

Monksdown Primary School

Monksdown Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L11 1HH

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. By the time they leave school many attain the level expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is effective and pupils enjoy learning. A wide variety of activities sustain their enthusiasm and they try hard to complete their tasks.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted most effectively. A respect for each other is evident throughout the school.
- Behaviour is often exemplary and it is a delight to see how well the pupils play together and applaud the efforts of each other.
- Staff look after the pupils very well. Pupils say they feel safe and know how to recognise dangers.
- Parents are very pleased about the education their children receive. The school is held in high esteem by the local community.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong management team. They lead by example showing great determination to provide the best for the pupils in the school.
- Regular checks are made on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and this leads to improvements in learning. This has a positive impact on progress and ensures the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes activities do not ensure that the most able pupils make their best possible progress. Teachers do not always adjust tasks to help pupils while they work.
- Pupils do not consistently spell correctly or enliven their writing with imaginative vocabulary.
- Governors do not always have enough information about pupils' attainment and achievement to enable them to ask challenging questions about the progress of pupils of differing needs and abilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, the local authority and pupils.
- A selection of pupils read to the inspectors.
- Pupils' work was analysed with a focus on writing and mathematics, and the use of these skills in other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the checks made on pupils' progress, the minutes of meetings held by the governing body and information about safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the day.
- Thirty-five responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection Team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Pye	Additional Inspector
John Shutt	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language although this is rising with an increase of pupils from Eastern European countries.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection the school has had many staffing changes including a new headteacher. Currently, building work is taking place to improve the playgrounds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that the expectations of what pupils can do are always high enough, especially for the most able pupils
 - checking that pupils understand their tasks and remedy any misunderstanding while they are working
 - increasing pupils' ability to spell correctly and ensuring that they use more imaginative vocabulary in their writing.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring the governors are well informed about pupils' attainment and achievement and become more robust in challenging leaders about pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- This is a good school because of the effective determination of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has had some difficulties to overcome since the previous inspection and is now showing a rising trend in progress and attainment. Collaboration between staff is used effectively so all feel involved in changes. New staff quickly become part of the team. As a result the school is well placed to improve.
- Good systems are in place to track pupils' progress. Information is used successfully to provide extra help when needed. However, teachers do not always build on data as pupils move from year to year leading to examples of tasks not fully matching pupils' needs. On the other hand, information is used accurately to identify the school's priorities. This leads to detailed strategic planning with precise actions and allocated roles. The impact is clear in the improvement in pupils' phonic skills (letters and the sounds they make) and increase in the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics.
- Teaching is checked in many ways ensuring a good overview of what works well and where improvements can be made. Teachers benefit from guidance on how to improve and extra training is readily available.
- Since the previous inspection staff have been made more accountable for the progress of pupils. Staff attend meetings prepared with explanations for dips in achievement and plans to overcome them. This supports the secure systems in place to check performance and reward strong teaching. Additional responsibilities are added if it is felt management rewards are not fully earned.
- The impact of middle leaders in driving improvement in English and mathematics is good. They evaluate teaching and track pupils' progress closely. As a result they are aware of the strengths in their subjects and have actions in place to tackle weaker aspects. The move to subject teams for other subjects is extending collaboration and subsequently the support for change.
- Leaders are seizing the mantle to implement the new National Curriculum. Staff are determined to sustain the balance of academic, physical and creative activities that makes the current curriculum successful. Pupils appreciate the many experiences that extend their horizons. Visitors, including a Commonwealth Games gymnast and Paralympic gold medal winner, raise their aspirations. Although spelling is not yet a strength of the school the sessions for spelling and grammar, the daily reading sessions and focus on applying knowledge in mathematics all contribute to raising pupils' basic skills. These are promoted in other subjects, with very good examples in the Year 5 and 6 impressive project books.
- The curriculum encourages pupils to appreciate the influence famous people had on changes to the way people live today and to respect each other. They reflect on their actions and how these affect others. This respect extends to different cultures, beliefs and customs and pupils grow in their understanding of life in modern Britain. Newcomers of all ages quickly pick up the ethos of caring for others and are left in no doubt that good manners and politeness are expected. These activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development most effectively.
- The primary school sports funding has been used imaginatively to extend pupils' experiences and opportunities to be involved in more competitions. Specialist coaches lead sessions and staff observe so that they improve their own skills. Activities and clubs target the vulnerable and the least active so that all engage in activities that promote their physical well-being and healthy lifestyles.
