



Montem Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131218
Local Authority Islington
Inspection number 282182
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hornsey Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		N7 7QT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02072726556
Number on roll (school)	462	Fax number	020 72721838
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Maggie Elliott
		Headteacher	Ms Sue Seifert
Date of previous school inspection	30 October 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school which serves a culturally diverse community. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around half speak English as an additional language. The school is in an area of high social need and more than half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is much higher than average. Many pupils are in temporary housing and significant numbers are asylum seekers and refugees. More pupils arrive and leave during the year than is the case in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Parents rightly hold it in high regard. At the heart of its work is a commitment to its diverse community and the school motto 'together we learn' is evident in all aspects of its work. The care, support and guidance of pupils and their families are outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school and all that it has to offer. They feel safe and thrive in this supportive environment. Their behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. One commented quite spontaneously that 'I feel really happy because I like to learn'. Consequently, they achieve well. Their attendance is improving but remains well below average overall because a relatively small number of pupils do not attend regularly. Some pupils do not arrive punctually and therefore are not well prepared to begin learning.

The school continues to improve because of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and her senior team. They know the school well and are relentless in their pursuit of improvements when weaknesses are identified. This is done within a framework of teamwork where staff feel valued and able to contribute. Teaching is monitored rigorously and teachers are helped to develop their skills. As a result of these high expectations, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and ensures that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The school has addressed almost all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. It is not content to rest on its laurels, however, and the determination of the senior team and governing body gives it outstanding potential to improve still further.

When they arrive at the school pupils have skills and understanding which are well below average, particularly in communication and language as many are at the early stages of learning English. They quickly settle because of the stimulating and welcoming environment in the Foundation Stage. Those who are learning English are supported very effectively. They quickly acquire the necessary language to take a full part in school activities and make good progress thereafter. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities continue to make generally good progress because of the good teaching and an interesting curriculum which meets their needs and gives them opportunities to be creative. By the time they leave the school pupils reach standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, although they do not do as well in writing because their vocabulary is limited and some are reluctant to write. Pupils' good achievement together with their positive attitudes to learning and ready facility with information and communication technology (ICT) prepares them well for secondary school and the world beyond.

The high quality of care is evident in many aspects of the school's work. The significant numbers of pupils who arrive at different points during the year are quickly helped to settle. Regular family learning sessions give parents confidence to support their children's learning. Vulnerable children are extremely well supported.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards in writing by motivating pupils to write in different contexts.

* Work with parents to improve attendance and punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Although children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, most do not reach the goals set for these children by the time they enter Year 1 because of their low starting points. Their attainment in communications, language and literacy remains particularly low because many are still learning English. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and good groundwork is laid for their future learning. Standards in reading and writing are significantly below average at the end of Year 2 because pupils' communication skills remain relatively weak. Their progress accelerates from years 3 to 6 as most become fluent speakers of English. Standards are broadly average by the age of eleven, although progress is slower in writing. The school has identified motivation as a key factor and used a range of innovative strategies such as drama and the use of film images to increase pupils' interest in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their needs are recognised and they are well supported in the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is good. Their enjoyment of school is evident in lessons and in the way they regularly use words such as 'excited', 'happy', and 'proud' to describe their experiences at school. This is not entirely reflected in attendance figures. The school is using a wide range of strategies to address the situation and attendance is improving as a result. Punctuality remains a problem for some pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the components of a healthy lifestyle and they generally adopt safe practices. This is evident, for example, in the way most move about the potentially difficult site. They feel that their views are listened to and they take their responsibilities on the school council seriously. One member commented that the role was 'to make the school proud and improve things'. They are also well aware of the responsibilities to the wider community. Involvement in raising money for a range of charities and teamwork help pupils develop useful skills for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good because teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Teachers generally plan effectively for the wide range of needs within their classes. They enjoy a good partnership with teaching assistants who make a very good contribution to the quality of education, particularly

for pupils who are learning English and those with learning difficulties. A particular feature of the teaching is the very good use of interactive technology. Teachers have developed considerable expertise in this area and model their work for other schools. This has a considerable impact on learning as it motivates and engages most pupils very effectively. In some lessons, a number of pupils are too passive and teachers are not fully successful in getting them to be more involved in their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It provides well for the development of pupils' basic skills and allows them to be creative. As a result they enjoy their education and achieve well. Pupils develop good skills in ICT which they use to support their learning in other subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils were introduced to spreadsheets using a Victorian census. They were challenged to consider how the Victorians would have collated the information. Various innovative strategies have been used to motivate reluctant writers but the school recognises that these have yet to be fully effective in raising achievement. The curriculum caters well for pupils' personal development through its strong programme of personal, social and health education. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It offers a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities although the newly developed outdoor area is not being exploited fully to maximise children's learning. The curriculum is enriched in many ways and the arts, for example, have a high profile. The school has an artist in residence and music provision is strong. There is a good range of additional activities, including the widely renowned chess club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding because the school has created an ethos in which individuals are valued and their self esteem is nurtured. This has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. They feel safe and achieve well. In particular, the support for the many vulnerable pupils is exemplary. The school's own specialist staff play an important role in this work and they also draw very effectively on the expertise of a wide range of outside agencies where necessary. This care extends to the families of the school who are made to feel welcome and part of the school community. One commented 'the school is welcoming to parents and I have always been able to talk to the head about anything'. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress and pupils are given clear guidance on how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The outstanding headteacher leads by example and has a very clear vision in which every child really does matter. This vision is shared

by staff, parents and governors which creates a harmonious school in which pupils achieve well. One member of staff commented 'she has transformed a school that was deteriorating into a positive working and learning environment where there is harmony and trust'. The headteacher is supported extremely effectively by her senior team. Many of the subject leaders are new to their post and the senior team are planning a comprehensive programme to help them develop their roles in terms of raising achievement. Governors are also effective and offer a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders.

Of particular note is the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and to ensuring that all pupils achieve well. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively and intervention put in place where underachievement is identified. For example, Black Caribbean boys were identified as making slow progress in writing. An innovative project using film images as a stimulus resulted in much improved progress for these pupils. The school's self evaluation is good and the most important priorities for development are identified in its school improvement plan. For example, further work on improving writing and attendance remain priorities for the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited the school. We really enjoyed our time at Montem and you all helped us by being so friendly and welcoming. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You and your parents are right to be proud of the school because it is a good school and in some things it is outstanding. All the staff work hard to make sure that you are all safe and extremely well looked after. Those of you who are new to the school are made to feel at home very quickly. We thought your behaviour was good and we were impressed with the way you all get on together most of the time. You all seem to enjoy school and try to do your best in lessons.

You make a very good start on the Foundation classes where all the staff help you get used to school. You all do well as you move through the school because teachers help you to learn. Those of you who are learning English and those who find things a bit more difficult are given lots of help. You are very lucky because you have so many interesting and exciting things to do in school. By the time you move on to secondary school you are very well prepared.

Your headteacher has worked hard over many years to make the school as good as it is now. She still has plenty of ideas to make it even better. She is assisted very well by the senior team, all the staff and the governors. We have asked them to do a couple of things which we think might help. Firstly we have asked to make writing activities more exciting to help you to improve. You can help with the second one. Some of you do not come to school regularly enough and sometimes you arrive late. This does not help your learning. We have asked the school to work with your families to improve this.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector