

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Fraser-Underhill
Headteacher	Justin Stokes
Date of previous school inspection	15 December 2009
Telephone number	0121 552 1885
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