

Moulsecoomb Primary School

The Highway, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 4PA

Inspection dates

2–3 April 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders' and governors' evaluation of the school is inaccurate. Their actions to raise standards are too slow to have sufficient impact on how well pupils achieve.
- Outcomes for pupils, including those in vulnerable groups, are inadequate overall. Pupils' progress in key stage 2 is weak, especially in writing.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate overall. Leaders' judgements about standards of teaching do not take enough account of the progress pupils are making in their learning.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. They do not hold pupils closely to account for the quality of their work. This prevents pupils from making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. At times, teachers provide pupils with inaccurate information. In some lessons, the resources provided prevent pupils from learning well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are inconsistent. At times, pupils struggle to concentrate and give up quickly.
- At times, rough play on the playground escalates because staff are not quick to notice and do not intervene decisively to stop it.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school, particularly those from vulnerable groups. Levels of attendance have been too low in recent years.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' work to improve pupils' attitudes to learning is starting to have a positive impact.
- The school is an inclusive community. Leaders know pupils and their families well, and staff work hard to meet pupils' varying needs, both social and emotional.
- Outcomes in phonics have improved in recent years and are close to the national average.
- Children get off to a strong start in the early years and make good progress as a result of effective teaching.
- Improvements in teaching and the curriculum in key stage 1 are enabling pupils to make better progress than in the past. New approaches to the teaching of mathematics are also showing early signs of improvement.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and thereby pupils' outcomes, particularly in key stage 2, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, so that they make strong academic progress
 - insist on high standards of presentation and accuracy in all subjects
 - have the secure subject knowledge required to teach all subjects successfully
 - plan lessons carefully, ensuring that they use equipment and resources effectively so that they enable pupils to learn well.
- Develop the effectiveness of leaders and governors by ensuring that:
 - plans to improve the school focus sufficiently on their intended impact on pupils' achievement, so that leaders can be held closely to account
 - judgements about the effectiveness of teaching are closely aligned to the progress that pupils are making in their learning
 - improvements seen in the lower part of the school and in the teaching of mathematics continue to strengthen and spread through the school.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly the disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attend school regularly and that persistent absence declines
 - continuing to develop pupils' attitudes to learning and strengthening their resilience and self-confidence, so that a greater number are better equipped to learn
 - making sure that staff on the playground are quick to notice when play becomes rough and take swift action to restore order.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not addressed low standards or improved the quality of teaching quickly enough. Although they recognise some of the school's weaknesses, their assessment of the school was overly positive at the start of the inspection. Leaders' plans for school improvement do not focus sufficiently on how the planned actions will raise pupils' attainment rapidly.
- Leaders have an inaccurate view of how effective teaching is across the school. Their evaluations do not take enough account of the impact on pupils' learning. Consequently, leaders' attempts to improve teaching in key stage 2 have not made enough difference to pupils' attainment and progress. Although pupils' outcomes are improving in some respects, overall achievement in key stage 2 remains weak.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher understand the importance of providing pupils with a secure foundation of the basic skills needed for them to succeed in school. Their work to improve teaching in the early years and in key stage 1 has currently been more successful than at key stage 2. As a result, outcomes for pupils are rising in both key stage 1 and the early years.
- The local authority recognises the need for outcomes to improve further. It provides a comprehensive package of support to develop leadership and improve teaching.
- Middle leaders play an increasing role in improving the school. They receive useful support and training from senior leaders, the local authority and other local schools. They have a growing awareness of how to drive improvements in their subjects, and correctly identify strengths and some weaknesses seen in pupils' work.
- Staff are provided with regular training that helps them to develop the effectiveness of their work. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics this year provide evidence of the success of this training.
- Efforts to improve parental engagement have been successful, especially this academic year. Senior leaders understand pupils' varying needs, which often make learning more difficult, and have put support in place for them and their families. Leaders have created a warm, welcoming community, where parents and carers know that they will find a listening ear and help in a range of areas. During the inspection, many parents spoke positively about various aspects of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically achieve in line with other pupils in the school. However, they are not making the progress needed to enable them to achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. They use pupil premium funding appropriately to help overcome these barriers and to ensure that pupils are able to make the most of the extra-curricular activities provided.
- Senior leaders are clear that the curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils get many opportunities to do things that they would not otherwise do. This includes visits to interesting places such as a local farm, the Natural History Museum and Seven Sisters Country Park, where they learn about archaeology and landscapes.

- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school is involved in the Brighton Festival children's parade. This year's theme of 'Africa' gives pupils the chance to learn about not only their own town and the festival but also a different culture. The curriculum fosters a diverse community, where everyone feels welcomed and valued and where differences are celebrated.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a range of skills and expertise that enable them to offer support and challenge to senior leaders. However, they are not sufficiently skilled in interpreting information about pupils' outcomes, which reduces the effectiveness of their work. They do question leaders, not only for clarification but also to probe more deeply where they identify areas of weakness.
- Governors visit the school regularly to check that aspects of the school improvement plan are being carried out. They draw their evidence from a range of sources, including by seeking the views of parents and talking to pupils in the school. However, their ability to hold senior leaders stringently to account is hindered by improvement plans that do not relate closely enough to pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils' well-being is paramount to all who work at the school. Staff know pupils well as individuals. As a result, adults are able to meet pupils' social and emotional needs effectively.
- Office staff undertake all the required checks to make sure that only people who are suitable are allowed to work in the school. The school site, although extensive, is secure.
- Staff have up-to-date training in all aspects of safeguarding. All have read the latest information about keeping pupils safe in school. Staff understand how to recognise, report and record concerns, even if the concerns appear to be minor. They appreciate that even minor concerns may form part of a wider picture at a later date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low in key stage 2. There is little evidence of teaching enabling pupils in key stage 2 to make the progress needed to achieve in line with the national average. In some cases, pupils are falling even further behind.
- Teachers do not all have sufficiently secure subject knowledge overall. This prevents them from recognising when pupils make mistakes, for example in the use of grammar and punctuation. Weak planning and poor choices about resources lead to pupils not learning as well as they should.
- Pupils' misspellings are common and not corrected promptly. As a result, mistakes persist and become ingrained. Teachers do not systematically insist that pupils present

their work well. Consequently, inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work are evident, not only from day to day but also within lessons.

- There are some signs of improvement in the teaching of mathematics, especially since January of this year. Pupils have increased opportunities to tackle challenging problems using their mathematical knowledge and reasoning. This is leading to them making better progress than in the past across the school.
- Teaching in key stage 1 has improved in recent years as a result of the actions of senior leaders. This ensures that pupils get off to a strong start in school, providing them with a secure foundation for future success. However, the weak teaching in key stage 2 currently fails to build on this increasingly secure starting point.
- The teaching of reading has a high priority in the school. Many topics are planned around rich texts, and this helps pupils to develop an enjoyment and appreciation of fiction. Pupils learn phonics well and use this knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words and to read with increasing accuracy and fluency as they progress through the school.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils, especially those with SEND, to participate fully in lessons and to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Homework provides pupils with useful opportunities to read at home and to practise their knowledge in mathematics. As pupils grow older, they take on an increased amount of homework to help them prepare for the greater demands of secondary school. Parents are becoming increasingly involved in their children's learning at the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils do not have consistently positive attitudes to learning. Some lack resilience, have low self-esteem and do not see themselves as learners. In several lessons, it was clear to inspectors that pupils were struggling to settle to the task, especially when they felt that they could not succeed. This led to pupils becoming easily distracted and not achieving as well as they could.
- Senior leaders and staff understand the personal and learning challenges that some of their pupils face. They work hard with pupils and their families to establish positive, affirming relationships and consequently strengthen pupils' confidence and determination to succeed in school. These efforts are having a positive impact on pupils but have not had time to result in stronger academic progress. Several parents reserved special praise for this aspect of the school's work.
- In lessons where teaching fully engages pupils' interest, pupils show more positive attitudes to their learning. They focus well on the tasks in hand and complete them by the end of the lesson. In such lessons, pupils cooperate well, share ideas and accept each other's views.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They trust adults to sort out any problems, but also say that friends can be relied on to help as well. Pupils have a very strong understanding of equality and diversity. One pupil explained this by saying, 'Everyone is appreciated for who they are.'

- Pupils have a good understanding of the dangers of bullying, including cyber bullying. They understand how it differs from just falling out, describing it accurately as 'continued abuse'. Bullying is uncommon, but when it does arise staff deal with it quickly and decisively.
- Pupils understand the importance of reporting any incidents of bullying. Several were able to explain the difference between being an 'upstander' who reports incidents quickly and a 'bystander' who sees bullying happening but does nothing. This demonstrates leaders' clear expectations for pupils to play their part in promoting a positive culture in the school.
- Pupils learn how to adopt healthy lifestyles. There are many opportunities to participate in different sports and games. Leaders also ensure that pupils learn how to ride bicycles and scooters safely. Pupils appreciate the extensive school grounds that enable them to learn out of doors at times.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. On occasions at playtimes, some pupils do not show thoughtfulness or consideration to others. Rough play sometimes spills over and tempers fray. Staff do not systematically intervene quickly to defuse this behaviour and so it escalates. Pupils confirm that events such as this are not uncommon and that they leave some pupils feeling anxious.
- For several years, too many pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, have had high levels of absence from school. Attendance figures are well below the national average and persistent absence is high. Leaders now analyse patterns of absence more carefully than in the past, which helps them to identify specific pupils who need support to improve their attendance. Case study examples show that this approach has had a positive impact for some pupils and there are some signs of improvement. However too few pupils still benefit from regular attendance at school.
- When pupils are in the school, for example walking along the corridors and eating lunch together in the hall, they behave well. Pupils are mostly polite and well mannered. They open doors for adults and say thank you when adults do the same for them. The school is an orderly environment.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently low and show little sign of improvement. Attainment and progress dipped further in 2018 so that the overwhelming majority of pupils left the school having not met the expected standard in these three subjects. No pupils have achieved the higher standard in all three subjects by the end of Year 6 for the last three years. The progress of pupils by the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was below that seen nationally, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils currently in key stage 2 is slow and uneven, especially in writing. The proportion of pupils on track to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 remains well below the national average. Although key stage 2 pupils are currently making better progress in reading and

mathematics than in the past, this is not enough to enable them to make up for the ground lost in learning in recent years. However, positively, a few pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain the higher standard at the end of this academic year.

