

Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114741
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357604
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Nichola Perry

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Long
Headteacher	Claire Holmes (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seven teachers were observed in 18 sessions. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, the school improvement adviser, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and displays, and at documentation, including the school development plan, the single plan, assessments, records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning, and safeguarding and welfare arrangements. Inspectors spoke to parents and scrutinised 21 parents' and carers' questionnaires and 21 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether all leaders have a sufficiently well-developed understanding of self-evaluation processes and whether these are sufficiently rigorous to provide an accurate judgement about the school's performance in key areas.
- Whether the strategies being used to improve teaching have had the necessary impact in improving pupils' learning.
- The effect of the school's work on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of life in the wider world, beyond their own community.

Information about the school

This is an average size infant school serving the local community, although increasing numbers of children are now being admitted from outside this area. Many children and their families in the area face challenging circumstances and experience significant social and emotional needs. High numbers of pupils move in and out of the school on a regular basis. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average. Proportions of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs are significantly higher than those found nationally. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school has undergone a period of staffing instability since the last inspection. Ongoing difficulties in recruiting governors has meant that a very small group of governors is having to undertake the work of a full governing body. The school has been awarded lead Healthy Schools status and is participating in the pilot for the Enhanced Healthy School project. The school has also been awarded the Activemark and additional Gold award for physical education.

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

Monkwick is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The acting headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has steered the school successfully through a period of significant change. She has focused the entire school community on continued improvement in all aspects of pupils' personal development and their learning.

Behaviour of most pupils is good. Relationships are excellent. Pupils learn how to be polite and show respect for others. They get on well with each other and are increasingly accepting of and thoughtful towards those less fortunate or different from themselves. The inclusive nature of the school has ensured that there have been no exclusions in recent years and incidents of racism or bullying are rare. Pupils demonstrate good appreciation of how to keep safe and why they need a balanced diet and regular exercise. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because all aspects are given high priority through the school. The excellent quality of care, guidance and support offered to pupils and their families is a real strength. These aspects contribute well to the happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school and ensure that all groups of pupils are highly valued and treated with great respect as individuals. An extremely strong partnership exists between the school and its parents and carers, evident in the way parents and carers relate to staff on a day-to-day basis. They are very pleased with what the school offers their children. Attendance is low, but rapidly improving: the excellent partnership with parents and carers and the outstanding care, support and guidance have had a major impact in rapidly reducing unauthorised absence. The school has won awards for its strong systems to develop pupils' understanding about healthy living. Nevertheless, one of the reasons for low attendance is the comparatively high level of illness in these very young children, whose circumstances often make them vulnerable. In addition, there remains a very small number of pupils who are absent unnecessarily.

Although regular attendance is still an ongoing issue for the school, pupils say that they love coming to school and think that their teachers are kind and help them to learn. The good teaching and the well-enriched curriculum encourage pupils to be positive learners. As a result, all pupils make good progress and achieve well. Attainment is broadly average by the time they leave the school. Additional adult support also contributes positively to pupils' good learning. There is some variation in the quality of teaching between classes. Assessment is accurate throughout the school and is mostly used well so that planned activities focus precisely on pupils' individual needs. Questioning and the way teachers help pupils to develop ideas, however, are sometimes less challenging, and the range of activities is not always effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Ongoing feedback in lessons and marking are effective in informing pupils how well they are doing and motivating them to try their best.

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Senior leaders have a very effective impact on raising achievement. Subject, and other leaders are contributing well to ongoing improvement within their specific areas. However, they have yet to fully develop their roles in strategic planning and so contribute effectively to whole school improvement. Governors are knowledgeable and very supportive of the aims of the school. However, their impact on strategic leadership is limited by ongoing vacancies. Continuing improvement since the previous inspection has been achieved as a result of accurate self-evaluation and development planning, which focus well on key priorities and have moved the school forward. Together, with the entire school community's determination to always get better, this demonstrates that the school is well placed to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that learning is consistently good in all year groups by:
 - ensuring questioning challenges all groups of pupils in Key Stage 1
 - providing a range of activities that is always sufficiently challenging in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Raise attendance by focusing support closely on the remaining pupils and families whose attendance is low.
- Widen the school's strategic leadership by:
 - developing the leadership skills of middle leaders so that their contribution to strategic planning and whole-school improvement is more productive.
 - taking more active steps to recruit new members to the governing body and improve their role in strategic planning, strengthen their ability to challenge the school's performance and distribute the amount of work more evenly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress year-on-year so that attainment by the end of Year 2 is average in reading, writing and mathematics, with an improving trend over the last three years, in spite of very high numbers of pupils who have significant barriers to learning.. Effective assessment and focused interventions are having a positive impact on improving attainment for all pupils, most notably in writing. Throughout the school, effective provision helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, to make good progress. The many pupils who enter the school part-way through the academic year settle and learn well as a result of very effective arrangements and support.

In lessons, pupils show pride when they achieve well. They work well together and are keen to learn, In an outstanding lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were enthralled to see themselves performing on a video of previous learning. As a result, they were highly motivated to 'get writing'. Questions to the 'black cat' brought learning alive and helped to develop pupils' thinking and investigative skills and raise their self-esteem about their learning.

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Pupils contribute to the community well. They identify and contribute to both national and international charities annually and participate in many local festivals. Pupils love acting as 'helpers' around the school and talk enthusiastically about this. Enterprise awareness is being developed well; bulbs grown by pupils are sold to raise funds for a well-known charity. The school council provides a good forum for pupils to share their views and this is helping them to gain 'adult skills' of stating their preferred options and learn about democracy in a community. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding about religions, faiths and cultures different from their own, both within the United Kingdom and in the wider world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is particularly effective, imaginative teaching styles, along with astute questioning and regular reference to pupils' learning targets, motivate, challenge and support pupils' learning well. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate excellent understanding of how young pupils, and in particular, pupils with high levels of need learn. In satisfactory lessons seen, expectations about attitudes to learning and what pupils can do were not always high enough.

