

Moorgate Primary School

Entwhistle Street, Bolton BL2 2RH

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- At Moorgate Primary School pupils, staff and leaders live up to the school's motto, 'Aspire, Achieve, Sparkle', each and every day.
- The headteacher ensures that she listens to the hopes and dreams of pupils and staff. Most importantly she makes it her job to help everyone try to achieve them.
- No one is in any doubt of the high expectations the headteacher has but staff are confident help is on hand whenever it is needed.
- Members of the strong leadership team are key to the school's success. They take their responsibilities very seriously, carry out their duties diligently and are an excellent role model for staff.
- Governance is improving rapidly. Governors check that they have the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience to support and challenge school leaders more effectively.
- The school's excellent programme of professional development ensures that teachers in the early stages of their career are well supported and those who aspire to leadership are given opportunities to step up.
- High-quality teaching and learning are underpinned by a well-considered curriculum. It not only secures key skills but also ignites pupils' passion for learning. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Children in the early years get off to a flying start. Everywhere you look, they are absorbed in learning and the atmosphere buzzes with their excitement.
- Teachers' unrelenting focus on securing the basic skills generates strong progress for all pupils. By the end of Year 6 pupils have caught up with, and in many cases overtaken, their peers nationally.
- The culture of vigilance means that all pupils are cared for exceptionally well. Strong partnerships with other agencies contribute to children and their families getting offered the support they need.
- Pupils behave very well. They are kind, caring and considerate.
- As pupils move into Years 5 and 6 they have a wealth of opportunities which prepare them for some of the issues which will face them in their community as they grow up.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further enrich pupils' enjoyment of the challenge of learning and resilience to failure by:
 - allowing pupils more opportunities to reason and solve problems in mathematics
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to work on their own
 - ensuring that all pupils have many opportunities to practise their writing, especially those who find it difficult
 - teachers reflecting on pupils' mistakes so that they make more timely decisions about when and how to move on to new learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's resolute and aspirational leadership, ably supported by the highly effective leadership team, ensures that everyone in the school lives up to the Moorgate vision. The headteacher is a 'hands on' school leader. Staff, pupils and parents know that 'her door is always open'. A parent told one of the inspectors that 'she always gets the job done.' This sums up why everyone has such faith in her.
- The curriculum has been developed over a number of years to meet the needs, interests and aptitudes of all pupils. As well, teachers take time to get to know their class and find out what will 'hook them into learning'. Pupils are encouraged to drive their own learning. When embarking on a topic about the Egyptians, one pupil asked 'What's the obsession about cats?' The class then set about trying to find the answer, acquiring a wealth of knowledge about the Egyptians along the way.
- Pupils love the wealth of experiences they have, with countless opportunities for pupils to join clubs and go on trips. Moreover, pupils benefit from the many visitors to the school, such as the local ministers who lead assemblies or an artist who worked with pupils to design and make a robot using recyclable materials. On Friday afternoons pupils take part in a range of activities to develop their life skills, including 'Baker's Dozen', where pupils learn to create savoury and sweet dishes, which they take home.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted, for example through links with the local community, especially through the intergenerational project. Pupils have developed cultural links with Vietnam and Germany. Staff make good use of assemblies to broaden pupils' understanding of British values through a 'Character Matters' programme. A local minister led an assembly about the athlete Derek Redmond to teach the pupils about resilience.
- Everyone is quite rightly proud of their school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak highly of their teachers. Staff feel valued and well supported by their colleagues. Parents have confidence in the school. One parent told an inspector that if there are any problems, the school 'will sort it out'.
- Leaders know the school extremely well. Self-evaluation is forensic, accurate and honest. Any weaknesses are swiftly addressed and the impact of actions is monitored carefully. School priorities are clearly communicated to staff. The school is reaping the success of its commitment to professional development as recent promotions have strengthened the leadership team, bringing new ideas and opportunities.
- All staff are set challenging targets but they are helped to achieve these through the highly effective programme of professional development. Teachers in the early stages of their careers speak in glowing terms of the high-quality mentoring and support programme.
- Subject leaders ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills expected for their subject through learning walks, planning, work scrutinies and talking to pupils. Frequent assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills across all subjects provide leaders with a wealth of information which they use to prioritise actions. Teachers respond well to training, for example on 'working scientifically'.
- Parents are invited to meet teachers regularly to find out about how well their child is doing and receive up-to-date information. Curriculum evenings and workshops help parents to learn about different aspects of the curriculum and try some 'hands on' activities with their child.
- School leaders, keen to keep improving the school, engage effectively with other local schools to moderate pupils' work. They welcome external advice and guidance and attend relevant training offered by the local authority.
- The school provides advice and support to other schools locally, particularly around establishing and running provision for two-year-olds. The local authority regard it as a beacon of good practice in early years education.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is improving rapidly. Governors have taken decisive action to strengthen their own leadership. As part of their recent reconstitution they took the opportunity to recruit new governors who bring skills, knowledge and experience so that they can even more effectively drive the school forward. Following their reconstitution, governors commissioned an external review of governance to identify priorities for its improvement.
 - Governors now visit the school more often to see its work in action so that they can support and challenge senior leaders really well. Governors' increased involvement in the life of the school has brought other benefits. Pupils now take part in a local inter-generational project promoting positive community relationships. Last term, a group of pupils had lunch with some older members of the community and then showed them how to make reindeer bookmarks.

