

Inspection of a good school: Monkton Infants' School

St Simon Street, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 9SD

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

Outcome

Monkton Infants' School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Aiming High' is the school motto, and this shines through in every aspect of the school's work. Pupils are well behaved and polite. They move around the school calmly and safely. Pupils know the school rules. They meet leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Any rare instances of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly.

Pupils have great trust in the staff. They know that adults have their best interests at heart. Pupils say that there is no bullying in or out of the school.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They enjoy running the daily mile to keep fit. Pupils know how to keep safe online when using the internet. They can describe strategies they would use to do so. Pupils are consistently engaged in learning in the classrooms. Teachers home in on pupils' interests and make learning meaningful and fun.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Those with long-term medical conditions only take time off when necessary. Leaders and staff have successfully eliminated most longer-term absences.

The breakfast club and 'Wake-up, Shake-up' sessions before school and the '4 o'clock' after-school club are popular with pupils and parents and carers alike. Pupils are well prepared for the start of the school day. Working parents have some flexibility with drop off and collection times.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed an effective curriculum. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Leaders are currently fine-tuning their plans for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. This is to make sure that pupils achieve as well as they can in all subjects.

Teachers work positively as a team. They share their skills and expertise with each other. In most subjects, they know what to teach pupils and when. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects. In some subjects, the most important knowledge is less well sequenced. In geography, for example, pupils' knowledge is less secure.

Pupils remember learning from previous years. This helps them to understand new concepts being taught. Some pupils use their knowledge of deciduous trees to write winter poems. In history, Year 2 pupils remember learning about the story of Guy Fawkes in Year 1. Pupils use their knowledge to debate and discuss differences between sections of society in historical times.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional activities including clubs, visits and visitors to the school. During the inspection, pupils became engrossed as an actor portrayed Florence Nightingale. Pupils become inspired by such visits. They undertake detailed research and produce high-quality questions to ask at the end of performances. Pupils speak enthusiastically about trips such as those to the church. They have a good understanding of why people light candles. Their spirituality and cultural awareness are developed well.

All pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very effectively supported. Pupils with SEND learn well. Staff have the skills, confidence and training needed to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Staff forge positive relationships with parents to ensure that pupils thrive. Communication with parents is strong.

Reading has a high priority. Staff teach phonics from the beginning of children's time in the school. There is a clear structure and sequence for teaching. Children quickly gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful early readers. Pupils read regularly. Teachers read to children every day, sharing favourite stories and introducing new authors. Pupils vote each day for the book they would like to hear that afternoon. They develop a love of reading. However, some of the books pupils read do not match their phonic knowledge. Leaders have actions in place to address this.

Those children who start early years at the age of two settle quickly. They learn and play happily together. Children develop in confidence and independence. Staff introduce new vocabulary to improve children's communication skills. Phonics, English and mathematics are taught at the earliest possible opportunity. The learning environment in Nursery is vibrant and stimulating. Staff know what children can do and what they need to learn next. The early years curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of every child. Children who need support get extra help and practice.

Staff feel exceptionally well supported in terms of their work-life balance and well-being. Leaders see this area of their work as very important.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is an absolute priority for all staff. They are well trained to identify and report any concerns. Leaders pursue and secure timely and appropriate support for pupils and their families. Records are well kept. Information is shared in a timely manner when appropriate. The school works well with partners to make sure that pupils are protected. Governors regularly monitor all aspects of safeguarding to ensure that children are safe. The governor with responsibility for this area of the school understands their role. Every term, they check that all staff are up to date in their knowledge and attend training. They review all processes and procedures to ensure that they are understood and followed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For most subjects, the curriculum is ambitious, well planned and carefully sequenced. In some subjects, it is not clear how pupils' knowledge will build year on year. Leaders have identified that the progression in some foundation subjects needs to be more clearly and precisely defined. Leaders should continue their work to fine tune and embed the curriculum to ensure that all pupils attain as well as they can in every subject.
- Not all pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds they know. This hampers some pupils' fluency and confidence in reading. Teachers should ensure that books are linked precisely to pupils' phonics knowledge.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Monkton Infants' School to be good on 26 January 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139314
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10110772
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Hodgson
Principal	Clare Askwith
Website	www.monktoninfants.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2016

Information about this school

- The school opened provision for two-year-olds in January 2019.
- There is a term-time-only breakfast club and after-school provision until 4 o'clock run by the governing body.
- The school is a stand-alone academy.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the principal, deputy principal, curriculum leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff. I also held a meeting with the chair of the governors, who is also the chair of the trust. I spoke with the school improvement adviser. I viewed a range of school documents, including safeguarding records and the school development plan.
- I considered reading, phonics, mathematics and history as part of the curriculum deep dive. I also looked at science. I reviewed plans for these areas of the curriculum. I visited lessons and examined pupils' work with the principal and curriculum leaders. I listened to pupils read. I spoke with them about their learning and how they viewed the school.

- I spoke with five parents and also took into account the views of staff and parents through reviewing Ofsted's surveys of parents and staff.

Inspection team

Geoff Dorrity, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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