

# Montalbo Nursery and Primary School

Fairfield Road, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8TN

**Inspection dates** 1–2 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. As a result, pupils make variable progress from their individual starting points and not enough are making better than expected rates of progress.
- Too much teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always set work that matches the different abilities of pupils and this slows their progress.
- Teachers do not always make clear what is to be learned. They do not always accurately assess the progress pupils are making in lessons. In these lessons, pupils' progress requires improvement.
- Teachers do not focus regularly enough on helping pupils to establish the links between letters and sounds in order to improve the quality of their reading.
- Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in all of their subjects and to improve their writing through editing.
- Leaders, managers, and governors have not yet improved the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement so that it is consistently good in all year groups.
- When planning for improvement, leaders and managers are not clear about how they will recognise whether their actions have been successful in improving teaching and achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils say they enjoy school; they feel safe and are well cared for.
- Behaviour is good with pupils generally making a good contribution to their learning.
- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly. Recording systems provide clear, detailed information about the gains pupils are making.
- Governors ask challenging questions and hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance. There is a strong system for the performance management of teachers.
- Leaders focus well on pupils' achievement and the school's performance is improving.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons and six teachers. One teacher was a support teacher who regularly works in the school. Four joint observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in school. The inspector also listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, school staff and a representative of the local authority. In addition, the inspector looked at the school's review of its performance, its development plan, safeguarding information, school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector analysed 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and read letters from parents. The inspector spoke to some parents at the start of the inspection.
- The views of 10 staff who returned inspection questionnaires were taken into account.

## Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The number of pupils in each year group is small.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- Almost all pupils are White British. With very few exceptions, pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school holds the International School Award, Investors in Children accreditation and the Artsmark Gold Award.
- On-site private childcare managed by a company established by the school, 'Montalbo Extra', offers pre-school provision which will be inspected separately.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading and writing in all year groups by ensuring that teachers:
  - plan and set work that meets the needs of all of the pupils in all lessons
  - ensure that pupils are always clear about what is to be learned
  - assess pupils' progress accurately in lessons to make sure that all pupils are making at least good progress
  - firmly establish the links between letters and sounds to develop pupils' reading skills
  - provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length in all subjects and to edit their work.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that plans for development have measures for success that are closely linked to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The Nursery and Reception classrooms and outside learning areas provide children with a stimulating environment in which to learn. In Nursery, children are curious and develop their language and social skills well. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that vary considerably but, in the main, are below those typically expected for their age. They do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most start Year 1 with skills that are broadly average for their age.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been improving and, in 2012, were well above national levels in mathematics and writing, and average in reading. Standards in mathematics were higher than in reading and writing as the school has had a strong focus on the teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils who left Year 6 in 2012 entered Key Stage 2 with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that were below the national average. Overall standards were below national expectations in 2012 in English and mathematics. Pupils' current attainment shows that they are on track to exceed the national average in English and in mathematics in 2013. Standards in mathematics are currently on track to be higher than in reading and writing.
- From their individual starting points, almost all pupils made the progress expected of them in 2011 and 2012 in reading, writing and mathematics. Few made better progress than this. The school's information systems indicate that the rate of progress is improving and that currently, more pupils are on track to make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013.
- The rate of pupils' progress throughout school varies and depends on the quality of teaching. Pupils make most progress in Years 5 and 6. Achievement requires improvement because variation in the quality of teaching means that not enough pupils are making consistently good progress throughout the school. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they could, particularly in reading and writing. The inspector observed these variations in progress through lesson observations and through analysis of work in pupils' books.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as those supported at school action plus or through school action, do as well as other pupils. Those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, (those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in this school), attain as well as those who are not eligible in both English and mathematics due to the good support they are given. The attainment of these pupils is a good example of the school's successful promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The school provides a good range of reading materials to pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and parents generally contribute well in listening to pupils read. However, pupils do not read widely and, in the most recent screening check for reading at the end of Year 1, pupils' skills were below those expected nationally. In particular, pupils do not readily use letters and sounds to help them read unfamiliar words as teachers do not promote this well during all of their lessons and this requires improvement.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not consistently good over time and, because of this, pupils do not always make good progress in all of their lessons.
- There are too many lessons where the work is not at the right level for all pupils and does not match their individual needs. For some, the work is not demanding while, for others, the challenge is too high and they are unable to make good progress with their work. In these lessons, the least able and the youngest pupils do not make good progress.
- At times, pupils are unclear about what has to be done in a lesson and teachers do not assess

pupils' progress well enough to help them make good progress. However, in the best lessons, the teacher explains clearly what has to be done and what will be learned during the lesson. In these lessons, the teacher and the teaching assistant check the progress of all pupils regularly and prompt them, when necessary, so that all pupils make good progress.

