

Moat Farm Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103948
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	354312
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Wyer
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Evans
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Brookfields Road Oldbury B68 9QR
Telephone number	0121 5521215
Fax number	0121 5441776
Email address	chris.evans@moatfarm-jun.sandwell.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 19 lessons and saw all 16 teachers. They observed the school's work and looked at some of its documentation. This included monitoring and assessment information, school development planning and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner. In addition, inspectors analysed 75 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and questionnaires completed by pupils.

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

- the current achievement of boys
- the validity of the school's claims to have improved the curriculum and the range of enrichment activities available to pupils
- the impact of strategies to raise attendance
- how successfully the school tackled the improvement point from the previous inspection concerning achievement in writing and the quality of marking.

Information about the school

This large school of its type contains pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are White British, 58%, and Indian, 21%. Although there is a higher than average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, very few of them are at an early stage of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is greater than the national average. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are a handful of looked-after pupils. The headteacher was absent at the time of the inspection. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Award and a □Leading Aspect Award for its curriculum enrichment programme.

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

The warm relationships between staff and pupils create a supportive environment in which all are well cared for, enjoy learning and strive to do their best. Pupils report that 'teachers make learning challenging but fun', and this was certainly evident in the majority of lessons and in pupils' work. The results are good achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 and this represents good progress from their starting points.

The pupils' good progress reflects the success of the senior leadership team in sharing and communicating high expectations in all aspects of the school's work. Accurate self-evaluation helps to sustain above average standards because well-focused checks on teaching and learning identify areas for development, trigger effective interventions and so lead to improvement. There is no complacency in this successful school. For example, the school recognises that although teaching in Year 6 narrows the gap between the writing skills of boys and girls, the progress of boys' in writing in other year groups is a relative weakness. There is a strong sense in the school of everyone working towards the same goal. This common purpose, the successful track record and the effective systems in place to monitor performance, demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

Well-planned teaching in English and mathematics meets the needs of individual pupils in the different ability sets. Teachers, and learning support assistants, use assessment information well to set targets and to adapt learning to ensure that all pupils find challenge and success in these subjects. These qualities are less evident in other subjects, where pupils often receive the same tasks to work on. Marking and dialogue between staff and pupils are of good quality. The most successful feature of the good curriculum is the outstanding range of activities on offer during the enrichment afternoons. These meet all interests and contribute well to the pupils' learning, and good personal development and well-being.

The school improvement plan has clearly stated priorities. However, the success criteria in the plan do not consistently highlight the precise impact the identified actions are intended to have on outcomes for pupils. Consequently, it is difficult to evaluate throughout the school year how successfully the senior leadership team is implementing the plan. The school promotes community cohesion well, and pupils show great respect for each other. There is a strong sense of harmony among pupils from different backgrounds. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively, and ensures that pupils learn and play in a safe and secure environment. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy, and they leave the

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school well prepared for the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Narrow further the gap in writing skills between boys and girls by:
 - sharing very effective practice in Year 6 with other year groups
 - helping boys to see themselves as writers by using their own interests as starting points
 - providing more stimuli, for example the enrichment activities, that promote writing across the curriculum.
- Sharpen the success criteria in the school improvement plan to include the precise impact the identified actions are intended to have on outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils' strong appetite for learning and their mature behaviour contribute to their good progress. They collaborate very well with one another on tasks, demonstrate high levels of perseverance and a keen desire to succeed. For example, a Year 6 class exuded enjoyment as they drew upon their mathematical knowledge and reasoning skills to solve questions such as, 'Find a cube number less than 1000 with the same first and last digits.' It was particularly impressive seeing pupils compare approaches and striving to find the most effective strategy. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers because the school is quick to identify and support their individual needs. They participate confidently in lessons because they know that consistent and effective support from teachers and skilful learning support assistants is close by. The high priority given to speaking and listening activities, for example using talk partners, helps pupils who are learning English, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. The national award for promoting healthy lifestyles recognises the success the school has achieved ensuring that pupils understand how physical activity and a healthy diet help them feel healthier. However, the uptake of school meals is low and the school is taking steps that they hope will encourage more pupils to take up lunches that meet national nutritional standards. The introduction of the enrichment afternoons has added to the pupils' enjoyment of school. These afternoons also provide many opportunities for pupils to become involved with the local community, for example, through the gardening club, links with a local nursing home and the school choir. The school council provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community through its involvement in developing child friendly school policies and fundraising. It is now looking at how it can have a stronger voice in decisions about learning. Although their understanding of the range of faiths represented in the school is patchy, pupils are very happy to celebrate diversity. For example, all pupils enjoyed the assemblies where Sikh pupils shared their weekend celebration in Handsworth Park.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There are consistent strengths in the large majority of lessons. These positive features include: relationships between pupils and adults, strong subject knowledge that enables adults to pitch questions offering the right amount of challenge for individuals and groups, and many opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with one another. Succinct reviews of previous learning at the start of lessons and careful explanations of their current learning ensure that pupils understand the purpose of their lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good or better, pupils tackle activities not so closely tailored to their earlier learning and abilities. Occasionally, teaching moves at the pace of the fastest learners and does not address the misconceptions of a few pupils who struggle to keep up during the whole class introduction to lessons.

