

Moat Farm Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103949
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	336203
Inspection dates	15–16 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Bob Roberts

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

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Emery
Headteacher	Helen Barlow
Date of previous school inspection	2 April 2008
School address	Brookfields Road Odbury B68 9QR
Telephone number	01215 521885
Fax number	01215 443494
Email address	office@moatfarm-inf.sandwell.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Moat Farm Children's Centre, Lavender Farm Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	183
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and plans, minutes of meetings and records of pupils' progress. They considered the views contained in the 45 responses to the parent questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
- assessment and marking issues from the last inspection
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the leadership and management of the school during its transition to a new leadership structure.

Information about the school

This large infant school has its own nursery. It also works in partnership with the children's centre where the day care provision, Lavender Farm Nursery, together with extended services for children, is managed by the headteacher and governors. This provides additional places for children of nursery age. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. English is an additional language for a small number of the higher than average proportion who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has received a number of national awards for its success in promoting, for example, basic skills, study support and healthy lifestyles.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

As at the last inspection, this is a good school and one which continues to be led by a very effective headteacher. It continues to provide a nurturing, supportive environment for staff and children. There have been a small number of significant changes to the staffing at the school in the last eighteen months, in part due to staff gaining promoted posts in schools elsewhere. This loss is being skilfully and imaginatively turned into an opportunity by the headteacher. Leadership roles have been more widely distributed giving more staff responsibility and accountability. This is creating an even firmer sense of stability and collective purpose. Staff in new roles are contributing well to the work of the school. The school knows it needs to establish a means to evaluate the full effectiveness of these developments.

The quality of provision is good across all aspects. Areas for development identified at the last inspection regarding assessment and marking have been effectively addressed. Teaching is not as consistent as at the last inspection but is still good overall. Inspectors are confident in the determination, experience and skills of senior leaders in tackling the very small pockets of weaker teaching. The team is well on the way to achieving consistently good teaching across the school. The curriculum meets very well the needs of pupils in this area of great social and economic challenge. The school shows a continual willingness to review and adjust its curriculum as needs change. The real strength in the provision is the good quality care and support that pupils receive. Senior leaders in all parts of the school set the example of giving a high priority to identifying and supporting vulnerable children.

As a result of this good provision, pupils make good progress from their low starting points. Levels of attainment by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 2 are consistently at the levels expected nationally. The school has rigorous systems which allow teachers to assess effectively the progress of individual pupils. A range of support strategies are in place to help those pupils who need it. The aim now is to raise levels of attainment even further by developing ways to monitor the progress of particular groups of pupils more stringently. Besides their academic progress, pupils develop well in many other ways. In this caring, positive environment they grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are clearly happy and secure at school. They have a well developed understanding of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Many contribute well to the school and the local community. Their satisfactory attendance and their average levels of attainment when leaving mean that they are being suitably prepared for the next stage of their lives.

In its own evaluation, the school showed caution alongside an extremely good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development. The headteacher 'knows

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the school backwards'. She is very good at encouraging and developing the skills of staff and shows great vision for the future. The strong effectiveness of this leadership at a time of transition in sustaining a good rate of progress is the main reason the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment further by implementing plans to monitor the progress of particular groups of pupils more stringently, so that effective measures can be put in place to support these groups as appropriate.
 - Continue to take actions to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good in quality.
 - Complete the transition to the new leadership and management structure and establish means of evaluating its effectiveness in driving improvements for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language development. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage but enter Year 1 still below the expected levels. Throughout pupils' time in Years 1 and 2, their progress is good. Pupils were enjoying the lessons seen by inspectors and were working purposefully. By the time pupils leave Year 2 they have reached levels of attainment that are broadly in line with national averages. This is true for reading, writing and mathematics and has been consistently the case for several years. Standards in reading dipped in 2008 but, as a result of concentrated attention by the school, they rose again to the expected levels in 2009. Pupils from ethnic minority groups tend to do better than pupils from White British backgrounds. In particular, the school has identified that boys from this group require extra support and has put effective extra support in place. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in all aspects of school life, especially in class and school assemblies. Pupils feel safe and well looked after, knowing that there are always adults who will help them. Their behaviour, including that of the youngest children, is consistently good. Pupils are clearly influenced by what they learn about healthy lifestyles. They participate enthusiastically in physical education. Many pupils make a good contribution to the school and the local community. The school ethos is enhanced by the willingness of pupils to take responsibility. For example, inspectors saw playground 'buddies' helping other pupils and playing with them. The development of workplace skills is satisfactory because average levels of basic skills in reading, writing and number, are supported by the good development of teamwork and collaborative skills. The school's attendance figures are below average but gradually improving.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. The school has made a good start in developing the skills of its newly recruited staff. Given the expertise of senior staff and the school's good systems for monitoring teachers' skills, progress is being made towards improving the quality of teaching to consistently good levels. Lessons usually have clear learning objectives. In the better lessons, tasks are effective in motivating and enthusing pupils. There is probing questioning and consolidation of learning. Teachers make very good use of assessment to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils who need extra help. In the lessons which were less effective, the work was not adapted sufficiently to meet pupils' needs at various levels and attention wavered.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides stimulating learning opportunities. With an increasing proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and greater diversity of ethnic origins, the school has adapted its curriculum to meet these needs very well. There is a clear focus on developing the essential basic skills within a highly supportive environment. This emphasis is coupled with the need to give

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils new experiences and broaden their understanding. For example, with few pupils having experience of the seaside, the school constructed a mock beach area, to teach the language and suggest the experience of being at the seaside. This well-planned thematic work leads to pupils' enthusiasm and engagement. Successful strategies, such as more active learning tasks and one-to-one reading sessions, have been put in place to support and engage the interest of boys. There is a good range of enrichment activities including visits, visitors, and special events. The use of circle time is beneficial in encouraging social skills and emotional development.

