

Monkton Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108684
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	356412
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Hansen
Headteacher	Julie Finlay
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons involving six teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Inspectors considered questionnaire responses from 26 parents and carers and 15 staff.

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

- How effectively the school engages with parents and carers and other agencies to ensure at least average attendance and to reduce persistent absenteeism.
- How effectively all teachers challenge pupils of different abilities in order to secure good progress for all groups across the school, especially those with low attendance.
- How well the school provides a range of experiences to motivate pupils and to meet their needs.
- How successfully all leaders and managers identify strengths and carry out their responsibility to improve weaker aspects of the school's performance.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost three times the national average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Currently, there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The nursery site is situated about half a mile away from the main school building. Awards over the last three years include Activemark, Eco-schools Bronze and the Financial Management of Systems in Schools (FMSiS). The school holds Healthy School Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Monkton Infants is a good school. The welcoming environment provides a positive place in which pupils play and learn. This is demonstrated in the good quality care, guidance and support provided, especially for those who are vulnerable or with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Relationships with parents and carers are developing well and are beginning to contribute to improved attendance. Parents and carers are very happy with their children's experiences at school and how it keeps them safe. They know that attainment is above average and their children are encouraged to be polite and show respect. The well-developed understanding pupils have of right and wrong underpins their good behaviour and positive attitudes to each other.

Pupils achieve outstandingly well. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make outstanding progress overall during their time in the school from their well below expected skills on entry so that by the end of Year 2 attainment is above average. This is because of good quality teaching and the school's relentless focus on developing pupils' basic skills. School systems to track pupils' learning are effective and recently refined to add even greater rigour to the tracking progress. Teachers are beginning to use this information to greater effect to provide better individual challenge, and to inform pupils of what they need to learn next. Occasionally opportunities for pupils to investigate and learn through practical activities are more limited because teachers dominate the lesson with long explanations. Good relationships support positive attitudes to learning. Pupils work hard and try their best to achieve what is asked of them. The curriculum is good. Pupils immensely enjoy and benefit greatly from going out on visits and learning from visitors. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to engage with other children from different cultures and backgrounds are at an early stage of development.

A strong programme of professional development enhances staff knowledge and their understanding of new strategies and how to implement them. The strong senior leaders effectively guide middle managers in their roles and responsibilities, which has increased their involvement in monitoring and evaluation. Self-evaluation is effective and there is a very clear programme of improvement to address areas of weakness. Noted improvements since the last inspection include, raised attainment in writing and better communication with parents and carers. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance to average through reducing persistent

absenteeism but knows there is more to do to increase the levels to above average. Overall, the school demonstrates good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment from above average to high, by:
 - consistently making the best use of assessment data to plan challenging activities that meet the needs of pupils
 - ensuring that marking always clearly indicates to pupils what they need to do to improve
 - ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and practical activities.

- Raise attendance from average to above average by reducing even further the proportion of persistent absenteeism.

- Improve the effectiveness of community cohesion by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about others from different cultures and backgrounds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils speak well of the school and they very much enjoy the many opportunities it offers them. They respond positively to tasks set by teachers and demonstrate good attitudes to work and responsible behaviour. In particular, when they use strategies such as 'hot seating,' as demonstrated in their character description work, using 'The Jolly Postman,' they show effective skills in speaking and listening.

Pupils make outstanding progress in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. The school's strong focus on promoting pupils' basic skills is highly successful and has, for example, improved the quality of boys' writing. Similarly the reduction of the level of persistent absenteeism for some pupils is impacting positively upon their progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also outstanding. Pupils' above average basic skills, improving attendance and increasing self confidence as they move through school prepare them well for the future.

Pupils talk confidently about feeling safe in school. They know that adults will help them when they are upset or have concerns. Attendance is now average. Pupils enjoy taking part in sport and dance to keep them physically active. They understand what foods should be eaten in moderation and have a growing awareness of the dangers of drugs. Members of the police and of the dental health team help pupils to understand how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils contribute well to their school through membership of the school council and as monitors and buddies. There are fewer opportunities to contribute within the local community. However, recent initiatives to develop pupils' understanding of recycling and to participate in work-related activities, such as bricklaying and plastering, extend their understanding of

the world about them and the part they could play in it. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures and communities is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are eager to engage and want to learn. Positive relationships with staff support pupils' willingness to please and to work hard. There are high expectations of behaviour and application to work which contribute much to pupils' above average attainment. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are particularly effective in promoting pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. In the best lessons, there is good pace and pupils have time to consider and practise their skills at appropriate levels. Opportunities to learn through practical and creative activities, stimulate pupils' independent learning. Most teachers constantly move pupils forward in lessons with highly-focused learning objectives. However, where teaching is less effective, there are some relative weaknesses in the use of assessment information to fully match work to pupils' abilities and in marking of pupils' work.