Improving the curriculum has been a major drive since the previous inspection. In addition to the excellent enrichment programme, the curriculum links together subjects under a broad theme each half term. This enables pupils to gain and apply a range of skills and knowledge, including making use of their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. Work on the Aztecs, Tudors and Ancient Greeks shows the emphasis on practical, hands-on learning. The school recognises that the programmes of study in a minority of areas require developing to ensure that there is continuity to learning and appropriate challenge for pupils at both ends of the ability range.

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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The effective systems of care, guidance and support are improving rates of attendance and contribute to the good progress made by the looked after pupils. Learning mentors effectively support pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. The meticulously kept records monitoring the progress and well-being of vulnerable pupils illustrate well how individuals, at risk of underachievement, now engage successfully in school life.

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 senior leadership team has a clear vision for the school. It works closely with the whole staff who share its determination that pupils will achieve as well as they can, academically and personally. The result is a school with an impressive record of above average attainment and good progress that continually seeks further improvement. For example, innovative strategies to tackle low attendance and high persistent absence have been very successful. This work also reflects the strong commitment to promoting equality and tackling any form of discrimination. The school is increasingly engaging with parents and carers. It provides sensitively targeted support when staff identify issues that put pupils at risk of underachievement. The well-developed plans for establishing trust partnerships with three agencies that specialise in working with vulnerable groups show the school's impressive commitment to inclusion. Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements and often demonstrate best practice. The Chair of the Governing Body provides both expertise and tireless energy. She has driven improvements in the effectiveness of the governing body since the previous inspection. It is now confident in discharging its duties and more able to interpret data and other performance information to form a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold the senior leadership team to account. The school serves its own community very well. Its litter picks are extremely popular with residents and local shopkeepers. Educational and residential visits to rural towns and places very different to Oldbury increase the pupils' knowledge of their own country. Thematic topics - for example, on Fair Trade, Europe, rain forests and learning Spanish - are helping pupils increase their awareness of the wider world but the school agrees that this strand of the school's work to promote community cohesion remains an area for development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with the school. Almost all consider the school well led and are pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress their children are making. A small number shared their concerns about how the school deals with behavioural issues. Inspectors looked into the matter and found the procedures to be appropriate and behaviour good. One questionnaire raised a concern about safeguarding. The inspectors found that the procedures in place to ensure the well-being of children are rigorous.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moat Farm Junior 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 446 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	52	33	44	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	56	30	40	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	32	47	63	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	37	41	55	3	4	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	32	43	40	53	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	39	38	51	5	7	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	32	47	63	3	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)	26	35	40	53	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	35	42	56	3	4	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	39	31	41	10	13	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	23	44	59	9	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	33	44	37	49	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	47	35	47	3	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



30 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moat Farm Junior School, Oldbury, B68 9QR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. You told us how much you enjoy school and that you are pleased with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because Moat Farm is a good school.

What we found out about your school:

You really enjoy school and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

You behave well in class and on the playgrounds.

Your headteacher, senior teachers and the governing body are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.

You understand well how to stay safe and live healthy lives.

The enrichment activities are very popular and allow you to develop skills in activities that really interest you.

What we would like the school to do now:

We have asked school leaders to develop the teaching of writing skills in Years 3, 4 and 5 so that boys make similar progress to girls.

We want the school leadership team be even clearer about how the actions they include in the school improvement plan will improve your learning.

You can help by continuing to attend school as regularly as possible and also by continuing to read carefully, and respond thoughtfully, to the comments teachers write when they mark your books.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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