

Moorthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	130863
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	385698
Inspection dates	26 – 27 June 2012
Lead inspector	John Rutherford HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 – 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Mark Spink
Headteacher	Edward Cottle
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
School address	Regent Street Moorthorpe Pontefract West Yorkshire WF9 2BL
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Age group	3 – 11
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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

Introduction

Inspection team

John Rutherford
Rosemary Batty

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent eight hours observing 20 lessons and support groups taught by 13 teachers and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, pupils, a small number of parents, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. During the inspection, they observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including those relating to pupils' progress, self-evaluation, improvement planning and safeguarding. No questionnaires were requested from pupils, staff or parents and carers for this inspection.

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to most primary schools. One in five pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. One in eight pupils is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is above average. The school has Healthy Schools' status and has received the Sports Activemark and Open Futures curriculum awards. It has met the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school was placed in special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2011. Since then a new headteacher has been appointed on a temporary contract and there have been significant changes to staffing and the governing body.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has improved considerably in the past year. In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school is not yet good because the very effective teaching found in some classes is not consistent across the school. Furthermore, not all of the middle leaders are having an equally strong impact on raising achievement and the attendance of a small but significant group of pupils is below average. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Standards in English and mathematics are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils’ writing is improving strongly, however, the progress of less-able readers in Key Stage 2 is limited because they are not all confident with letters and sounds.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. In a minority of classes, very stimulating teaching makes the pupils eager to learn and tasks are carefully adapted to meet their learning needs. These strengths are not seen in all classes and, as a result, some of the more-able pupils are not being stretched enough.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good, they feel safe and they work very hard, which helps them to make better progress.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed a very strong partnership and their effective management of teachers’ performance is a key driver in the school’s improvement. An imaginative curriculum motivates pupils to learn. It also makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

To improve achievement from satisfactory to good, the school should:

- ensure more consistently good practice in relation to the following aspects of teaching by:
 - planning tasks that meet the needs of all groups of pupils in lessons, especially the more able
 - keeping all pupils thoroughly engaged in learning, especially during the introductory parts of lessons
 - increasing the skills of less-able Key Stage 2 readers in using letters and sounds to tackle new words
 - planning lessons with a much sharper focus for learning
 - marking work in a way that makes clear to pupils what their next steps of learning are and gives them an opportunity to respond.
- improve the work of middle leaders so that they all make an equally strong contribution to monitoring provision and pupils' outcomes across the school and to leading improvements where required
- target more support and challenge towards the small group of pupils whose frequent absences have a negative impact on their own achievement and on the school's ability to reach its target for above-average attendance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children start in Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills and knowledge are below those typical for their age. They make good progress, especially in developing their language, mathematical and social skills and these are broadly in line with national averages by the time they leave the Reception Year. School records, lesson observations and analysis of work show that pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, therefore, by the end of Year 6 their standards in English and mathematics are broadly average. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' writing has improved significantly, which is the result of more systematic teaching of basic skills combined with very imaginative tasks linked to cross-curricular topics, such as the 'dragons' or 'pirates'. Pupils have well-developed skills in communication which they put to good use in discussion and drama. This, in conjunction with their ability to work independently and to persevere with challenging problems, contributes to their improving progress.

Pupils' reading, though satisfactory, is not improving as rapidly as their writing, especially for the less-able in Key Stage 2. They have adequate skills in recognising known words or working them out from their meaning, but when faced with a new word, they do not always have sufficient skills to sound it out. Staff have recently undertaken training to improve their work in teaching letters and sounds, however,

new approaches are not yet thoroughly established. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because a new middle leader has greatly improved methods for identifying their needs and planning well-matched support. The same approaches are beginning to be applied for more-able pupils, but it is too early to see any positive impact, therefore the progress of many coasts along at no more than a satisfactory pace.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is no longer any of the inadequate teaching that was found in the previous inspection and a small proportion of it is good or outstanding. Where teaching is most effective, pupils make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills because teachers link them to other subjects of the curriculum in very stimulating ways. For example, some Key Stage 2 pupils extended their writing skills considerably in a task stemming from their role play about third-class passengers on the Titanic. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's interest and progress are increased in many areas of learning by linking them to the theme of 'Africa' and planning exciting activities, such as a visit by a group of African drummers. These experiences also make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, sharing responsibility for groups of more-able pupils, disabled pupils or those with special educational needs to ensure that they receive appropriate support or challenge.

