

Monkspath Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104084
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	355519
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou HMI

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	579
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Smith
Headteacher	Wendy J Hutchinson
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
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Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
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Registered Childcare provision	Monkeys Childcare
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	24
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and observed the 21 teachers who were teaching at the time of the inspection. One inspector visited the Monkeys Childcare provision and held meetings with the manager. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff and pupils, and inspectors spoke to some parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised the arrangements in place to safeguard pupils, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessments and data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. Questionnaire returns from 87 parents and carers were analysed as well as returns from pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- Are pupils making enough progress in writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1?
- Has the Early Years Foundation Stage improved sufficiently since the school's last inspection to accelerate children's learning?
- Is the teaching consistently effective so that it offers the right level of challenge for pupils, and particularly those of higher ability?
- How well do the staff and governing body evaluate the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' learning and their achievement?

Information about the school

This is a very large primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class for three-year-olds who all attend part-time, and three full-time Reception classes for four-year-olds. The governing body manages the on-site Monkeys Childcare provision which currently has 24 three-year-olds attending part-time, and in June this year, it took over responsibility for managing the school's Children's Centre. The registered childcare provision had previously been inspected separately in 2006 but was part of this inspection and is reported together with that of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The childcare provision also manages before- and after-school activities for pupils as well as a holiday club. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils are of White British heritage and others come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A lower-than-average percentage of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below that of most schools. The main areas of additional need include pupils with moderate or specific learning difficulties such as autism. The school has a large number of national accreditations, including the Healthy Schools, Active Mark and Eco awards.

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

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and are exceptionally well behaved. A parent accurately stated that it is a, 'Very supportive and caring school, where the whole child matters.' Underpinning the school's success is the very strong commitment to pupils' all round academic and personal development. The added benefit of the exceptionally well-managed childcare provision places the school at the heart of its community, enabling it to provide outstanding extended services, care and support for children and families.

The majority of children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and aptitudes that are broadly in line with those expected of three- and four-year-olds. As a result of the good foundations laid in these early years, attainment is rising steadily throughout the school in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in writing is improving but at a slower pace than in reading. Pupils who reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in reading do not always do so in writing. Some pupils are unable to apply common spelling rules and there are inconsistencies in the quality of handwriting and punctuation. Some very effective teaching is improving pupils' writing, with encouraging signs that they are becoming confident and independent writers. However, some lessons do not set precise writing targets to help pupils understand how best to improve their work.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and many have stated that they feel safe and secure. They enjoy school, and this is reflected in above-average attendance rates. They have formed trusting relationships with other pupils and staff and benefit from mainly good teaching across the school. One pupil commented, reflecting the views of many, 'We learn lots of new and exciting things.' This is understandable as lessons are usually engaging and purposeful with practical tasks that interest pupils, although some lessons miss opportunities to accelerate the pace of learning so that more pupils reach levels that are above those expected for their age. Teachers share the learning objectives of each lesson but do not always adapt these to meet the specific needs of more-able pupils, which slows their progress. This is reflected in national test results as some pupils, particularly by the end of Year 2, just fell short of higher than age-related levels. Improved planning is beginning to address this, and an increasingly common feature is the attention teachers give to providing extension tasks for more-able pupils. However, this has yet to be fully established in practice across the school and in all lessons.

The school is very committed to inclusion and equal opportunities, which is best demonstrated in its extended childcare provision and the integrated services established with the school's Children's Centre. This partnership enables the school to forge strong links with external agencies and services that support families and children. It also provides before- and after-school activities and parent workshops with crèche facilities.

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Parents and carers are made to feel exceptionally welcome as there are very good arrangements to involve them in well-organised induction sessions for families with children joining the childcare, Nursery or Reception classes.

