

Moorside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114050
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325931
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Yvonne Clare

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	129
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Jane Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Wrightson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chester Road Moorside Consett County Durham DH8 8EQ
Telephone number	01207 509724
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Almost all the pupils attending this much smaller than average sized school are from White British heritage backgrounds. The school serves an area of social and economic deprivation and many more pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, and mobility in the school is high. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes throughout Key Stage 2. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage unit consisting of Nursery and Reception children. The school has been accredited with several awards including the Activemark and Healthy Schools Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school that is now emerging successfully from a period of turbulence and senior staff absences. The school has clear strengths in the good pastoral care it provides for pupils which contributes directly to their good personal development and well-being. The school is highly valued by its parents who appreciate the care and concern shown to their children. As one parent said, 'My child is happy ... the teachers are very helpful in every way and I am so pleased my child is in this school.' There is a strong sense of pride and community among all involved with the school fostering a warm, welcoming and harmonious ethos. The school has developed appropriate links with other partners to enhance the provision for all pupils.

Pupils join the Nursery with skills that are well below those usually seen for this age and make satisfactory progress through the school. When they leave at the end of Year 6, standards, although variable due to the small cohorts, remain below average. Following a successful focus on writing, standards in English are rising and have been higher than those in mathematics. However, recent strategies implemented in mathematics, have addressed this and standards are now also improving and achievement is accelerating in some areas of school. Effective teaching in upper Key Stage 2 means that current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching and learning. For many pupils, teachers do not always use information from their assessment of learning well enough in their lesson planning to provide challenge and promote good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well-supported by committed teaching assistants and make satisfactory progress. The satisfactory curriculum has an increasing focus on the acquisition of skills and is enhanced well by trips, visits and visitors.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite, open and friendly, behave well and are tolerant and respectful of each other's views and opinions. They say that they enjoy school, act on the good advice they receive on living safe and healthy lives and relish the opportunity to be able to contribute to their school and local community. Attendance has improved, but despite many strategies employed by the school, remains below average. Preparation for the next stage of the pupils' education is satisfactory.

The care, guidance and support the school provides are satisfactory. Pastoral care supports pupils well. Responsibilities for safeguarding are effective. The 'Talk to Me' box gives pupils the opportunity to share any worries and they have absolute faith in the adults around them. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have targets and marking of pupils' work is focused and in some classes is beginning to inform pupils of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear leadership and are supported well by the dedicated staff in school. School leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and are rightly focused on improving standards. Outcomes from tracking, and monitoring, at all levels, are not acted upon regularly enough to ensure emerging issues are swiftly addressed. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that the school is improving, indicating that it has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with much lower levels of development than are typical for their age, particularly in their personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. By the time they join Year 1, children have made satisfactory progress but standards remain below average overall, although assessments show this is improving. As a result of the strong focus on personal and social education children make good progress. They follow routines well, play cooperatively, take turns and share. They develop a good sense of right and wrong, for example, children were most indignant that 'Benji Bear' would not share his birthday cake in a recent story. Children enjoy school and parents appreciate the way staff help their children to settle quickly into the unit, many commenting how their children enjoy coming to school. As the small number of Reception children work within the unit, transition is seamless and there is continuity of learning. A range of activities is available and the space outdoors is used in a variety of ways to enhance the learning. There is plenty of opportunity for children to choose what they do for themselves, as well as work guided by adults. Most activities are appropriately planned, although some areas lack purpose, limiting opportunities for learning. The school pays good attention to children's welfare and children are developing an awareness of how to stay safe and healthy within this secure, protective environment. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent improvements to the assessment and the tracking systems, records of planned and incidental observations ensure adults know their pupils well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the recent changes, especially in English and mathematics, to accelerate progress and raise standards throughout the school.
- Make better use of information gained about pupils' progress to provide work that consistently challenges them.
- Ensure leaders at all levels more regularly evaluate the outcomes of their monitoring, to respond swiftly to any issues arising from these.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with below average standards. Assessments at the end of Year 2 have shown standards to be below the nationally expected levels. Progress overall is satisfactory and improving. This is reflected in recent assessments in reading, writing and mathematics that show a rise in standards halting the previous decline. Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were below average, particularly in mathematics. There are clear signs of improvement in achievement, with pockets of good progress, due to strategies implemented in mathematics and writing. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve their realistic, but challenging targets, and tracking systems show that this improvement is set to continue with the current Year 5. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates because they receive good quality support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. They work hard and cooperate well with each other. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils show respect and consideration for others. They willingly accept responsibility such as acting as 'Buddies' and 'Mini-Buds' to younger pupils. School council members represent their classmates reliably. The school's many strategies to raise attendance are having some success and rates of attendance are rising, although remain stubbornly below average. Spiritual, social and moral development is good. Pupils' awareness of different cultures is improving. This is a result on an increase in visitors and the teaching of French that are developing their understanding of different traditions and customs. Pupils have a good understanding about the importance of being safe and having a healthy lifestyle. They say they feel safe in school and trust their teachers implicitly. Pupils make a good contribution to life outside school by their involvement in local events including the distribution of harvest gifts. The development of workplace and other basic skills for pupils' future education and lives is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In all classes, relationships between staff and their pupils are good. Pupils are respectful, keen to learn and are prepared to work hard. In some lessons, learning is good or even better, because teachers have clear learning objectives and success criteria. They provide interesting activities and encourage pupils to assess their own and others' learning. Questioning skills are generally effective, but often miss opportunities for pupils to extend their learning by involving them in explanations or in evaluating their own and others' work and answers. Tracking systems in the school provide teachers with the necessary information to closely match tasks to the needs of pupils of all abilities. However, teachers do not always make best use of this information to provide sufficiently challenging work. This slows down the pace of learning and limits progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make satisfactory progress. The school is currently in the process of reviewing the curriculum to make learning more exciting and relevant to pupils of all ages and provide more creativity. Personal, social and health education has a strong influence on their good personal development; and the extra-curricular enrichment is appreciated by pupils. Accelerated progress indicated by school documentation, suggests that the school's focus on writing and more recently on mathematics, is beginning to have a positive effect on achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care and support given to the pupils is good. The school has effective child protection systems and all current government requirements for safeguarding pupils are met.