The new skills-based curriculum is starting to have a positive impact, for example, on the progress pupils are making in their writing. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to see themselves as writers and are rightly proud of their achievements. There is a strong

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emphasis on speaking and listening and on the development of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. This, along with many opportunities for engaging in learning which is relevant to their own experiences, is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and development. For example, this relevance is stimulating boys' enthusiasm for learning: they thoroughly enjoyed making models of cars as part of their work to support their writing. Frequent use of a themed approach means that opportunities for developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative skills are now well embedded in Key Stage 1 planning. The wide range of additional activities, provided both within the school and by using the wider community, enhances the curriculum and also contributes strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Pupils' pastoral needs are extremely well met from the day they start school. Highly effective induction arrangements ensure pupils' settle quickly and happily and parents are very pleased with this. Work with pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and their families, is extremely effective and deeply embedded into the work of the school. Parents and carers are very confident that the school will listen and help them access any necessary resources, such as links with the children's centre, to help them support their children's social, emotional and learning needs. The school makes excellent use of all external professional agencies to support the wide range of pupils' needs, ensuring no group is disadvantaged. The steps it has taken to raise attendance are exemplary: it has done everything its resources allow. Good links with the junior school mean pupils feel well supported when changing schools.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has created an environment where pupils thrive. She is dedicated to helping all pupils achieve their full potential in all aspects of their social, emotional and academic development, in spite of the many complex learning and emotional needs of some pupils. Staff and governors share this vision and play their part in achieving it. Development planning consistently focuses on breaking down barriers to learning and pupils' progress is carefully tracked so that all have equal opportunities to learn and achieve. Although recent instability in staffing has partially restricted the speed at which the school has improved, the hard work and commitment of the whole staff has minimised the impact this has had. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and excellent use of external support ensures that teachers new to teaching an age-range are developing their skills quickly. The small number of governors continues to provide satisfactory governance and develop their role in spite of considerable difficulties in recruiting members. They ensure

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that good practice in safeguarding, child protection procedures and training requirements is the norm and that systematic records of staffing checks are maintained.

Leaders ensure wide-reaching links within the local community. Pupils learn about diversity through involvement in a wide range of celebrations from different faiths, such as Eid and Diwali, as well as those within Christianity, so that they show good awareness of the multi-cultural nature of the United Kingdom. All pupils learn German and have regular contact with children in a German school. This is a positive move towards helping young pupils develop their awareness of the wider world.

These are the grades for 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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery, quickly becoming confident, independent and happy learners. Children enter school with very low levels of knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning, but especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal and social skills. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage, although they enter Year 1 with attainment still below average. Behaviour is mostly good because staff have very high expectations of children and help them take responsibility for their own actions. There is excellent support for children who find learning difficult or who have very significant emotional needs. A good balance exists between adult-led activities and those the children choose for themselves. Adults use questions astutely without limiting children's creativity. The strong focus in both Reception and Nursery on speaking and listening and role-play ensures children rapidly develop their social skills. Where teaching is good, there is strong emphasis on learning through practical activities that ensures basic skills are developed effectively. Activities, including those outdoors, provide increasing opportunities for children to make decisions about their own learning and development, as well as developing their thinking and imaginative skills.

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Occasionally, activities are not of a wide enough range to fully enthuse and challenge the children with different abilities and interests, so some lose concentration and learning slows.

Thorough and accurate assessment ensures adults have a good knowledge of each child's stages of development. Currently, the system of recording is less useful for providing an overview of progress and attainment across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Nevertheless, leadership is good. Staff work closely together, teaching is rigorously monitored and plans are effective. Adults support children's welfare consistently well so that personal development is very good and provides a strong base for their future learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A small proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents and carers to seek their views. They have high levels of satisfaction with the school. Responses to the questionnaire are unanimous on several aspects and the overwhelming majority are positive about all other aspects. Inspection findings support parents' and carers' many positive views. Individual concerns were explored with the school and the evidence taken into account in the inspection judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monkwick Infant and Nursery 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 214 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	81	3	14	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	67	7	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	67	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	71	5	24	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)	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	71	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	48	9	43	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	62	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	62	7	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	81	3	14	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



26 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Monkwick Infant and Nursery School, Colchester, CO2 8NN

Thank you very much for helping us find out about your school when we visited. We all really enjoyed talking to you and watching you working and playing. We think you go to a good school that is a really happy and friendly place to attend every day. We were so pleased to hear how much you all love coming to school. There are lots of good things about it.

You all try hard and make good progress in your work.

You thoroughly enjoy school and most of you behave really well.

Your headteacher and senior teachers have very good ideas about how to improve your school.

All the adults care about you and support you extremely well. They listen to you so that you feel very safe in school.

Your school gets on very well with your parents and carers and other people who can help you learn.

We have asked your acting headteacher and the other teachers to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things are listed below.

We have asked teachers to make sure you always get activities and questions that make you think hard.

Many of you have done really well to make sure you come to school more often. Well done! But a few of you are still staying away when you do not need to. You can help the school a lot by making sure you always come to school unless you are really unwell.

We want more of your teachers to get involved in helping your headteacher to decide how to make the school better. We are also asking for the school to try to find more adults to be governors.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Perry

Lead Inspector

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