There has been very good progress since the school's last inspection. The leadership team, staff and governing body have successfully tackled the issues raised then. Despite many staff changes recently, sharp and accurate evaluations of pupils' and teachers' performance have contributed to supporting, developing and improving the quality of teaching and learning, which has maintained above average standards and secured significant improvements to pupils' achievement in mathematics. The school has successfully adapted its curriculum to incorporate topics that interest and motivate pupils. The leadership team and governing body have been diligent and effective in keeping the school on a consistent path of improvement, demonstrating good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - improving the consistency and structure of pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation
 - providing more time in lessons for pupils to edit and correct their writing and opportunities to check their progress using individual and more precise writing targets.
- Build on current best practice to improve the consistency and effectiveness of the teaching by:
 - ensuring that, in all lessons, the learning objectives and tasks set for pupils are always sufficiently ambitious and challenging to extend their learning towards higher levels
 - ensuring that the work provided for more-able pupils consistently meets their learning needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thrive on opportunities to reflect and learn through a range of practical and engaging activities in lessons, such as challenging problem solving in mathematics or special projects where they adapt written accounts of historical events and characters. Pupils are active learners and are keen to answer questions or generate ideas when working with partners or in groups. Pupils use their reading, writing and mathematics skills competently when researching facts and topics. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to edit, self-correct or check their work against their writing targets to improve their independent and extended writing. Pupils who join with little or no spoken English or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported so they quickly gain confidence and contribute to class discussions, answer questions independently and show initiative when working with other pupils.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through eating balanced and healthy lunches, as well as taking part in a very good range of sports and activities. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected well in the respectful and courteous way they treat

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each other and their knowledgeable consideration of different cultures and world religions, which includes a good understanding of British cultural and ethnic diversity. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take on additional responsibilities as mentors, buddies, Eco and school council members, so that they are encouraged to care for, or represent the views of others when meeting with staff and governors. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school and the wider community, for example, when producing artwork for a local housing association or through regular visits and work to consider how best to improve the environment.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

There is a positive climate for learning in lessons and a shared ethos amongst staff which encourages everyone to do well. The most effective teaching offers additional challenges to extend learning. This was clearly evident in an excellent mathematics lesson when pupils in Year 6 skilfully checked their calculations to simplify fractions with added challenges provided by the teacher who adapted tasks to the needs of all pupils, enabling them to reach very high standards. In some lessons, effective use is made of self-assessment. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 often check each other's writing. In Year 2, pupils worked together to agree which are the most accurate spellings of consonant blends in words that appear frequently in texts. However, teachers miss opportunities to extend the learning of more-able pupils. They do not always model writing, particularly for

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younger pupils, so there is no common approach to the structure of handwriting from an early age.

Interactive display boards are used well to focus pupils' learning using illustrations and charts. Teachers ask pupils how well they have understood the lesson's objectives, for example, by signalling with thumbs up or down, but this form of self-assessment is sometimes too superficial and does not add anything to teachers' understanding of pupils' learning. Teachers and skilled support staff provide outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. Effective programmes and interventions are carefully targeted to remove barriers for those who find learning difficult. Careful tracking and assessments of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities help to accelerate their progress so that many reach the standards expected for their age. The school is particularly strong in supporting those whose circumstances cause them to become vulnerable by optimising its use of extended services that are fostered by the school's outstanding childcare provider.

The creative arts, physical education and sport are significant strengths of the school's curriculum, which broaden pupils' interests in school and learning and are having a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development. There are good opportunities for pupils to link different subjects which enrich their learning experiences because teachers incorporate a range of interesting projects. For example, history was brought alive when pupils dressed up as evacuees as part of their study of the Second World War during a recent visit to Shugborough Hall.

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 leadership team, middle managers and governing body have worked effectively with staff to apply a robust process of self-evaluation, audit and review which has improved the quality of teaching and learning and is raising standards. The strategic faculty structure enables the assistant headteachers and middle managers to broaden the capacity for staff to engage in self-evaluation and school development planning. Consequently, teachers and senior staff regularly monitor and evaluate pupils' progress using efficient assessment systems to access information about the performance of individuals and groups. The governing body supports the school well and offers the right level of challenge to those responsible for managing faculties, subjects and phases of the school. Moderation meetings held by staff to look at pupils' work and identify any lapses in pupils' progress enable teachers to adapt their planning, although assessments by teachers are not always robust enough to ensure that all pupils of higher ability reach their expected targets.

