

# Monkton Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108683
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	377799
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Derek Neil

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Walter Armstrong
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Dame Flora Robson Avenue South Shields NE34 9RD
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Neil

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons or parts of lessons, taught by six teachers. These included a joint observation with the headteacher. He held meetings with pupils; with three members of the governing body, including the Chair and vice-chair, and with school staff, including senior and middle managers. He observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school development plan and assessment information. He analysed 70 questionnaires from parents and carers. He also looked at Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded to aid inspection planning.

## Information about the school

This school is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportions from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is about average. The school meets the current floor standard. Plans for its conversion to an academy are at an advanced stage. At the time of the inspection, the leadership team consisted of the headteacher and two acting deputy headteachers.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Monkton Junior is a good school. Parents and carers are very happy to send their children here. They appreciate the welcoming and friendly atmosphere and the care that staff take to promote pupils' academic progress and personal development. The school aims for excellence but is not outstanding because of some shortcomings in the teaching and in the way leaders and managers plan for and evaluate improvement.
- Attainment fluctuates but is usually above average. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, enjoy being in school and achieve well. The quality of their written work, particularly their handwriting and presentation, is high.
- Teaching is effective. Lessons are characterised by the very good relationships between everyone in the class and the well designed and enjoyable activities which ensure pupils are actively involved in the lesson and making good progress. Occasionally, teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most able for some sections of the lesson and their progress slows.
- Pupils behave well and are safe in school. They are courteous and confident when speaking to adults and show each other respect and friendship. They report that there is very little bullying.
- Leadership and management are good. The school has made steady progress since the previous inspection and maintained the quality and standards that were praised at that time. The headteacher leads a cohesive staff effectively and manages their performance well. The development of policies on aspects such as teaching, behaviour and assessment has ensured a high degree of consistency in the way staff carry out their duties. The school has detailed plans for further improvement, including its conversion to an academy, but these plans are not always based on a rigorous self-evaluation of its current performance.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better by:
  - making sure the most able pupils are challenged at all stages of each lesson
  - ensuring that the main focus of the learning remains at the forefront of each lesson.
  
- Improve leadership and management to be consistently effective by:
  - strengthening the link between the school's self-evaluation and its plans for improvement
  - ensuring leaders at all levels, including the governing body, evaluate the school's effectiveness by considering its impact on pupils' outcomes.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils develop a great enthusiasm for reading. Although some of the less able find it difficult, they persevere, read regularly to the teacher and at home, and have good skills for working out how to read unfamiliar words. By the time they leave school, pupils read with enthusiasm and understanding. They are not confused by figurative language; several were aware, for example, when they encountered 'going down for the third time' in a text that it meant 'drowning' or 'not coping.' Pupils have good strategies for finding out the meaning of words they have not met before. Their writing is good. They take huge pride in their work, and their books are beautifully presented with excellent handwriting. They cover a wide range of genres in their creative writing and express themselves clearly and with a good range of vocabulary. Although their spelling is sometimes adversely affected by the way they pronounce a word and their use of apostrophes is shaky, for the most part their work shows a high level of technical accuracy. They show good skills in mathematics, but occasionally take recourse to support materials when they are capable of carrying out a calculation in their head.

Attainment is usually above average, especially so in reading at the end of Year 6. It dipped in 2011 to be broadly average because of the nature of the intake, but is set to rise again for those pupils currently at the school. Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points, which are carefully assessed by the school when they arrive. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for free school meals make good progress, often because of the effective support they get in the classroom and the teacher's high expectations. In a fast-paced mathematics lesson, for example, pupils with special educational needs enjoyed keeping up with their peers when calculating percentages. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate when the teacher is explaining the work, apply themselves very responsibly to individual and group tasks, and persevere when an exercise is challenging. Their love of learning can be seen in the fact that many use playtime to rehearse their multiplication tables. When offered an additional challenge in class they literally gasp with excitement. Pupils confirm they learn well in school and their parents and carers rightly agree they make good progress.

## Quality of teaching

Most of the teaching is good, and parents, carers and pupils recognise this. Teachers begin lessons by recapitulating what pupils have already learned, then proceed to introduce new material in a lively and stimulating way. They plan activities that capture pupils' interest and which keep pupils fully involved. Relationships are very good. Staff often inject some much-appreciated humour into their teaching. Teachers regularly stress the importance of basic skills, for example, in a lesson on asking questions, the teacher sensibly reminded the class of the spelling of words like 'could', 'should', and 'would'. Lessons are efficiently organised; resources and routines are managed very well so that very little time is lost when pupils move from one activity to the next.

