

# Moat Farm Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103949
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308467
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	338
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Emery
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Barlow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2004
<b>School address</b>	Brookfields Road Oldbury B68 9QR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 521885
<b>Fax number</b>	01215 443494

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large infant school has its own nursery. It works closely with the recently established on-site Children's Centre, where the Day Care provision plus extended services for children are managed by the headteacher. Amongst other things, this provides additional places for children of nursery age. The rest of the Core offer is managed by Barnardo's in partnership with the school.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. English is an additional language for a small number of the higher than average proportion who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children start school with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age.

The school has received a number of awards for its success in promoting, for example, basic skills, study support, and healthy lifestyles, including sport and exercise.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where the excellent direction provided by the headteacher creates a nurturing, supportive environment for staff and children. The headteacher's knowledge of the school is extremely effective in bringing about improvement. Governors and the senior leadership team support the headteacher well and all staff are fully aware of their individual and collective responsibility for each child's progress. The teamwork arising from this enables the school to tackle very robustly and successfully any aspect of its work found to be lacking. All of this gives it good capacity for further improvement.

Children enter the school with skill levels well below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well, reaching broadly average standards in Year 2. The good provision in the Foundation Stage sets them up well for their work in Year 1. Teachers plan children's work well and ensure that all ability groups make equally good progress in lessons. The school has good systems that provide it with up-to-date information about each child's progress in English and mathematics. However, senior leaders have correctly noted that in some classes, the assessments are not always accurate. They are beginning to tackle this by coming together to moderate children's work more frequently. In thematic work, teachers assess how well children have learned key skills in each subject covered at the end of a theme. However, the systems are cumbersome, making it difficult to use the information to plan further work in each subject.

Children grow greatly in confidence and self-esteem because staff care deeply for them and help them to overcome things that stop them learning. Children greatly enjoy school. Comments such as 'I like everything about this school' and 'I would tell my teacher if I was worried about anything,' demonstrate the confidence they have in the staff. These views echo those of their parents. Attendance, though below average, is satisfactory and the school is doing everything possible to improve it.

Children take responsibility well, for example, as school councillors and playground 'buddies,' and they make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They have a well-developed understanding of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise to keep themselves healthy. The curriculum promotes all of this well and ensures pupils feel safe and well cared for. Where subjects are linked together, children have some autonomy over their own learning. For example, as subjects are linked together, children have the opportunity to decide some of the direction their learning should take. Children have targets for English, mathematics and science. However, teachers' marking does not often enough show them the small steps they can take to reach their targets.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Very effective links with the on-site Children's Centre and carefully planned induction arrangements ensure children and their parents settle quickly into school routines. Attractive, well-organised and stimulating classrooms promote children's learning effectively throughout the Foundation Stage. The school makes best use of the limited space it has for outdoor learning. All six areas of learning are set up there, as well as in the classroom.

Staff work well together, making a significant contribution to the children's good achievement. They note carefully how well each child is doing in each session and mostly use the information well in planning further work. However, there are some variations in the accuracy of assessment

and the school is working hard with staff to eradicate them. Staff value and place appropriate emphasis on, activities which allow children to explore and investigate independently. They balance these with carefully selected adult-directed activities. Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered particularly well. Few children fully meet the standards expected for the end of the Foundation Stage except in this area of learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the accuracy of the assessment of children's learning in some classes to give a clearer picture of how well children are doing at all times.
- Sharpen teachers' marking in all subjects and find ways to make assessment more manageable in the subjects included in thematic work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The school places strong emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills and on teaching phonics. As a result, children are successfully gaining the confidence to ask as well as answer questions, and to think and find things out for themselves. This is improving their reading and writing skills. By Year 2, children usually remember to use capital letters and full stops as they write simple sentences and stories. Children readily engage in practical mathematical activities, successfully learning how to add and subtract and to solve simple mathematical problems. More- able children can sort numbers into groups and add the groups up, gaining an emerging understanding of multiplication tables.

Handwriting and presentation skills are relatively weak. A significant minority of Year 2 children still find difficulty writing letters and numbers correctly. Overall, however, all groups of children make good progress, and standards are average in Year 2.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children behave well in and around school. They are supervised well at playtimes and lunchtimes and move in orderly fashion in the narrow corridors and en-route to and from the dining hall. They know, understand and appreciate the simple school rules, which they have helped to draw up. Children report that 'some children are sometimes naughty' but that they do not know of any bullying. They say 'teachers look after us' and are confident they will get help if they need it. All children work and play together amicably, regardless of race, background or ability. They report that 'If you are hurt or lonely, playground buddies help you.' They understand and respect each other's differences and help to raise substantial sums of money for different charities. The well-organised school council gives pupils a voice in the life of the school, which they greatly appreciate.

A minority of parents take their children on extended holidays abroad during term time, even though the school very strongly encourages them not to do so. This affects the children's overall progress, although it is good when they are in school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, and children respond well to the high expectations teachers have of their behaviour and work rate. Teachers ensure that children are clear about what they are going to learn in lessons. In the best lessons, they use open-ended questions effectively to encourage children to think for themselves, and they give children opportunities to talk to each other before answering. This further enhances the children's speaking and listening skills. Teachers check carefully that children understand unfamiliar words. They use whole-class sessions at the ends of lessons well to assess, and help children assess, what they have learned.

Good teamwork and joint planning ensure that children in the same year group have the same learning experiences. All teachers use assessment information well in their planning. However, at times, some teacher's over- or underestimate how well children have done, and they miss some opportunities to encourage independent learning within the sets for literacy and numeracy.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Innovative practice is promoting the development of a continuous curriculum that embraces the Children's Centre, the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and meets the needs of all ability and ethnic groups. The current focus on promoting speaking and listening skills across the curriculum is having a beneficial impact on reading and writing. Subjects other than literacy and numeracy are taught in themes that stimulate pupils' interest and benefit their learning. Children are set for literacy and numeracy. Opportunities for independent learning are limited in these sessions, as are opportunities to promote basic skills in thematic work. The school is looking for ways to tackle this. A wide range of educational visits, visitors and well-attended school clubs greatly enhances and enriches pupils' learning and personal development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and secure environment that nurtures children's personal development and well-being exceptionally well. Safeguarding procedures are robust, as are the procedures to encourage good attendance. All children are valued highly and are fully included in all that the school has to offer. All of this is reflected in the children's positive attitudes and good behaviour. The strong links the school has with a range of external agencies ensure that children and their parents receive the right support when they need it. Multi-agency relationships are developing well following the opening of the Children's Centre some fifteen months ago. Effective liaison with the junior school ensures children transfer easily to the next stage of their education.

Children know their targets in English, mathematics and science, which are matched well to the children's developing understanding and their learning needs. However, teachers' marking does not always give children helpful enough guidance on how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning very rigorously. They are helping staff new to the senior leadership team to learn how to do the same. All staff are receptive to the good advice and guidance they receive on how to improve. They understand their role in school improvement and work well together as a team to reach the challenging targets the school sets to improve children's progress. The headteacher has an exceptionally good grasp of all of the school's work. She knows the children, staff and parents well. Along with her deputy, she can give an accurate account of the progress of every child in the school and of the various factors affecting it.

The governing body fulfils its role well as a critical friend and the excellent links with the Children's Centre are contributing effectively to the overall provision within the school. The school has a very clear understanding of what it does well and what it needs to do to improve further. The steely determination of the headteacher ensures it is moving in the right direction to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed. Currently, this includes finding ways to ensure accuracy in assessment in all classes and subjects.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Moat Farm Infant School, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 9QR

Thank you for making us so very welcome when we visited your school this week. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school and thank you for being so polite and well mannered. You told us that you like everything about the school and that your teachers look after you well. We noted that you behave well in class, at lunchtime and in the playground. We found that you go to a good school where all of the staff care deeply for you, find exciting things for you to do, and want you to do as well as you possibly can.

Your headteacher and the governors lead and manage the school well. The headteacher and the deputy keep a close eye on how well you are doing, and make sure that your teachers teach you well. As a result, you make good progress from the time you start school to the time you leave. We were pleased to learn that you understand the importance of choosing healthy food and taking regular exercise. A good many of you join in the many clubs and activities the school puts on for you and you learn a good range of new skills by doing so.

You clearly enjoy your work as school councillors and playground buddies. These activities help you to understand how you can help each other, and they prepare you well for when you grow up.

We have asked the school to do two things to make it even better at helping you to learn. They are:

- make sure that teachers in every class assess your learning correctly so that they always have an accurate picture of how well you are doing
- make sure teachers always tell you what you need to do to improve when they mark your work, and make it easier for teachers to assess how well you are doing in the subjects that are included in your thematic work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by asking for help in how to improve your work when you need it. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, as you grow up.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell Lead inspector

24 April 2008

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Doris Bell  
Lead inspector