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The school listens to, and acts on the views of its community, which accounts for the good level of satisfaction expressed by parents and carers. There is a clear commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, reflected most in the sensitive care and management of pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school is effective in tackling any discrimination with robust procedures in place to report any incidents. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good with many opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience different cultural traditions, as well as appreciate the diversity of the wider community of the United Kingdom. Accurate assessments of different minority ethnic groups are also undertaken to help the school measure the impact of its work on pupils' learning.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were being met well and in line with statutory requirements, including appropriate procedures and checks to ensure that only suitable adults come into contact with pupils.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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 in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress so that attainment is above that expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. The Monkeys Childcare Provision is outstanding and enables the children to settle very quickly into routines and make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In all the Early Years Foundation Stage settings the staff provide a stimulating range of activities that broaden children's knowledge and understanding, laying secure foundations for their learning and development.

Nursery and Reception children make good progress linking letters and sounds to words through songs, nursery rhymes and story books. The staff are skilled at making learning fun; for example, Nursery children clapped hands and shook musical instruments in time

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when singing during the Nativity performance. In the Reception classes, children start to form letters accurately when these are modelled for them by the teacher, although this is not consistent practice across classes. Relationships are warm and trusting and each child is highly valued. Some Nursery and Reception children find it difficult to choose activities for themselves when not being directly supervised, particularly boys, and this limits opportunities for them to develop their independence. Assessments are carried out with good records kept of children's progress. The Monkeys childcare group have particularly effective records of the children's 'learning journeys' and these are shared with parents and carers and are a model of best practice. The manager of this provision has addressed all three recommendations for improvement left at the time of the setting's last inspection four years ago, reflecting outstanding leadership and vigilant attention to detail when ensuring that the provision fully meets welfare requirements.

Children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage explore and develop their physical and creative skills using different textures, for example, when colour mixing, drawing and painting or using foam to make shapes to create a 'snowy winter wonderland'. Children benefit enormously from working in well-resourced outdoor and indoor areas safely and productively. They have good opportunities to initiate their own ideas, improving their confidence and communication skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed overall. The staff work cooperatively ensuring there is a smooth transition into Year 1. All staff are very committed to their role in supporting and managing children's care and welfare and this is an outstanding feature of the support provided in all settings. There are very positive relationships with parents and carers. The additional benefit of the Monkeys Childcare provision optimises opportunities for the school to engage parents in self-evaluation or to seek their views on how best to continue improving provision.

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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately one in six parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaires, which is below average, and some spoke to or wrote to inspectors before or during the inspection. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires or spoke to inspectors hold mainly positive views of the school. They believe that this is a caring and supportive school and are pleased with the progress their children are making. Inspection findings support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monkspath Junior and Infant 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 579 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	76	21	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	71	23	26	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	48	40	46	3	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	52	35	40	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	59	30	34	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	52	38	44	2	2	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	60	32	37	2	2	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)	49	56	29	33	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	54	34	39	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	41	41	47	6	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	47	39	45	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	59	29	33	5	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	70	22	25	2	2	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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are 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.



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Monkspath Junior and Infant School, Solihull, B90 4EH

You were all so welcoming and the inspectors really enjoyed talking to many of you, including the school council who were very helpful. Your school has improved very well since its last inspection and now provides you with a good education. We were pleased with your excellent behaviour and the way you try hard. Your work, including artwork and displays of special projects and visits, show how well you are learning and the rich experiences that broaden your interests and talents. You are making good progress in lessons and are continuing to achieve above-average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Standards are improving as well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 because teachers and support staff across the school provide you with an interesting and broad curriculum. You have told us or written in questionnaires that your work is fun because of the opportunities you have to go on visits or learn interesting things, like how to speak Spanish or play a musical instrument, as well as take part in a wide range of activities like dance, gymnastics and sports. The headteacher and senior leadership team are continually improving the school and together with the governing body have successfully made many improvements since the last time your school was inspected three years ago. The Monkeys Childcare is an excellent provision and is extremely well managed.

Your writing is improving well but some of you should be doing better, so we have asked your teachers to provide you with more opportunities to practise, edit and improve your writing, and provide clear writing targets for you to work towards. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that in all lessons the work provided for you is challenging enough. This is especially important to make sure that the work you do is not too easy or too hard but is just right for all of you.

You can all help too by carrying on trying hard, especially with your writing, and looking after each other, as inspectors were very impressed by the way older pupils care for younger ones. Also, keep up your good attendance. I wish you, your parents, staff and governors the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector

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