

Moss Hall Junior School

Nether Street, Finchley, London N3 1NR

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Governors, senior and middle leaders work together effectively to drive school improvement. They understand well the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was above average in reading and mathematics in 2013. It was slightly below average in writing.
- Pupils are now making good progress in writing because of the action school leaders have taken.
- The quality of teaching has improved, particularly in writing, because of the training that teachers have received. Leaders provide effective support where it is needed and, as a result, teaching is good.
- Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to learning which contribute to the good progress they make.
- Pupils feel safe in school because of the emphasis that leaders give to this responsibility.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and work effectively with senior leaders. They increasingly hold school leaders to account for the work of the school and for pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders take increasing responsibility for managing the performance of teachers and for the progress that pupils make. Leaders of English and mathematics identify the right priorities for improvement in their subjects. Improvement plans are detailed and of good quality.
- The broad curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of visits, visitors and clubs. Music is a particular strength at Moss Hall, with a large proportion of pupils playing a musical instrument.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always act on the comments teachers make about their work. This slows their progress.
- Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to move pupils' learning along more quickly.
- Some parents do not feel as involved as they would like to be in their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons, including five jointly with senior leaders. They also shared six short visits to lessons with the headteacher, and one to a rehearsal of the school orchestra.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress that pupils make throughout the school. They analysed the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with other senior leaders, year group leaders, subject leaders and two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. An inspector also met with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 120 parents and carers as expressed in the online survey, Parent View. Inspectors spoke informally with parents and carers at the start and end of the school day and considered the comments of seven parents made by letter or telephone call. Inspectors received and analysed 32 staff questionnaire returns.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and interviewed two groups of pupils. They looked at samples of pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors looked at documents, including: those relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning; minutes of governing body meetings; records relating to behaviour and attendance; planning for school improvement; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jeremy Loukes, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Penny Spencer

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is average. This is additional government funding provided to schools to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Extensive building work is currently taking place in preparation for the expansion of the school. It will have places for 90 pupils in Year 3 from September 2014 and 120 places from September 2015. Further renovation work has recently taken place to replace doors and windows as well as to make the site secure.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by making sure that teachers:
 - check that pupils have applied the advice given in marking comments
 - move pupils' learning on quickly when they are ready.
- Review the systems used to communicate with parents and carers so that:
 - parents are enabled to play a full part in their children's learning
 - parents understand the school's policies, procedures and reasons for any changes so the school community is united in its aims.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2013, Year 6 test results were above the national figures in reading and mathematics and slightly below in writing. Similarly, the proportions of pupils making expected progress or more than expected progress were above national figures in reading and mathematics and slightly below in writing.
- Pupils' work, together with information the school has about their performance, shows that pupils are achieving well. They are making good progress from their starting points. For example, the most able pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve Level 6 in this year's national tests.
- Recent changes in the approach to the teaching of writing are effective. Writing in pupils' books shows that the range of their vocabulary is increasing and their use of punctuation is improving. Pupils in Year 6 incorporate a wide range of punctuation in their writing, including semicolons and ellipses.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are successful because leaders check that the additional support provided through catch-up groups is well targeted and effective. Leaders meet with parents of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as part of the transition process from infant to junior school to help identify and apply any support needed.
- Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with emotional difficulties are met. Individual or group lessons with the learning mentor address these pupils' emotional barriers to learning. As a result, their confidence and self-esteem increase, as does the rate of their academic progress.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for pupil premium and that of their peers has closed rapidly over the last three years. In 2013, there was no significant difference between the attainment of this group and that of their peers in mathematics, reading or writing.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Those who enter the school with lower levels of attainment make good progress in their reading. The majority of pupils are confident readers by the time they leave Moss Hall. They are keen to read aloud in class and do so with expression and understanding.
- Pupils' literacy skills develop effectively throughout the school. Teachers correct pupils' grammatical errors in their spoken language during discussions so that they are well prepared for any subsequent writing.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. School leaders provide equal opportunity for these pupils to achieve as well as their classmates through additional staffing to support their language development.

The quality of teaching is good

- Improving the quality of writing has a high priority in the school. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson, pupils developed their writing skills by creating a diary entry in the role of a Victorian child.
- Teachers use their thorough subject knowledge accurately to judge pupils' levels of understanding. Teachers use this information effectively to tailor their questions of, and explanations to, individual pupils. They provide good challenge for the more able as well as extra support for those who need it.
- Teachers ask thought-provoking, philosophical questions which help pupils consider issues in depth. They often generate lively discussion and debate, providing good challenge for the most able pupils.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly in line with school expectations. However, teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on their advice. This sometimes results in pupils repeating

errors in subsequent work and making less progress than they could.

- Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills, for example to solve problems they may come across in everyday life. For instance, pupils in Year 5 calculated the cost of discounted items using their knowledge and understanding of percentage.
- Some teachers do not move pupils' learning on quickly enough. For example, in mathematics, they allow pupils to repeat too many examples of calculations without them increasing in difficulty. This limits the progress pupils make.
- Leaders use the the information they have about pupils' progress to identify those needing additional support. The support provided through catch-up groups helps these pupils make more rapid progress.
- Teaching assistants generally have a good understanding of pupils' learning needs and work seamlessly with the teacher to provide well-tailored support for individuals. Occasionally, teaching assistants do not intervene quickly enough to make sure pupils achieve all that they are capable of.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning in the classroom are positive. They concentrate well and are well motivated. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in the playground is good. It is not uncommon for pupils and staff to greet each other politely as they pass in the corridor.
- The school's simple rules about learning, respect and safety underpin its expectations of pupils. The rules are well understood by pupils, as is the system for managing any misbehaviour. As a result, such incidents are rare. Pupils show each other a good deal of respect and support one another socially and academically.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average and there have been no exclusions during the last two years.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council, eco council or as junior road safety officers. One pupil explained the positive culture in the school by likening it to a 'big family', explaining that 'we all grow up together.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents agree. School leaders have robust procedures for checking the risks associated with the activities pupils are involved in, both on- and off-site.
- Pupils are well aware of different forms of bullying. They have a good understanding of the risks associated with using the internet. They know that they should consider the extent to which they share personal information and to which they trust information they gain from the internet.
- Pupils say, and school records support the view, that name-calling or discrimination rarely occur. Pupils have confidence in their teachers to sort out any issues that arise. However, pupils feel that difficulties on the playground at lunchtime, on the rare occasions when they occur, are handled less well.
- Junior road safety officers take a leading role in improving safety at, and in the vicinity of, Moss Hall. They seek the views of other pupils and survey the volume of traffic near to the school. Their efforts to reduce local traffic and increase the proportion of pupils walking to school are valued by local residents.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. They make sure that the good practice observed within school is shared with others. Leaders also seek appropriate training from experts beyond the school. Pupils' work shows that this has had a

noticeable impact on the teaching of writing.

- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. For instance, they correctly identified the need to improve the quality of the teaching of writing. Plans for school improvement are clear and progress towards achieving targets is checked regularly by governors.
- Senior leaders use the information collected about pupils' progress increasingly effectively to check on how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing. This means that action is taken quickly to support pupils who may have fallen behind.
- Middle leaders articulate clearly how their role has been enhanced so that they now hold teachers in their teams accountable for the progress pupils make. They have a good understanding of the key priorities for the future and of their role in further improving the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have set out a broad curriculum at Moss Hall. Pupils particularly value the chance to dress up and take part in themed days which support their learning in history-based topics, such as the Aztecs and the Ancient Greeks. Plans to implement the new National Curriculum from September 2014 are well under way.
- Pupils' participation in music and sport make a particularly strong contribution to their personal development. Music can often be heard around the school. During the inspection, the orchestra treated an inspector to an accomplished performance of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. By the time they leave Moss Hall, pupils are confident and well prepared for secondary school.
- The local authority has confidence in school leaders and has supported the school well in improving the quality of the teaching of writing.
- While the majority of parents are supportive of the school's work, there are some who feel they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress. Some feel that their concerns are not addressed by school leaders. Changes to policies and procedures have not always been effectively communicated to parents so the school community is not fully united in its aims.
- Detailed and well-considered plans are in place for the spending of the primary sports funding. Spending is effectively targeted at increasing participation, improving the quality of the teaching of physical education and raising the profile of sport generally. Senior leaders have, correctly, given subject leaders the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through managing this work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school regularly to see for themselves how it runs on a day-to-day basis. They ask increasingly challenging questions of school leaders, checking the progress that pupils make. Governors make sure that they undertake appropriate training, for example in being familiar with the numerical information about pupils' performance. Governors know how the pupil premium and primary sports funding is spent. They check that money is spent effectively and that it has an impact on how well pupils do. Governors receive regular reports from school leaders about standards and the quality of teaching. Their visits to classrooms give them a first-hand understanding of the impact of school policies. They make the final decision about teachers' pay progression after receiving recommendations from the headteacher, and lead the headteacher's performance management process. Governors make sure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including the recruiting and vetting of staff, meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 101294 |
| Local authority | Barnet |
| Inspection number | 444297 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 388 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kim Politzer |
| Headteacher | Patricia Grant |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 March 2011 |
| Telephone number | 020 8445 7965 |
| Fax number | 020 8446 6559 |
| Email address | office@mosshalljnr.barnetmail.net |

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