- Governors ensure that finances are used to best effect, including how pupil premium funds are allocated and their impact on disadvantaged pupils' achievements of disadvantaged pupils as well as the additional funding for physical education and sports.
- Governors ensure that the school's high aspirations and expectations are reflected through the performance management process, which they monitor closely to ensure that teachers are held to account.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that staff are extremely well versed in what to do if they have concerns and signs to look for that suggest a pupil may be at risk; all concerns are acted upon quickly. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were unanimous that they are safe in school. At every stage, pupils are taught how to manage risks. During the inspection, Year 5 enjoyed taking part in a workshop to help them establish healthy, safe relationships and make positive life choices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The well-considered curriculum provides a firm foundation for teaching. The freedom given to teachers to tailor learning to pupils' interests and enthusiasms means that learning is personalised to each cohort. Consequently, pupils enjoy their lessons.
- The highly effective subject leaders provide excellent support to their colleagues and ensure that teachers are constantly deepening their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. A well-developed approach to supporting less experienced colleagues enables them to hone their craft as teachers very quickly.
- Teachers plan, continually review and reshape their lessons carefully using information they gather from talking to pupils and marking their work. Pupils respond to marking and use feedback to improve their work. In Year 1, a pupil was reminded to use finger spaces between his words and in the following pieces of work he did this.
- The impact of a recent focus on improving teachers' use of questions was evident when inspectors observed lessons. In a science lesson, the teacher asked good questions and quickly increased the level of challenge for pupils who had a secure understanding as well as addressing other's misconceptions.
- As a result of excellent subject knowledge, phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) teaching is highly effective, building on the excellent start pupils make in the early years. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to recap on prior learning before moving them on swiftly. Pupils learn new sounds quickly and have ample opportunities to apply them to their reading. The few pupils who do not meet the expected standard at the end of Year 1 catch up quickly with extra support.
- Pupils told inspectors that their teachers are very good at explaining new learning. At the start of mathematics lesson in Year 5 a pupil was heard to say 'Yes! We're doing maths!' The teacher, using carefully chosen visual aids and incisive questions, helped pupils to identify all the possible combinations of factors in the improper fractions.
- In a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher and pupils both had high expectations. The pupils reviewed each other's work really well to refine and improve their writing. Their increasing skills and knowledge were evident in their writing, particularly in their more sophisticated vocabulary choices.
- Sometimes, in their enthusiasm to support pupils to be successful, particularly lower attainers, adults do too much for pupils and do not give them enough opportunities to practise their basic skills. Occasionally, adults miss ways to encourage pupils to respond well to challenge and learn from their mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Personal, social, health and cultural education is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders have a deep understanding of the community they serve and ensure that they equip pupils with the skills they need to overcome the challenges they face day to day. The school promotes British values through its well established 'Character Matters' programme. Each week both in assemblies and in classes there is a focus on one characteristic such as honesty, integrity or perseverance.
- The school revisits pupils' hopes and dreams each term and always tries to find ways to help pupils move closer to achieving them. One pupil wanted to dance and so the school put on a Dance Club. Former

pupils are encouraged to talk to current pupils about their achievements to give pupils role models to aspire to.