There is good teamwork in the school and adults work very hard to ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and happy. Support given by skilled and caring teaching assistants is effective in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to participate in lessons and be fully included in school life. The needs of these pupils are monitored regularly. Sound links with outside professionals and other agencies enable the school to gather support for pupils when required. Academic guidance is satisfactory but inconsistent. All pupils have targets and some are beginning to use them to guide their learning, but they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their performance. Marking by most teachers is focused and often gives guidance to pupils about how to improve but this practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The school has suffered from unavoidable long term absences and staff disruption. The returning headteacher and her deputy head have worked relentlessly with staff to overcome the impact of this and are now emerging successfully from this period of turbulence. There is a positive team spirit and renewed focus on improvement. Managers share their vision well and staff are committed to their pupils. Through its monitoring, the school is able to evaluate its own performance accurately. However, this monitoring is not regular enough to tackle emerging issues swiftly and this slows down the pace of improvement. Governors are well informed and supportive of the school, but as yet do not challenge the school sufficiently about the standards pupils reach. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. It has undertaken an audit and recognises what is required to improve pupils' understanding and has made the planning of activities to extend pupils' contribution to the wider national and global communities a priority. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moorside Primary School, Durham, DH8 8EQ

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I really enjoyed visiting you. It was a pleasure to listen to you talking about the things you do, and telling me what you think about your school.

Your school provides a satisfactory education for you, and it has some real strengths. Everyone in school works hard to take good care of you, and keep you safe and happy. You behave really well both in class and around the building. You enjoy your lessons, work hard and respect each other. You know lots about staying safe and being healthy and enjoy the jobs your teachers ask you to do.

Everyone in school wants the very best for you and I have asked the school to continue with the changes made to improve your progress and standards in all subjects by the time you leave Year 6. Your teachers know lots about what you can do and I have asked them to use what they know about your work to plan lessons for you that always, really make you think. Your school checks how well you are doing, but I have asked it to do this more often, so that it can help you to make even better progress.

Please continue to be the happy and helpful young people you already are, come to school regularly – and on time - so that you don't miss any of your lessons!

Good luck for the future and enjoy your long summer holiday.

Best wishes

Yvonne Clare

Lead inspector