

Montbelle Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100149
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	285728
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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 on roll	
School	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Offord
Headteacher	Mrs J Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Milverton Way Eltham London SE9 3EY
Telephone number	020 8857 3909
Fax number	020 8860 1105

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Montbelle is a larger than average school serving a socially diverse community. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is just below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than typically found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and has increased significantly since 2002. The school population increased significantly in 2002 when a neighbouring school closed. In 2004, Montbelle relocated to refurbished buildings on the present site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Montbelle is a good school with many outstanding features. It is held in high regard by pupils and parents. As one parent commented, 'My children will leave Montbelle confident, considerate and articulate and they will thrive in secondary school.' Pupils feel safe and exceptionally well cared for. They make outstanding progress in their personal development and well-being. Pupils attend school regularly, thoroughly enjoy lessons and other activities and leave well prepared to benefit from the next stage of their education.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Children join the Nursery with very modest skills, with particular weaknesses in behaviour and literacy. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and are well prepared for more formal learning in Year 1. By Year 6, standards are above average overall, with particular strengths in English. Pupils' performance in mathematics, however, lags behind that of other subjects. The school has taken robust action to tackle this problem. These actions are bearing fruit and evidence indicates that standards are likely to improve this year. Attainment is still below that of other subjects, however, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils experience a wide range of interesting activities to help them to learn, including very good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards. Teachers have worked hard at improving learning in mathematics and standards are beginning to rise. The school recognises that it needs to do more to encourage higher-achieving pupils to work on real-life problem solving activities. The rich curriculum makes very good provision for creative subjects, as well as for basic skills.

Leadership and management are good because there is a clear focus on improving standards as well as promoting the personal development of pupils. The headteacher provides exceptionally able leadership. She works in close partnership with a talented leadership team to ensure that pupils develop a deep love of learning and school. The school is in a good position to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of higher achieving pupils in mathematics, with a particular focus on problem solving skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Children start school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are below those expected of three year-olds, with particular weaknesses in behaviour and communication, language and literacy skills. This means that, despite good progress, by the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils reach below expected levels.

Standards by Year 2 are generally below average, and in 2006 were significantly below average. This was because a very high percentage of the pupils in this group had learning difficulties or disabilities. Records show they made good progress in the light of their starting points, and that the current pupils in Year 2 are also achieving well, especially in English.

Secure foundations for learning are laid in Years 1 and 2, when pupils' basic skills are still being consolidated. These foundations stand pupils in good stead for the next stage in their education,

resulting in very good progress being made throughout the junior classes. By Year 6 standards are above average overall. Pupils do particularly well in English, with significantly high proportions of pupils producing work at the higher levels. Their progress in this subject is exceptional and is in the top 1% of schools nationally. The school's rich curriculum adds breadth to pupils' achievements and the quality of their work in subjects such as history, design technology and art is very good. The pupils' performance in mathematics, however, lags behind that of other subjects, with too few pupils achieving the higher levels. The school has rightly begun to take action to tackle this and there is evidence to show that standards are beginning to rise.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as those with English as an additional language, make good progress and the school makes sure that they are fully included in every part of life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are proud of their school and respond positively to the many exciting opportunities available to them. Excellent relationships and good behaviour are evident throughout the school. Pupils contribute very effectively to the school and the wider community. They are keen fund-raisers for charity. They are proud to represent their class on the school council and are enthusiastic about plans to monitor lunchboxes in 'Healthy Packed Lunch Week'.

Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong, consider how their attitudes affect others and reflect on life. Through links with a Hungarian school, for example, and activities led by teachers and visitors, they grow in their understanding and appreciation of other cultures. This understanding is celebrated through the excellent displays of work in classrooms and corridors.

Pupils' awareness of healthy living has been acknowledged with a Healthy Schools award. They participate enthusiastically in sports and enjoy the tasty and nutritious dinners they eat at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers establish high expectations of pupils' behaviour from the start and this contributes to their good achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage learn clear routines and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through a good range of interesting activities, such as making Turkish bread or designing an ant walk. Recent initiatives, such as 'Big Writing', help to improve pupils' standards in writing as well as developing their creative and imaginative skills. As one Year 3 pupil enthusiastically described at lunchtime, 'We do 'Wow' words in my class. I even gave one of my own today. It was 'treason'.' The pace of most lessons is brisk, but when it occasionally slackens, the attention of some pupils wanders. Pupils' work is presented to a high standard and they show particular pride in the creation of their topic books. These display impressive individuality in both design and content.

Teachers have worked hard to raise standards in mathematics and their work is beginning to bear fruit. More remains to be done, however, to ensure that higher attaining pupils make the progress they should, especially in problem-solving activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum encourages pupils to think for themselves. In the Foundation Stage, all areas of learning are covered imaginatively, with a good focus on aspects where children need most help. The curriculum is enhanced by a strong creative element. Links between subjects are very well developed. Some of the results of this can be seen in the stunning quality of the hand-made books that pupils produce on their topics. They are shown in an annual exhibition and are also proudly displayed throughout the school. Information and communication technology is used well across a broad range of subjects, a significant improvement since the last inspection. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils used their mathematics skills to give instructions to a robot to make it move in various directions.

The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, such as workshops by the Royal Ballet and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Regular visits, including residential trips, provide first-hand learning experiences and promote pupils' social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Excellent pastoral care enables pupils to grow in confidence and self-belief. The school is calm and welcoming. Adults and children treat each other with respect and it is clear that every child matters. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are very well supported by both the school and by outside agencies. There are good procedures for child protection. The induction of children into the Foundation Stage is well planned and children settle quickly into their new environment.

Academic guidance is very good. Teachers make very good use of assessment to identify learners who need extra help or who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils know how well they are doing and have clear targets to aim for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has good systems for checking how well it is doing and uses them effectively. Governors are fully involved in the work of the school and are becoming increasingly confident in checking performance and asking challenging questions. There are many signs of real improvement and the school is in a good position to build on these. Issues from the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The school dealt very well with the many difficulties that arose as a result of its expansion and subsequent relocation.

Senior leaders, including the recently formed primary leadership team, have made a good start in tackling the problems in mathematics and there is a tangible sense of determination to do better. There has not yet been sufficient time, however, to see the full impact of their initiatives to raise standards. The percentage of pupils who gain the higher levels at the end of Year 6 is still not high enough, for example.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A very small number, however, feel that the school should be more mindful of their views. Inspection evidence, however, shows that the school actively seeks and acts upon the views of parents.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
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	2
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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.

Annex A

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	2
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

16 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Montbelle Primary School, London, SE9 3EY

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with many of you and were particularly impressed by the excellent quality of the hand-made books you make for your topics. We would also like to thank the children in the nursery for giving us some of the delicious Turkish bread they made.

We think that Montbelle is a good school with many excellent features. You are very good at taking on responsibility and understand very well how to stay healthy. All your teachers and other staff work really hard to help you concentrate on your learning. You have plenty of opportunities to learn by doing interesting things, not just by listening. All this means you make good progress in your learning, especially in English where you make excellent progress. The headteacher and all her staff have worked hard to improve the school. They certainly believe that all of you can achieve well, so it's up to you to keep on proving them right.

Work has begun on helping you achieve higher standards in mathematics. To make the school even better, we have asked the school to carry on doing this. You can play your part in this by always working as hard as you can.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you well for the future.

Lynn Bappa Lead Inspector