- The school holds a number of themed weeks and events. During the annual 'Wider World Week' each class finds out about a different country. They take part in food-tasting, learn to play the traditional music or produce artwork in the style of their country. At the end of the week pupils share their learning in an assembly and then hold an arts evening.
- The school is committed to being at the heart of its community. Pupils regularly attend the Friday lunch club as part of a local inter-generational project. They eat lunch with the older people and then take part in an activity together. Last term, the pupils taught their lunch guests how to make bookmarks. The school sponsors a child from India to help pupils get a better understanding of life for a child in a developing country.
- Pupils are encouraged to listen to each other's point of view and make democratic decisions. During the inspection, Year 5 went on a visit. At the end of the day the teacher said that he could not award the 'Star of the Day' to one pupil as he felt that they had all excelled: so the pupils decided to put everyone's name in the hat and draw the winner.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They know what to do if they have any concerns and feel confident to approach adults who work with them. Pupils talked about how harmoniously all pupils work and play together. Pupils who are 'Official Helpers' take their responsibilities very seriously. Throughout their life at Moorgate, pupils are helped to keep themselves safe. The school's excellent links with a range of local partners provide pupils with expert advice and guidance that will stand them in good stead, now and in the future. Year 6 take part in a 10-week programme led by the local police which raises their awareness of some of the key local community issues, such as knife crime.
- The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in their local community but leaders are aware that more needs to be done to give their pupils the skills for life and work in other localities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around school is exemplary. They listen attentively to both their teachers and each other so that no time is wasted in lessons; this contributes to their strong progress. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly fashion. They hold doors open and behave sensibly in the dining room at lunchtime. Pupils greeted inspectors warmly and politely. All adults provide excellent role models for pupils.
- The school closely monitors the rare incidents of poor behaviour including bullying and quickly addresses any emerging patterns and trends. Pupils spoke positively about how the teachers deal with any instances of poor behaviour, saying: 'teachers believe in you to try again'. There have been no exclusions over the past two years.
- Pupils' attendance continues to improve as the school works tirelessly to get every pupil in school every day. Detailed case studies reflect the high levels of support the school offers in partnership with other agencies to families who struggle to maintain regular attendance. Pupils at risk of persistent absence have been identified and early intervention is being put in place.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in early years. Leaders ensure that this momentum is not lost as pupils move through the school. At every stage pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils' work in books, learning in lessons, the school's own assessment of progress and the 2015 test results are all testament to the rising standards. The school's relentless focus on reading, writing and mathematics helps all pupils to end Year 6 well prepared for the demands of secondary school.
- Pupils' writing and topic books show the considerable shift in expectation and improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, middle- and higher-ability pupils often practise their writing. Despite only half the cohort achieving age-related expectations at the end of early years, pupils quickly master and apply basic grammar, punctuation and spelling. As pupils move into Year 2, their writing shows increased awareness of the audience, with more interesting and varied language. The high standards expected of pupils in their English lessons are seen in all subjects. High-quality phonics teaching across early years and KS1 and has meant that from their different starting points pupils achieve extremely well in the national phonics check.

