

# Monkston Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133259
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	360463
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Edwards

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	422
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gary Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martyn Skinner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Wadhurst Lane Milton Keynes MK10 9LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908671034
<b>Fax number</b>	01908679582
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:martyn.skinner@milton-keynes.gov.uk">martyn.skinner@milton-keynes.gov.uk</a>

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 teaching staff while visiting 19 lessons. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, minutes of governing body meetings, arrangements for safeguarding and pupils' work. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised along with 189 completed by parents and carers.

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

- Whether boys attain well enough at Key Stage 2, particularly in English.
- The progress made by the more able pupils at Key Stage 1.
- The effectiveness of support provided by the school for those pupils who enter school later in the school year.

## Information about the school

Monkston is a much larger than average primary school. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for children in two Reception classes. The school has gained the International Schools award and has Healthy Schools 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

Monkston Primary is a good school. Parents think highly of the school and comment favourably on the improvements made over the last two years. The views of one are typical of many when commenting, 'I am very impressed with the way the leadership team and the rest of the staff have improved the school over the past couple of years.'

Pupils achieve well, so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics and this represents good progress from their starting points. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls who make good progress in all year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have excellent support, enabling them to progress in line with their peers. Support is particularly effective for those pupils whose behaviour is challenging and those pupils who enter the school later in the school year and need to 'catch up'. Although there is a strong focus on improving pupils' basic skills, other areas of the curriculum are not neglected. Many pupils participate in musical activities, as part of the school choir and in learning to play a range of musical instruments. Subjects such as history are brought to life; for example, the local fire station manager supervised a re-enactment of the 'Great Fire of London' adding considerable enjoyment to the pupils' learning. The good curriculum, enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities, contributes very effectively to the pupils' great enthusiasm for learning, illustrated in their excellent behaviour and well above average levels of attendance. Pupils participate in the good number of sporting and physical activities on offer and eat healthily and this contributes to their good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.

Children have a good start to their education in the Reception classes. The learning environment is welcoming and inviting. Children settle well to the good range of activities. Consistently good teaching ensures the children are well prepared for the next stage of learning. Throughout the rest of the school teaching is consistently good. Staff know the pupils very well, and their detailed assessments ensure pupils are provided with a clear understanding of how to improve their work. However, pupils do not always respond to the comments made by teachers in their marking. Occasionally, teachers miss the opportunity to allow pupils, particularly the more able, to move on to more challenging activities.

The headteacher provides strong, resolute leadership and he is fully supported by staff and the governing body. The impact of the leadership on improving the pupils' behaviour has been most significant. This has helped to create an environment where pupils are keen to learn and try their best and where staff feel valued and well supported in their efforts. Self-evaluation is rigorous and there is a determination to improve the quality of teaching further and to accelerate pupils' progress. The development of comprehensive systems of tracking and assessment of pupils' progress enable early and systematic

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interventions to be implemented, ensuring there is minimal underachievement for most pupils. The rigour of self-evaluation and improvements to teaching and learning since the last inspection show the school is well placed to sustain further improvement.

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

- Accelerate progress in lessons of the more-able pupils by:
  - ? allowing them to move on to more challenging activities sooner
  - ? encouraging them to find out more things for themselves.
- Ensure pupils are encouraged to respond to the teachers' comments and marking of work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

School information shows that over the past two years children enter the school with skills and abilities that are similar to those seen nationally. In previous years, these skills and abilities have been lower. This rising trend and the good progress being made in the Reception classes mean that attainment on entry to Year 1 is now above average. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress as a result of very effective support. Pupils' speaking skills develop very well, aided by teachers' effective questioning which gives pupils the opportunity to respond at length. A clear, structured approach to developing writing skills enables pupils to become confident writers in a range of styles. For example, as part of their study of the Second World War, pupils wrote a good diary account of what it might have felt like during an air raid, using a good range of adjectives in their descriptive writing. Mathematical skills progress well. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, pupils demonstrated improving skills in ordering and recording data collected while undertaking a range of throwing, catching and skipping activities. The regular teaching of French to all pupils helps them to develop good skills in this subject.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school, say they feel safe and are keen to talk about the exciting activities and clubs. They were particularly enthusiastic about the residential visits and opportunity to have a go at 'go-karting'. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and are enthusiastic members of the school council. Members of the school council have taken on responsibility for the drive to become an ECO school. Older pupils take on the role of playground sports leaders, encouraging participation by other pupils in physical activities. All pupils contribute to the well-being of others by seeking out those who sit on the friendship bench, a sign they would welcome help. They develop a good awareness of different religions and cultures through the good and developing links with schools abroad. Pupils' strong information and communication technology (ICT) and secure basic skills and their ability to work very effectively with one another provide them with a good foundation for the next stage of education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teaching is consistently good with some evidence of outstanding practice. Teachers have an excellent rapport with pupils and they work hard to enthuse and inspire them. They generally have a good awareness of the different ability groups within the class and work is usually planned accordingly. Those pupils who find work difficult are provided with excellent, well-directed support enabling them to progress well. Occasionally, teachers give more-able pupils too much information, missing the opportunity to allow them to challenge their own thinking sufficiently or to move on quickly to harder work. Activities are planned effectively so they cross subject boundaries; for example, there is a good emphasis on pupils producing extended pieces of writing in history and geography. Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly learners who find concentrating and learning a little difficult. Marking of pupils' work is consistently good, providing pupils with a clear picture of what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, however, pupils are not required to follow up upon the comments and this limits the progress they make.

