

# Montpelier Primary School

North Down Road, Beacon Park, Plymouth, PL2 3HN

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not achieve as well as they could. The standards pupils reached in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics declined in 2013, but are beginning to recover to the higher-than-average levels of previous years.
- Teaching requires improvement. Pupils do not always get the challenge they need to make good progress, especially in writing.
- Until recently, teachers' assessment has not identified gaps in pupils' learning. Consequently, these gaps were not addressed.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is consistently good over time.
- Until recently, the governing body has not checked the school's performance closely enough. Consequently, the school's leaders have not been held rigorously to account.
- Middle leaders and the most experienced teachers have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.

### The school has the following strengths

- The decline in pupils' performance has been arrested. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is beginning to rise. This improvement is a result of the effective actions now being taken.
- Since September 2013, governance has improved rapidly. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are driving school improvement.
- The headteacher enjoys the confidence of pupils, parents and staff. He has taken prompt action to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning and is tackling weaker teaching robustly.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 26 lessons and parts of lessons. Eight of these were jointly observed with either the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work from across the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data the school collects on pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 97 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also gathered the views of parents during the inspection.
- Questionnaire responses from 44 members of staff were analysed.

## Inspection team

Phillip Minns, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Leahy

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Prince

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Montpelier is much larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. This is extra government funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There have been changes in senior and subject leadership over the past few years. The deputy headteacher and two key subject leaders were absent at the time of the inspection. A number of teachers have been on long-term absence and two have left during the current academic year. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - pupils are given work that is demanding enough to move them on to higher levels more quickly
  - teachers use assessment information to plan and deliver lessons that close gaps in pupils' learning and enable them to speed up progress further.
- Raise achievement in writing by making sure that:
  - phonics (the sounds letters make) are consistently well taught and pupils are given sufficient opportunities to use their phonic knowledge when reading and writing
  - pupils have regular, motivating opportunities to develop their writing
  - adults have consistently high expectations of pupils' use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
  - middle leaders and the most experienced teachers monitor how well teaching impacts on pupils' learning and supports the progress being made by different groups of pupils
  - governors' oversight of the curriculum ensures that it supports all pupils to make good progress, particularly in writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In 2013, Year 6 pupils reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were broadly in line with those achieved nationally. Previously, pupils' attainment had exceeded the national average for several years. The recent decline in pupils' attainment is because pupils do not make good progress across Key Stage 2.
- Overall, most children start school with a range of skills, knowledge and understanding that is typical for their age. Children make good progress in the Reception classes and the majority are ready to start Year 1 having attained average standards. A few leave Reception with skills and knowledge that are above those expected for their age.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not consistently good. As a result, too few pupils achieve the levels in reading they are capable of by the end of Year 1. Although pupils use their phonic skills well when reading, they are not using them as well in their writing.
- Pupils usually make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above national averages. However, in the current year, pupils have not made as much progress in writing and few achieved the higher levels.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is not consistently good. In 2013, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading and mathematics was lower than the national average. Most pupils did not make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes the progress of the most able, who also did not make good progress. Encouragingly, pupils' progress has improved this year in both reading and mathematics, but not in writing. Few make more than expected progress in writing. This is because, in some writing lessons, there is not sufficient emphasis placed on the accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils also do not get sufficient opportunities to develop their writing on topics that interest them.
- The attainment gaps between pupils receiving additional funding and other pupils are narrowing in both English and mathematics. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 were, on average, a term and a half behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, more accurate assessment information on eligible pupils' progress, targeted additional support and better teaching for these pupils have brought their attainment closer to that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress against their individual targets. This is the result of very effective, targeted support.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils do not make good progress across the school. Some inaccurate teacher assessments have caused gaps in pupils' learning to go unrecognised. As a result, some teachers did not take sufficient action to adjust their teaching in response to how well pupils were learning and progress slowed.
- Recent improvements in teacher assessment have begun to remedy the gaps in pupils' learning and understanding. However, the actions taken have not been applied long enough to ensure all pupils make good progress. This is particularly the case with writing in Key Stage 2.
- Activities lack challenge for the more able and are frequently too difficult for less-able pupils. In these situations, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively to support learning and activities do not spark pupils' interest. In some lessons, teaching assistants show good subject knowledge and provide pupils with the support they need.
- The headteacher and the assistant headteacher have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils are making better progress. Well validated, accurate teacher assessments are contributing to pupils' better learning and understanding.
- Some teaching is good, with a growing amount that is outstanding. Good teaching makes effective use of assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment to plan learning well. In these situations, teachers choose activities that will interest and motivate pupils. As a result,

pupils find the work interesting and make good progress.