Staff mark each pupil's work thoroughly, making it clear what the pupil has done well and what needs to be improved. The well planned curriculum and the thorough assessment arrangements enable teachers to plan work that, for the most part, meets pupils' needs. Occasionally, however, the most-able pupils are not challenged by the work at some points in the lesson. This occurs because, for example, the teacher sets the same task for the whole class and the work is too easy for some, or because the introductory stage of the lesson goes on for too long. In some lessons, the main learning point is insufficiently emphasised. For example, in one class, while pupils enjoyed carrying out a role-play as interviewers and interviewees, the teacher missed opportunities to stress the learning point, which was about the difference between open and closed questions.

Teachers make the most of opportunities to contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a science lesson, for example, the teacher wisely gave a warning about health and safety when pupils were using hot water. Teachers use praise and encouragement very effectively to build up pupils' self-confidence and love of learning. When a pupil performs well before the class they encourage everyone to applaud the achievement. The regular use of pair and group work develops pupils' social and team-working skills.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good, as parents, carers and pupils confirm. No pupils have been excluded for many years and racist incidents are almost unknown. Pupils behave very well in class. They work hard and their conduct very rarely disrupts the learning. Outside lessons, behaviour is just as good. Pupils are very sociable and interact with others of all age groups. They are extremely courteous, holding the door open for visitors, for example, and always using polite forms of address. The great majority feel safe in school, and all parents and carers concur. Pupils are proud that bullying seldom takes place here. Name-calling is very rare and when it occurs it is of a minor nature. Staff supervise pupils very closely during breaks and when they move around the building so that any untoward event, such as an accident in the yard, can be sorted out swiftly. Attendance is broadly average; although it fell in 2011, the school has made effective use of its reward system and has recorded fewer absences so far this year.

## Leadership and management

The school has consolidated, and in some ways improved, on the good performance that was recognised in the previous inspection report. It has good capacity to improve further. The headteacher has used a range of staff development to establish a consistent approach

to teaching, assessment and behaviour. Ambitious targets are set for each class and this has contributed to the continuing good progress made by pupils. Staff are enthusiastic, extremely dedicated to the school, and fully committed to making it even better. As one pupil put it, 'All the staff want the best for us.' The governing body is supportive and has done much to safeguard the school's interests; for example, it has been involved in planning the conversion to academy status. However, when considering how effective the school is, leaders at all levels, including the governing body, do not always assess the impact of their actions on outcomes for pupils. The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching, for example, but observations tend to focus on the teacher and not on the progress pupils make. The decision to deploy two acting deputy headteachers has not been evaluated in terms of its impact on teaching or on pupils. The school has detailed plans for improvement, but these are not firmly based on a rigorous evaluation of its current performance. As a result, some leaders are unclear about the school's main priorities for improvement.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to make good progress. The house system and assemblies contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, pupils meet weekly in mixed-age groups to discuss issues such as the importance of setting personal goals. Whole-school singing brings pupils together in a harmonious and relaxed setting, where the headteacher takes the opportunity to reinforce key values. For example, in one session quotations from the Dalai Lama were used to stress the importance of peace and patience. The school promotes equality well and does not tolerate discrimination in any form. All pupils work and play harmoniously together and no one feels left out. Disabled pupils, for example, participate fully in playtime and in lessons. Staff's use of detailed assessment information to track progress ensures that pupils of all ages and abilities achieve equally well. The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements. In particular, pupils appreciate the secure perimeter fence and the closed-circuit television cameras.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

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

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

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

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

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



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Monkton Junior School, South Shields, NE34 9RD**

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly into your school when I visited recently. I enjoyed watching you in lessons and at play, talking about your school with you and your teachers, and looking at your work. Now I want to share with you what I found.

You go to a good school. It has many strong points. Staff take good care of you; I understand why you say you feel safe in school. You behave very well and look after each other. The teachers often give you interesting activities in lessons. This helps you to make good progress in literacy and numeracy and also in your personal development. I was very impressed by the way you all played together, and by the polite way many of you came and talked to me. You enjoy reading and many of you read well. I saw some of your work and was very impressed by your beautiful handwriting and the very great care you take with the way you present your work. You should be proud (but not boastful) about this. You all told me how much you enjoy school but a few of you are absent rather too often. You should all try to attend school as much as possible. This will help you to learn more (and to win vital points for the house competition!).

There are a few things that would make the school better. I have asked the staff to make sure that you always have work at the right level and that you never lose sight of the learning target in any lessons. I have also suggested to school managers some ways of improving how they plan for the future and how they evaluate their work.

Thank you again for helping me so much. It was a pleasure to meet you. I wish all of you the very best.

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil  
Lead inspector

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