The well-organised and creative curriculum provides a good range of activities for pupils. Regular opportunities for pupils to use computers for a wide range of applications help to improve their ICT skills. Effective partnerships within the cluster provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their music skills. The school choir enables pupils to improve their singing skills. The school is in the process of evaluating its curriculum to determine its impact on pupils' progress. Transition arrangements both in and out of the

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school are excellent. Pupils are very well known to the staff, provided with excellent support and very well looked after. As a consequence of extremely high-quality care, guidance and support, many aspects of pupils' personal development are at least good and improving. Intervention strategies ensure that pupils who are at risk of falling behind, or who are finding work difficult, are provided with additional support, enabling them to progress in line with their peers. Before- and after-school provision, managed by the governing body, provides pupils with an extensive range of activities and ensures they are very well looked after.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

There have been significant improvements over the past two years, the result of strong, determined leadership by the headteacher and senior staff. The key focus on ensuring the school environment is conducive to learning has been most effective. Pupils, staff and parents and carers all recognise how behaviour has improved to very high levels and the impact this is having on pupils' progress. There is a determination among all staff to drive improvement and they all aspire to provide the best for their pupils. As a result of systematic and regular monitoring of lessons, the quality of teaching is rising. Pupils' attainment in the core areas of English and mathematics and their progress have improved well. The monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress have developed and are used effectively by subject leaders to feed into staff training. For example, the identification that progress in writing was not as good as it should be resulted in all teachers being required to plan an extended piece of writing on a weekly basis and this has had a good impact on pupils' progress. The personalised information is used effectively to ensure all pupils have equality of opportunity, which is also reflected in the comparable rates of progress made by all groups of pupils.

Members of the governing body are regular visitors to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They are supportive but challenging. Community cohesion is planned and evaluated effectively. The school has developed good links with schools in Africa, France and Australia and these help to provide the pupils with a good understanding and awareness of other cultures. The International Schools award was cemented recently at a flag-raising ceremony attended by civic dignitaries enabling the school and local community to celebrate these links. There are good links with another school, visited by pupils during the inspection, and these provide pupils with an understanding of different social backgrounds.

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At the time of the inspection all safeguarding procedures were fully in place to meet requirements. There are good partnerships with support agencies and secure child protection procedures. Links with parents and carers to support their children's learning are good and the leadership continues to look for opportunities to involve them even further. The school has good procedures in place to canvass their views.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers are rightly very happy with the start their children make in the Reception classes. Children settle quickly and really enjoy the wide range of activities. They make good progress and they leave this class ahead of the attainment of most children nationally in the Early Learning Goals. The coordinator provides good leadership. Assessment procedures are systematic, informative and provide staff and parents and carers with a very clear picture of how the children are progressing. This enables staff to provide learning activities that are closely tailored to individual needs. The record of their progress in the children's profiles gives a clear picture of the consistently good progress in all areas of learning.

Children greatly enjoy learning and the well-planned activities ensure they make good progress in all key areas. Staff make learning fun. For example, during the inspection, teachers dressed up as butterflies to successfully improve the children's understanding of symmetry. There is a good emphasis on the acquisition of learning letter sounds in the regular phonic sessions ensuring children make good progress in their reading and writing. Teaching assistants provide good support for the children, helping them to settle quickly and supporting those who need extra help and guidance. The extensive outside learning environment is used very well to further learning that takes place inside. Staff assess the children's progress very effectively and use the information to provide a good range of



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child-chosen and teacher-directed activities. The staff are rightly considering how they might further involve parents and carers in their children's learning, as this is an area which is not as effective as it could be.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

A higher proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires than is seen nationally. The overwhelming majority who responded were very happy with all aspects of the school. A few parents and carers expressed concerns regarding behaviour. Inspectors found that during the inspection, behaviour overall was excellent, and there are excellent strategies in place to deal with any poor behaviour.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monkston Primary 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 189 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 422 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	118	62	69	37	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	131	69	57	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	87	46	96	51	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	50	83	44	12	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	96	51	90	48	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	43	100	53	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	43	106	56	1	1	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)	73	39	106	56	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	41	103	54	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	103	54	77	41	6	3	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	38	107	57	5	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	139	74	50	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	65	66	35	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Monkston Primary School, Milton Keynes, MK10 9LA**

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. We really enjoyed listening to your singing in assembly. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school and what we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- Your school is a good one and provides you with a good education.
- You say you really enjoy school and we saw that in your enthusiasm and excellent behaviour. Your attendance is outstanding.
- You have a good understanding of what you need to do to keep healthy and fit.
- There is a good curriculum with an excellent range of clubs, activities, visits and visitors that make your work more interesting.
- The teachers and staff look after you exceptionally well. They give those of you who find learning difficult or who have difficulties considerable help and support.
- Those in charge of the school are working hard to help it improve.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following.

- Make sure that those of you who learn quickly are given more challenging work sooner in lessons and give you more opportunities to find things out for yourselves.
- Make sure that when teachers mark your written work they encourage you to respond to the comments they make.

You can all help by telling your teachers if you find work a little easy and by trying hard to work things out for yourselves.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead inspector

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