The strongest teachers use a good range of methods for ensuring pupils are always paying attention and are fully involved in the lesson, for example, breaking up explanations with mini challenges for all pupils or carefully targeting questions so that every pupil knows it could be their turn next. Teachers use these activities well to assess pupils' understanding and change the lesson if necessary. Where teaching is less effective, pupils sit and listen inactively for too long and occasionally spend too much time on tasks that are not pitched at the right level for them. This particularly restricts the progress of more-able pupils who are not sufficiently stretched. Some lessons do not have a sufficiently sharp focus to give a clear direction for pupils' learning or for what teachers need to assess to evaluate their progress. As a result, the marking of pupils' work does not always make clear whether pupils have reached a specific learning objective or what they still need to do to make further progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour during the inspection was good and they showed very positive attitudes to work. This is typical of their usual conduct because the same judgement was made in the previous inspection and in the Ofsted monitoring visits that have been carried out since. The youngest children in Early Years Foundation Stage are eager learners and they settle well to learning their letters and sounds. Many older pupils recognise that they have a responsibility to help the school remove its causes for concern and they have increased their effort accordingly. This is typical of the responsibility shown by many pupils. Another example is the

work of Key Stage 1 and older Key Stage 2 pupils in producing DVDs to illustrate the negative effects of anti-social behaviour and the misuse of mobile phones. These are of very high quality and have been widely used in the community by the local police service.

Pupils enjoy school very much. The attendance of most is above average, however, the frequent absences of a small group lowers the overall figure to average. Pupils talk very confidently and fluently about why they feel safe, having had much guidance from staff and visiting experts on how to avoid sexual abuse, cyber-bullying and inappropriate internet use. They do not feel under any significant threat of bullying and their curriculum helps them to understand the importance of respect for people from different backgrounds.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. While the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong direction, leadership and management are not good overall because the role of middle leaders is not fully developed. As a result, improvements to teaching are not thoroughly embedded in every class. One of the new middle leaders makes an exceptionally strong contribution to safeguarding and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, others have not developed the same level of skill in improving practice across the school. The new leadership of safeguarding has led to the removal of concerns identified in the previous inspection and the school now meets requirements.

Senior leaders improved the school very quickly after it went into special measures. Supported well by the governing body, they dealt assertively with difficult staffing issues while also raising morale. Their performance management ensures all staff have the skills necessary to tackle priorities for improvement. Through systematic monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress, senior leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Their plans for tackling weaknesses have removed the school's causes for concern without delay, demonstrating that they are well placed to raise standards further. The governing body monitors the school's improvement closely and knows in detail the strengths and remaining weaknesses. On the basis of this, they make a good contribution to strategic planning.

When analysing pupils' progress, senior leaders identify those who are falling behind because of their circumstances, for example, those who speak English as an additional language, those who are looked after by the local authority or those who have social and emotional difficulties. They quickly provide carefully tailored support which accelerates their progress and gives them an equal opportunity to achieve their expected standards.

The curriculum is good because it combines subjects into very interesting topics which contribute significantly to pupils' improving literacy and numeracy skills. It is enriched by visits, for example, archaeological activities at a university and learning history first-hand in a Jacobean mansion. It also provides pupils with what

they regard as the 'experiences of a lifetime', for example, an outstanding production of Macbeth in a nearby theatre which involved all Year 5 and 6 pupils in such activities as acting, internet research, budgeting, writing reports and preparing costumes. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through, for example, planned opportunities to learn about other countries and faiths such as Africa and Judaism, and for exploring in depth what binds people together or drives them apart.

A small number of parents and carers spoke to the lead inspector saying how much the school had improved during the past year, how approachable they found senior leaders and staff and how they valued the increased encouragement to be involved in organising school activities, such as preparing the Jubilee celebrations.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear pupils,

Inspection of Moorthorpe Primary School, Pontefract, WF9 2BL

Thank you very much indeed for your help when I came with my colleague to inspect your school. We found our discussions with you very useful in helping us to judge that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. This means that your school has improved considerably since it was placed in special measures a year ago, therefore, we have decided that these special measures can be removed.

You deserve much praise for the part you have played in helping your school to improve, especially by always doing your best and behaving well. As some of you told me in a meeting; 'we have seen our teachers working so hard this year, it has made us want to work hard as well.' You now make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Your writing has improved massively and I find your work on display very interesting to read. You talk very well in lessons and this helps you to learn. Your drama is outstanding and we'll all remember your performance of 'Macbeth the Musical' for a long time. During the past year you have made a very important contribution to life in your community by producing DVDs which the local police service use to discourage anti-social behaviour and the misuse of mobile phones. Well done for all of these achievements.

The headteacher and staff are very keen to continue improving your education and we have agreed with them that the most important areas to work on are to:

- help you to achieve more, especially those of you who are more-able and those in Key Stage 2 who need extra support with their reading
- make sure that more lessons are as good as the very best in the school
- give more responsibilities to your teachers
- ensure that none of you miss school unless you really need to.

Your teachers are, therefore, going to continue to work hard and, to use your phrase, I know you, 'will meet them half-way.' My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford,
Her Majesty's Inspector

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