- Currently, the most-able pupils are well catered for in most reading and mathematics lessons. As a result, they are able to achieve the higher levels in these subjects. However, in the current year, the lack of emphasis on grammar, spelling and punctuation in writing has resulted in few pupils being able to achieve the higher levels in this skill in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in learning. Additional support is well targeted to meet pupils' learning needs and is enabling pupils to make good progress. A good example of this is the additional support available to pupils in Key Stage 2 to enable them to improve their early reading and writing skills.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have good relationships with staff and are attentive and responsive in most lessons. They appreciate the school and take good care of it. Consequently, the behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils' attitudes to learning are not of an equally high standard across all classes and subjects.
- In September 2013, expectations of pupils' behaviour were increased and systems introduced to reward consistently well-behaved pupils. As a result, pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school has improved. Pupils, staff and parents value the changes and all agree that behaviour has become good. Very few exclusions take place.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. The approach to tackling absence and promoting good attendance is thorough and effective. As a result, attendance is now higher than the latest national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders have effective systems to make sure the building is secure and staff are carefully checked prior to appointment. Pupils say the school is a safe place to learn and the inspectors agree with them. Good relationships between pupils and adults have helped to create a culture of trust and care. As one pupil said, 'Staff would never let any harm come to us here.' The very large majority of parents feel that their children are safe and well looked after by the school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and are confident that any issues that worry them would be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is rare, but that it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

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

- In the past, school leaders have not ensured that pupils achieve well across all subjects and year groups. However, they have now taken effective action to improve teaching so that standards are beginning to recover.
- Most subject leaders are new to their roles. They are diligent and committed to the school. However, they are not rigorous enough in checking how well teaching in their subjects is supporting pupils' learning. Consequently, their contribution to improving teaching and raising standards is limited.
- Until recently, the knowledge and skills of the most experienced teachers have not been used to the full. Consequently, they have not made a strong contribution to the school's work. They do not model effective teaching consistently across the school.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has quickly begun to tackle the weaknesses in the school's performance. He has quickly won the confidence of the whole school community. It is quite clear from the comments of pupils, parents, staff and governors that developments, while not always easy, have quickly improved the school's effectiveness.
- Significant improvements have been introduced to improve the school's assessment procedures. Teachers appreciate the changes and report that they are now able to identify accurate starting

points from which to measure the progress pupils make. Consequently, the school has a more accurate view of its own performance.

- The school's development planning effectively identifies priorities. The focus on reading this year has resulted in improved progress for pupils.
- The headteacher has made good use of performance management and professional development opportunities to improve teaching this year. Weaker teaching has been addressed and a good range of training used to improve the skills of teachers at every stage of their development. As a result, teaching is improving and the school's accurate teacher assessment information shows that pupils are making better progress.
- The curriculum gives pupils a range of interesting learning opportunities that they enjoy. However, the curriculum is not used well enough to ensure the development of pupils' basic skills, particularly those in writing.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils have regular opportunities to celebrate success, to reflect, to work together and to develop cultural awareness. These occasions enable pupils to learn about themselves and the world.
- The school makes full use of the primary sport funding to bring in coaches with specialist skills to work alongside teachers. The specialists contribute their professional development in teaching physical education. This provision has resulted in more pupils taking part in sporting clubs and activities. Consequently, pupils benefit from improved physical fitness and well-being.
- The local authority's limited level of support, based on three visits each year, did not identify the decline in the school's performance. The school has made good use of the support available from the local teaching schools' alliance, particularly in seeking professional development opportunities to develop teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Over time, the governing body has not ensured that pupils make good progress. This is because governors have not rigorously checked the school's performance and held senior leaders to account for it. Consequently, governors did not act swiftly to address poor performance.
- Since September 2013, governance has improved markedly. Under the leadership and guidance of the new Chair of the Governing Body, the governors are actively committed to school. They are developing a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors now challenge the headteacher and staff by asking for increasingly detailed information about pupils' progress, the standards achieved and the quality of education provided. Currently, governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They make sure that staff are rewarded only when the effectiveness of their teaching merits it, as shown by the progress pupils make. The governing body oversees performance management well. It holds the school to account for its spending of additional funding and ensures the school meets its legal requirements for safeguarding.
- An external review of governance is not required because of the improvements in governance since September 2013.

## 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>	134803
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	444092

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	683
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Wendy Tout
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jason Holland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 216167
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