- Pupils with SEND make variable progress. Some benefit from the strong specialist teaching that helps them to move forward successfully from their various starting points. Others achieve much less well and fall further behind. Some parents of pupils with SEND spoke very positively about the way that they feel the provision in place for their children is supporting and enabling them to make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with other pupils in the school, at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, they achieve much less well than other pupils nationally, especially at the end of key stage 2.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 improved significantly in 2018, with pupils attaining closer to the national average than in previous years. Pupils made stronger progress as a result of raised standards of teaching. This improvement is continuing for pupils currently in key stage 1, with increasing proportions on track to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Attainment in phonics rose sharply in 2017 to standards close to those seen nationally, and this improved outcome was maintained in 2018. Pupils currently in school achieve well in phonics as a result of accurate, effective teaching.

Early years provision

Good

- Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that children in the early years acquire a strong foundation of the basic skills to equip them well for success in school. Their efforts have brought about significant improvements to the quality of provision.
- The leader of the early years has a clear understanding of how well young children learn. She ensures that all who work in the provision have regular opportunities for training and professional development so that they can teach to a good standard.
- Children achieve well in the early years. They get off to a good start in the Nursery class and, by the time they leave the Reception class, are ready to take on the greater challenges of key stage 1.
- The majority of children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. However, they make strong progress as a result of effective teaching and high expectations among staff. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of early years rose sharply in 2017 so that it was close to the national average. These strong outcomes were sustained in 2018. Children across the early years are also making similar progress this year. Some of the most able children are on track to exceed the early learning goals.
- Children quickly develop positive attitudes to school. They are fully engaged in their learning, creating a positive, purposeful environment.
- The classrooms and outdoor spaces provide well for children to learn across all areas of the early years curriculum. Staff are skilled at planning activities that capture children's interest and help them to take the next step in their learning.

- The environment is rich in language and text, so that children are presented with written text and opportunities for writing, both indoors and out. Consequently, children from all starting points make good progress in writing. Those who start school unable to write their name quickly master this skill and move on to being able to write words independently.
- Leaders ensure that parents are involved in their children's education. They keep parents informed about how well their children are achieving. In Reception, leaders arrange for times when parents and the wider family join in with children's activities. For example, older people come and read stories at the Nursery, and there are a wide number of community links to such services as dentists and doctors.
- Leaders recognise that many children start school with poor communication skills. They ensure that children have a rich diet of stories and rhymes, especially in the Nursery, to equip them with good vocabulary and understanding of spoken English.
- Children get off to a good start, both in learning phonics and in the early skills of reading and writing. Teaching of phonics is accurate and effective. However, at times, learning is disrupted, such as when children call out when a word or sound appears on the whiteboard, preventing others from having time to think carefully about their answers.
- Children learn to count and to add and subtract numbers from one to 10. An inspector observed children working well together to tackle questions, using equipment to help them. Children are thoughtful and cooperative, and are happy to share equipment with their partners. This was typical of the behaviour seen in the early years.
- All safeguarding requirements are met, including ensuring that enough staff have paediatric first-aid training.

School details

Unique reference number	132028
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10088155

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marisol Smith
Headteacher	Adam Sutton
Telephone number	01273 605700
Website	www.moulsecoomb.brighton-hove.sch.uk/
Email address	office@moulsecoomb.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2017

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. In most year groups there are two classes, although there is one class in Year 5.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average. Levels of deprivation are well above those seen nationally.
- Most pupils are White British, but the school also has pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The school has a greater number of ethnic groups represented than seen in primary schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above that seen in other schools across the country.
- The school is receiving additional support from the local authority. This includes support from improvement advisers. Leaders also work closely with other schools in their local cluster.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes across the school. Several of these visits were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The headteacher joined the lead inspector for all his observations in lessons.
- Several meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss various aspects of the school's work, including leaders' evaluation of the school and their actions to improve behaviour. Inspectors also met with other leaders and staff, including the special educational needs coordinator, the subject leaders for mathematics, English and physical education, the leader of the early years and the 'closing the gap' teacher.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, together with five other governors. He also reviewed documents relating to the work of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and around school.
- Six pupils in total, from Year 2 and Year 6, read their reading books to an inspector and discussed how the school supports their reading development.
- A representative group of pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 discussed their opinions about the school, and their learning, with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View. Inspectors also met with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. There were no responses to the pupil or staff surveys.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' achievement, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plans. They reviewed records of behaviour and attendance, and leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching. They also scrutinised the single central record of checks on people who work in the school to ensure that it met statutory requirements, and reviewed a range of information relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in their books across a wide range of curriculum areas, focusing particularly on writing and mathematics.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Small	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector

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