The topic-based curriculum enables pupils to understand the links between subjects. A broad range of subjects is taught, including French. The basic curriculum is enhanced very well through a good range of visits and visitors, which complement learning and inspire pupils to understand the world beyond their immediate environment. The use of theme weeks, for example, 'Money Week' when pupils learn about how to manage money, give pupils increased practical opportunities to use their skills. Opportunities for pupils to use basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects are increasing.

Because staff understand pupils well, they are able to provide good care and pastoral support at the right time. This is particularly true for pupils and their families who are vulnerable or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships with a range outside agencies provide effective support in times of difficulty. For example, strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

absenteeism are now showing a positive effect with attendance levels rising. Improving communication with parents and carers of children entering Nursery is enhancing induction into the school and links with the junior school are good and support transition well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff work effectively with the governing body to identify the school's strengths and where improvement is most needed. Actions to further improve the assessment of pupils' achievement, improve writing, increase the involvement of parents and carers in the life of the school and to improve attendance, have all been successful. There is a strong ambition to improve pupils' basic skills in order to raise attainment even higher by the end of Year 2. The promotion of equal opportunities for pupils is good. Staff work well together and there is a strong sense of team work, which is supported by very effective quality professional development. Senior leadership is strong and newly appointed middle leaders are well supported in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility, in order to further improve provision and outcomes for pupils. Tracking systems are established and shared moderation, within school and with external partners, ensure accurate assessments. Monitoring of teaching and learning is well-established and is evaluated well.

The governing body demonstrates a range of experience and expertise. It supports the school well and ensures that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Communication with parents and carers, and with other partners, is satisfactory. There is much positive interaction with external agencies to support the needs of vulnerable families and to provide specialist help for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is aware that it could involve parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more closely in supporting their child's on-going development. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Actions to develop links with other cultures and wider communities are at an early stage of development. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into Nursery and into Reception classes where they are encouraged to share and take turns. Behaviour is good. Children are secure because of the warm relationships with staff. They are encouraged to learn about keeping safe and healthy through their activities and everyday tasks. From starting points which, for many, are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy, children make good progress, reaching standards which are broadly in line with the national average by the time they enter Year 1. Children who are vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. Effective intervention and additional support from outside agencies means that their needs are met well and they progress equally well.

Children are interested in the broad range of activities provided. They are positive about learning and work hard to please their teachers. They particularly enjoy opportunities to investigate and be creative. On these occasions, they engage very well, as they ask questions and try out their ideas. However, there can be too many teacher-led activities which can limit children's opportunities to learn independently. Adults know children well. Observations and other assessments are recorded clearly to determine at what level children are attaining. The use of this information, to inform future planning in line with children's interests, and the use of learning journeys to record and share success, is beginning to be an effective tool in identifying the next steps in learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader demonstrates good understanding of the strengths of the setting. Her evaluations identify where there are weaknesses and subsequent identified actions for improvement demonstrate successful impact. For example, improved communication with parents and carers means that they better understand their role in helping their child to learn. Teamwork is good as staff work together, sharing ideas to plan to meet children's needs. Strategies to promote the welfare of children are good and statutory requirements are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the care given to their children and are confident that their children are happy and safe and that teachers meet their children's needs well. Of the issues raised by a few parents there was no obvious pattern. All were fully investigated by the inspection team, who found that the school had taken appropriate action to ensure the overall quality of provision. The findings form part of the evidence base used to arrive at the inspection judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monkton Infants' School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 152 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	88	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	88	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	73	7	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	65	9	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	65	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	58	8	31	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	73	6	23	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	81	5	19	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Monkton Infants' School, South Shields, NE34 9SD

Thank you so much for the lovely welcome you gave the inspections team when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to talk to you about how much you enjoy your school and the added experiences you get from your visits and visitors. We found that your school gives you a good education and that you make excellent progress in your learning. Because your teachers and other staff look after you well, you feel safe and confident. It was very good to see how well you behave and look after each other.

To help your school become even better we have asked the headteacher and staff school to improve a few things. We have asked them to:

- Help you to achieve even higher standards by making better use of what they know about what you can do to plan activities that match your individual needs. We have also asked that marking clearly tells you what you need to learn next and how to improve your work. We would also like you to always have enough opportunities to learn through practical activities.
- Make sure that those of you who are absent from school a lot attend more often so that you don't miss any opportunity to learn.
- Give you opportunities to learn with children from other cultures and backgrounds that are different from your own, in Britain and from around the world.

I hope that you continue to work hard and do well

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs Kate Pringle
Lead Inspector**

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