- From their different starting points at the end of Year 2, all pupils make strong progress. High-quality teaching and timely interventions ensure that they catch up quickly to match their peers nationally. Current work shows that rising standards at the end of early years mean that pupils are more ready for Year 1 work and the proportion of current pupils working at age-related expectations is increasing. This is particularly noticeable for boys and disadvantaged pupils, who have benefited from the focused support in Reception.
- Disadvantaged pupils and boys make exceptional progress. As a result boys catch up with girls and overtake their peers nationally by the end of Year 6; in mathematics in 2015 they were one year ahead of pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers in school and other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with disabilities and who have special educational needs achieve particularly well as a result of the careful matching of support to their individual needs. By the end of Year 6 all pupils have a firm academic foundation which stands them in good stead for secondary school.
- The school has correctly identified that the most-able pupils are not achieving as well as they could in reading. While most actions are still in the planning stage, a reading competition has been launched to encourage pupils to read more at home. Pupils who receive vouchers visit a bookshop with the English subject leader to choose books. There is a new library area and bright, attractive book corners. A Key Stage 1 pupil, who previously never read at home, has now read around 100 books through the online library purchased by school. School also have put in place intervention to challenge more-able pupils.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in early years. The early years leader ensures that not a minute is wasted, so children catch up quickly from their starting points. A high proportion of children leave and join the school each year as cohorts move from 'Mini Moorgate' through Nursery and into Reception. Nevertheless, staff ensure that every child, for whatever period of time they attend the school, makes strong progress.
- From starting points which are below those typical for their age, children make exceptional progress across early years and outcomes at the end of Reception are improving. Children are catching up quickly with their peers nationally, particularly in their communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional development.
- Senior leaders have an accurate picture of the provision and have been effective in securing rapid improvements to aspects of the setting. The school recently invested in resources to enhance children's learning in technology. As a result, many more children were successful in this area in 2015. Inspectors observed a number of pupils enjoying using the talking phones and an adult used their interest well to help develop their language skills.
- The early years team is very skilful at making sure that, however much the cohort varies each year, all of them catch up quickly. Their success is seen by the accelerated progress made by disadvantaged pupils, boys and those pupils who have attended 'Mini Moorgate' and Moorgate Nursery. Despite many of the children joining the school in Reception, outcomes improved again in 2015 and school assessments suggest that an even higher proportion of the current Reception pupils will achieve a good level of development.
- The setting is a hive of activity. Wherever you look, children are absorbed in learning. There is a continual hum of chatter as children share their interests and enthusiasms with adults and each other. A Nursery child, fascinated by trying to screw a washer on, studied the problem, tried different approaches and when she succeeded her face lit up as she exclaimed, 'I've done it!' Another child was fascinated by the changing colour of the water as he washed and he experimented with different colours to see what happened.
- Children are caring and considerate towards each other. As a group of boys were playing with toy cars, one became upset as he wanted the blue one; another child successfully suggested how they could share the cars so that everyone had a turn.
- Parents are actively encouraged to be partners in their children's learning. From home visits before children join the school, invitations to contribute to assessments of their child's starting points and regular 'stay and play' sessions, parents are encouraged to be involved. Leaders are constantly reflecting on ways to refine and improve their partnership with parents.

- Children are exceptionally well cared for. Staff are assiduous in attending to children's needs and keeping them safe. All statutory welfare requirements are met. Children confidently approach adults for help and staff respond very warmly. However, staff encourage children to take responsibility: putting on their own wellington boots, helping with the tidying up and persevering with tricky tasks, for example.
- High-quality phonics teaching ensures that no time is wasted. Adults make the sessions fun using puppets, music and pictures and children respond by being attentive and keen to take part in the different activities. Children are keen to apply their learning, walking round the class recording names on a register or making notes about their symptoms, ready for an appointment with the 'doctor' in the role play area. In a small group led by the teacher, children loved talking about the book she was sharing with them. Children made predictions, talked about the different animal characters and the sounds they make and discussed the illustrations.
- Leaders have identified that boys' physical development holds back their writing progress, so there are now many activities which develop their gross and fine motor co-ordination. Staff have also been building on boys' interests to encourage them to write, by recording the birds they see in the garden as part of the 'Big Garden Birdwatch' survey.
- The school is a Department of Education Champion School for two-year-old provision. Staff have a secure understanding of their development and how they learn. Effective partnerships with health visitors lead to well-coordinated support for children and their families; children are secure and happy and make good progress from their different starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	105171
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10003747

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Councillor Elaine Sherrington
Headteacher	Mrs Debra Hopwood
Telephone number	01204 333477
Website	www.moorgate.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	office@moorgate.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 January 2011

Information about this school

- Moorgate Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs is above the national average.
- In 2015 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has commissioned and worked through an external review of governance.
- The school has offered provision for two-year-olds since September 2012. The school is a Department of Education champion school for two-year-old provision.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2012. There were three new appointments to the senior leadership team in September 2015. Two newly qualified teachers were appointed in September 2015.
- The school was awarded the Investors in People Silver Award in 2015. It has also achieved a number of other awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Eco Schools Silver Award, Artsmark Gold Award, Fairtrade Award and the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in a wide range of subjects to different age groups and phases. The headteacher accompanied an inspector on a learning walk. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at a sample of pupils' written work with senior leaders. They observed behaviour around the school and visited the before- and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, a group of staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors met members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including: self-evaluation and development plans; information relating to pupils' attainment and progress; information on attendance and behaviour; documents and records about safeguarding; records of checks on teaching and learning and teachers' performance management.
- Inspectors considered 14 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the school's own surveys of parents' views. They also took account of the responses of 34 members of staff and 26 pupils to questionnaires.

Inspection team

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