- Staff have given careful attention to keeping pupils safe during all of the building occurring around the school. Safeguarding meets requirements.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this effective school. Training is available as needed and is especially helpful in examining the new National Curriculum and organising trials to help the school manage assessment without the current levels of attainment.
- Parents are very pleased and the response to Parent View showed virtually all would recommend the school to others. The school's website is informative and the prospectus is translated for parents who do not speak English.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive of the school and help with many activities. They are effective in managing the budget and checking that additional funding for physical education and the pupil premium provides value for money. They keep a watchful eye on the impact of this spending and know it increases pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and accelerates the progress of those known to be eligible for extra funding. Governors are less aware of the details of pupils' achievement, including other groups such as the most able pupils and those new to learning English as an additional language. Not all governors are confident analysing data and so their ability to ask challenging questions is weakened. Governors are more informed about the quality of teaching and check that teachers' pay awards are linked to pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. The school provides an oasis of calm for many pupils who rise to the high expectations the staff place on their behaviour. In lessons pupils are attentive and, even when teaching is less exciting, do not misbehave. Their books show many write neatly and finish their work. They conduct themselves in an exemplary manner around school and when out of school. This has raised the school's reputation in the community. Pupils were falling over themselves to be helpful to the inspectors and their manners and respect were appreciated. This excellent behaviour flows over into the playground when the variety of resources encourages physical fitness as well as sharing and taking turns. The building that is going on around the school is making life difficult but the area is tidy and pupils are looking forward to a larger playground.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The older pupils have a very clear understanding of justice and fair play. They gave detailed responses to questions about bullying and older pupils discussed homophobia maturely. Although the younger pupils identified some name calling they were insistent that it was resolved and they were happy in school. Very good attention is given to teaching the pupils how to keep safe. They recognise the pitfalls when using the internet and also the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol. The younger ones are aware of how to keep themselves safe when crossing roads and also how to avoid dangers, especially from strangers.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. During the inspection there was stiff competition for places on the school council. The cakes candidates made as part of their campaign were appreciated by the voters! The school productions are of high quality and there is always a struggle to get seats. The singing, dancing and social interaction greatly enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The strive to improve attendance since the previous inspection has been continuous and many strategies have been tried. Success is at last emerging and the latest figures are starting to creep above the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall with many strengths. New staff are welcomed to the school and quickly learn the tools of their profession as the sharing of ideas and practice is commonplace.
- The focus is on getting the best out of the pupils but not at the expense of their enjoyment. Much is done to sustain their interest and enhance their attitudes to learning. Activities are often based around a visit so that learning is more purposeful. Books by favourite authors capture pupils' interest. For example, Year 5 pupils studying Michael Morpurgo's book *'Friend or Fo'* enjoyed drama as they created a scene to show their feelings when evacuees arrived at their new school.
- Reading is taught effectively. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their basic skills with daily reading sessions. These include opportunities to read with an adult as well as working on tasks to extend their skills of inference and understanding. These tasks are purposeful and include debate as well as writing, which is marked, and shows that these sessions are an integral part of their learning.
- The teaching of writing has promoted successfully pupils' confidence and ability to write at length with some examples of well-organised work and interesting language. At times pupils do not have enough support to write with flair. Daily sessions on teaching punctuation, spelling and grammar for older pupils are steadily improving skills. Spelling rules are taught but some pupils do not recall this information enough to correct long standing errors. Marking often identifies spelling errors but this does not have enough impact on remedying them.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved with a whole-school approach to solving problems. Singing multiplication tables to the tune of a favourite pop group was fun in Year 5 and also extended skills. Teaching assistants are effective in helping, although at times too much support does not allow pupils to make errors and learn from them.
- Better use is being made of assessment information to match work to pupils' ability. This is usually successful but at times, especially when pupils are being taught as a whole class, the most able pupils and, when no extra help is at hand, the lower ability, lose interest as the work is either too easy or too hard. The most able pupils do not always have to grapple with problems and make decisions.
- When pupils are working they do not always have the guidance needed to clarify and adjust their work. This was the case for pupils learning the inverse operation of division. Most understood the mathematical concept but were confused by the task; this restricted their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall leading to the effective use of questions which really make pupils think. Pupils share their ideas well with a partner. Pupils understand their level of work and know

how to improve.