- Teachers and pupils have good relationships. This enables all teachers to provide good opportunities for pupils to share ideas with each other and to develop good speaking skills. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils used precise mathematical vocabulary to describe the properties of triangles before successfully constructing different types of triangles.
- Teachers plan interesting work for pupils and provide good opportunities for them to write about their feelings and experiences. However, they do not emphasise the links between letters and sounds often enough so that pupils can use these to strengthen their spelling and reading.
- A review of pupils' work by the inspector showed that teachers marked pupils' work regularly and that pupils responded well to improve their work. It also showed that teachers created too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in all subjects to improve their writing. There was little evidence of pupils drafting and editing their work to develop higher-level writing skills.
- Teachers use computers well to support pupils' learning. Children in Nursery enjoy sharing computer games and sing along to number songs that develop counting skills. This early introduction to computers encourages good and confident use of computers to support learning in later years.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution when they are managed well and offer good support to all pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are keen and eager to learn and work well together in lessons. Behaviour is generally good in lessons. Pupils listen well to the opinions of others and lessons flow without interruptions. Some pupils do not always concentrate well, particularly when the teacher does not make it clear what is to be learned in the lesson.
- Behaviour around school is good with some exemplary behaviour, particularly at break and lunchtime when older pupils care well for the younger pupils in school. This helps the younger pupils feel exceptionally secure. Pupils play well together using the trim trail and tyre trail to enjoy themselves and keep active.
- Pupils say they are safe because the adults care for them well and bullying is rare. They are clear about all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what to do should it occur. They know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet.
- They know that their opinions are taken into account as the suggestions of the school council are acted on by the headteacher. They are proud to take on responsibilities as 'playground buddies' and 'problem-solvers' to resolve any minor disputes that might occur.
- Attendance during the inspection was high with almost all pupils attending school during the two days. Overall attendance during the year is average. Pupils are punctual. There have been no exclusions from school.
- Responses from staff questionnaires and from Parent View indicate that all staff and most parents believe that behaviour is good.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The focused efforts of the school's leaders are showing improvements in pupils' achievements in mathematics. However, overall, leadership and management are still judged to require improvement because there are still inconsistencies in pupils' progress in reading and writing that have yet to be fully addressed through improving the quality of teaching.

- The headteacher has high ambitions for the school and has involved governors and all of the staff in setting the priorities for improvement. However, the improvements have yet to impact fully to remove the inconsistencies that still exist in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are thorough. The school's development plan is well focused on the areas that require improvement. However, measures to judge its success are not clear enough in terms of how new actions will specifically improve pupils' learning and progress.
- There is a very thorough system in place for checking pupils' progress which allows the headteacher to hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make and identifies pupils in need of further support. This focus on the progress pupils are making is helping the school to improve further.
- Performance management of teachers is robust and clearly identifies the skills they need to improve by using the national teacher standards. The professional development programme for staff is effective and involves observing teaching in another school. As yet, the recent developments have not improved the quality of teaching to be consistently good.
- The school's curriculum offers a good range of experiences and topics but is not yet good overall as teachers do not focus strongly enough on the development of reading and writing skills in all subjects. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra activities that are available to them such as the visits and residential courses that support good team building. They have a good understanding of Christianity and other religions, asking deeply profound questions such as, 'Why does God allow such things to happen?' Their behaviour in school indicates they have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school's good links with other countries and involvement in the arts mean that pupils develop good cultural awareness. These experiences contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has supported the school well in developing its strong system for tracking pupils' progress. It has helped to develop the partnership with another primary school in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Guided well by the Chair of the Governing Body, the governors have supported the headteacher in establishing the school's priorities. Governors fully understand pupils' progress data and ask searching questions of the headteacher to determine the quality of teaching and learning. They have regular financial reports and make checks on the school's budget. They have approved the use of pupil premium funding to employ additional support for pupils from a learning mentor and teaching assistants which is improving achievement for these pupils. They understand fully the arrangements linking teachers' performance and pay. When teachers' targets are not met, governors challenge the headteacher to ensure that there is improvement. Governors have received training and ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114115
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	405500

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Shipman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Bainbridge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2011
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