Good arrangements are in place to support and care for pupils and to help them develop and learn. Parents and carers receive good quality and timely advice on how best to support their children's learning. The school and children's centre work well in partnership with other agencies to meet effectively the needs of pupils and their families. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the care and support their children receive. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Those lacking confidence are helped by initiatives such as the 100 minute nurture group which build confidence and self esteem in pupils. The range of support programmes, and some skilled work by teacher assistants, helps identified pupils make good progress. A range of strategies is used to try to ensure good school attendance, but it remains a challenge for a few families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The last inspection report commented on the exceptionally good grasp that the headteacher has of all aspects of the school's work. Eighteen months on, this continues to be the case. The headteacher demonstrates an extraordinary personal commitment to the school and the local area. She knows every child, and every child both in the school and also in the children's centre does matter. Equal opportunity for all is part of the very fabric of the building. Each pupil's progress continues to be closely monitored. Senior staff know that the system by which the school monitors and reports on the progress of different groups of pupils requires further development. Rigorous systems to develop and ensure good quality teaching and learning continue to run smoothly. The headteacher's vision for more widely shared responsibility is already paying dividends and contributing to the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. School development planning is very good, showing stringent self-criticism and accurate

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analysis. Priorities for improvement are strategically selected, sensibly limited in number, and the implementation and effectiveness of actions are closely monitored by the leadership team.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well, although it recognises it needs training in specific areas and some vacancies for governors exist. The school works well in partnership with others, and links with the children's centre continue to be excellent, contributing very effectively to the overall provision. Safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied. The school has a very good understanding of the needs of its own community and is closely involved in meeting the needs within the local area. However, it does not yet formally promote and evaluate its community cohesion work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good teaching in all parts of the early years provision managed by the governing body, children make good progress in their learning. Nevertheless, many of the children do not reach the expected learning goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and only a few exceed these goals. The strongest features of their progress are their positive attitudes to learning and good levels of concentration and determination, which are as a direct result of the good quality of provision.

Children learn and demonstrate good behaviour and relationships with others as a result of the good quality care and support they receive. Their introduction to the various classes and groups is meticulously arranged and they settle well and feel safe and happy. Families and their children benefit greatly from the very close and productive

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links between the school and the children's centre. The setting provides a good and well considered range of activities, indoors and out. During inspection, heavy snow was maximised well as a learning opportunity. Children were reminded of the importance of keeping warm and dry as well as learning about the properties of snow as they built a snowman bigger than they were, or worked with it in a sand tray. The quality of teaching and assessment is good.

The leadership and management arrangements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are undergoing review at the moment, but the more widely distributed leadership roles are already proving effective. For example, the accurate and detailed assessments of each child are being kept in a new way, to allow for greater ease in analysis of the progress made for individuals and groups. As yet, the system has too little accumulated data to make firm judgements, but this is growing daily. There is good teamwork within the school and between the school and Lavender Farm Nursery. This contributes to the school's good capacity to improve, particularly in relation to assessment and monitoring processes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very positive in their support for the school. Although the number of responses was quite small, the responses showed a high degree of satisfaction with the experience provided. There were few concerns expressed. Five parents felt that the school did not take sufficient account of parents' views. The same number felt that the school did not meet the particular needs of their children. From evidence gathered, inspectors judged that these concerns were not justified. There was strong support for the leadership and management of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moat Farm Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	64	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	58	19	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	38	27	60	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	40	26	58	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	38	27	60	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	40	25	56	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	40	25	56	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	44	21	47	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	42	20	44	5	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	31	28	62	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	31	26	58	5	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	44	25	56	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	49	24	49	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



17 December 2009

Dear Children,

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

As you know your school was inspected recently and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all I would like to thank you for the way so many of you greeted and spoke to us during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you told us.

Moat Farm is a good school, as is Lavender Farm Nursery. It is not long since they were inspected last time and they are just as good as they were then. This is a place where every child is valued and supported. The staff work well together to do their best for you. The teaching is good and the school provides you with many good experiences and opportunities. You learn to work and play together.

As a result of this, you all do well at school. The progress you make in lessons is good and the standards you reach by the time you leave school are what are usually expected. You obviously enjoy coming to school and you behave well. Many of you make a good contribution to the school and to the surrounding community. You told us you feel safe and are learning what it is to live healthily.

There are things that we are asking the school to do which would help to improve the school further.

Most of the teaching is good but it all needs to be good to help you reach higher standards.

The school needs to improve its systems for checking that you are all making the progress you should.

The new arrangements that the headteacher is setting up for leading and managing the school need to be completed and the school needs to find out if they are working well.

With best wishes

Bob Roberts

Lead inspector

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