- Management of pupils' behaviour is calm and yet teachers make it clear that exemplary behaviour is the expectation. Humour and laughter are commonplace contributing greatly to the ethos of the school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement of pupils overall is good and accelerates, especially in Years 5 and 6. There is an increase in the number of pupils reaching levels that are above average but this is not yet consistent in all years.
- Pupils' attainment as they enter Year 1 varies year on year linked to the ability of the cohort. Their basic literacy and numeracy skills are often lower than what is expected for their age. Pupils make good progress. Despite this, attainment at the end of Year 2 is currently below average linked to the ability of the cohort and an increase in the number of pupils starting school with limited spoken English.
- Progress is good in Key Stage 2 and attainment is rising. It is now securely in line with what is expected for the pupils' age. A dip in the results of the national tests in 2013 in mathematics has been resolved by improved teaching.
- The level of attainment in reading is rising because of a more structured system to teaching pupils their phonics. Consequently, the results of the national screening check in phonics in Year 1 have risen significantly and are now in line and moving to above the national average. In Key Stage 2, daily guided reading sessions are accelerating progress with data for 2014 national tests and predictions for the current Year 6 being above average. Older pupils read confidently, have favourite types of books and locate information accurately.
- Good progress is made in writing and pupils gain in confidence to express their ideas in writing. The results of national tests in grammar, punctuation and spelling have been below average and teachers provide daily sessions to remind pupils of these skills. Evidence in pupils' books and the school's data shows attainment is much closer to average, but pupils do not always spell accurately or enliven their writing with imaginative vocabulary.
- Pupils are more confident applying their skills in mathematics and more reached the above average Level 5 in the unvalidated test results for 2014 with the school's first success at Level 6.
- The most able pupils make good progress by the time they leave school and, particularly in Years 5 and 6, more are on track to reach higher levels by the end of the year. However, at times, in other years, these pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the work set is not hard enough for them.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The results of national tests in 2013 showed that in mathematics, pupils were 10 months behind all pupils nationally and four months behind other pupils within school. In reading and writing, attainment was five months behind all pupils nationally and very similar when compared with other pupils in school. Early indications of the 2014 unvalidated national test results and predictions for the current Year 6 show the gap is closing, especially in mathematics.
- Overall, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There are examples of excellent progress for those who have social and behavioural difficulties or physical difficulties because they flourish in the school's ethos and their achievements are celebrated by all.
- Leaders have recognised the increase in pupils from Eastern European countries who have limited spoken English. Additional help, including advice for parents and a prospectus translated for them, is helping them to settle in the community. The pupils make good progress, which is more rapid for the older ones.
- Displays and the evidence in books show high-quality art work and strengths in design and technology. Information and communication technology also supports learning. Pupils are prepared well for their secondary education.
- Although, at times, the most able pupils do not make enough progress the successful promotion of equality of opportunity is seen in the overall good progress in the school.

The early years provision is good

- Children start in the Nursery with attainment that is generally below what is typical for their age, especially in communication and numeracy. They make good progress and leave the Reception class much closer to the level expected for their age, although a few are still below this level in their reading, writing and number skills.
- Teaching is effective because staff know how to interact with this age range, asking questions to extend children's skills and knowledge as they play. Children settle happily and understand what is expected of them. Newcomers already know the signal for tidy up time and eagerly set to work. In the Nursery

children enjoy their snack time as they accomplish the difficult task of spreading butter on their crackers. Prompt assessment ensures support is placed where it is most needed. Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress and are fully included. For example, they are supported as they come down the slide outside and encouraged to interact with others so that they are happy and ready to learn. Similarly, those with no spoken English, those for whom the school receives additional funding and those who are most able make good progress as their needs are identified and met.

- The activities offered are imaginative indoors and outdoors. At times an overload of resources means staff cannot interact as much as they would like because they have to supervise so many activities. Nevertheless, the curriculum provides well for children's physical and emotional well-being as well as promoting their essential academic skills. A variety of imaginative activities, including role play, contribute well to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Management is effective in ensuring children are safe and a calm atmosphere welcomes newcomers. Precise assessment ensures staff are clear about how to help the children. Good relationships and modelling of manners and language are evident throughout the day. Priorities are clear and staff are deployed effectively.

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

Unique reference number	133331
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	449289

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	W Todd
Headteacher	Stephanie Gough
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2007
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