



Monkway Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112170
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289190
Inspection dates 1–2 March 2007
Reporting inspector Delia Hiscock

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Monkway Brow
School category	Community		Whitehaven, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	7–11		CA28 9DT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01946 852678
Number on roll (school)	124	Fax number	01946 852679
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Joe McAllister
		Headteacher	Mrs Pamela Telford
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 1–2 March 2007	Inspection number 289190
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school serves an area with a higher than average amount of socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average and a similarly above average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. The school is smaller than average and is subject to falling rolls. It has gained Healthy School status and ActiveMark for sports. The school has had three headteachers in the past three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory and improving school has a sound capacity to move forward in its work. The new headteacher's enthusiasm, energy and determination to harness the school's strengths to raise standards and aspirations are exciting features of her leadership. To bring about this vision, she uses external partners and services effectively to keep the pupils' good personal development and well-being at the top of the school's agenda. Staff contribute well to the pastoral care of pupils and the school provides very effective additional support for pupils and families who have stresses in their lives to contend with. This is one of the reasons why parents are very supportive of the school.

Standards are average and the pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory. They make good progress in English but satisfactory progress in mathematics. Successful developments in writing throughout the school have raised standards to average in English. In 2006, a high proportion of pupils achieved the higher level in national test results. This is because pupils are forging ahead in their literacy skills. The school's results in the 2006 national tests in mathematics were well below average. Weaknesses in provision in mathematics have now largely been resolved and recent developments have ensured that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently working at the expected levels for their age. Despite the largely successful actions taken by the school, pupils' progress is still hampered by tasks that do not match their learning needs precisely enough. This affects the more able pupils in particular. Pupils' skills of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for the world of work but their numeracy skills do so only satisfactorily. Many of the pupils have started to appraise each other's work. This helps them to determine how well they are learning but is not followed through consistently in marking to explain to pupils how they might improve their work.

The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The school's current evaluation of its work is accurate in terms of progress and achievement and in its understanding of the school's weaknesses. The leadership team is dedicated to raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. As a result of its actions, expectations have been raised and suitable strategies implemented to raise standards in mathematics. The outcomes of their monitoring of the quality of teaching are shared effectively with teachers who, in turn, are willing to make changes when they realise the need to do so. The school takes good account of what parents and pupils have to say. Their views inform the school council's debates, which contribute to pupils' understanding of how their voice can make a difference for the better. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve the match of activities to pupils' learning needs for the more able pupils in mathematics in particular.
- Ensure that pupils know clearly how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average overall. Pupils achieve satisfactorily including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In both English and science, standards are average, but those in mathematics are well below average.

On starting in Year 3, standards are broadly average, but vary each year between below and above average. The school recognises this and has a good grasp of the pupils' varying learning needs and of any difficulties they have. This is the reason pupils make a good start in reading, writing and mathematics. This good rate of progress continues throughout each year in English so pupils achieve well. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory, because, until the implementation of actions to improve it, activities have tended to repeat earlier work rather than promote new learning. Improvements in teaching, a reorganisation of teaching groups with smaller numbers of pupils and higher expectations are having a marked effect on the progress of most pupils. The exception is that of some more able pupils, because their work does not stretch them sufficiently. It is also one of the main reasons why the school did not meet its targets for performance in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well behaved; they form good relationships with their classmates and most of them see learning as important for their futures. Any personal difficulties pupils bring with them to school are sensitively managed. This boosts their self-esteem and helps them to deal with barriers to their learning, do their homework and make their own contribution to their development. This is why pupils say that they feel safe, well cared for and trusting of those who help them. They take on jobs around the school so they have a growing awareness of what it is to take responsibility. Most have a good knowledge of the importance of exercise and of what makes up a healthy diet. With this in mind, the active school council is negotiating the balance of choice between fresh fruit and pudding for school lunches. They intend that take-up is informed and fair to pupils' wishes. Attendance is good and the skills they gain in literacy and ICT equip them well for the future; their numeracy skills prepare them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching strengths include: good relationships, lively introductions to lessons, and plenty of conversation about what is to be learned. There is also a good pace of learning in many lessons. Increasing use

of ICT makes learning relevant and attractive. For pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and lower attaining pupils, this includes personalised programmes. In these lessons, pupils soak up learning, and the teaching assistants and the learning mentor provide support for those who have to deal with personal worries or problems. This helps them to overcome any barriers to learning.

Learning is only satisfactory. This is mainly because the tasks in lessons do not always meet fully the pupils' learning needs. This reduces the momentum of progress and makes learning tedious at times. One of the older pupils commented: 'I like it, (mathematics) because it's dead easy.' Most pupils say they enjoy some lessons. When there are lively investigations in mathematics and science, pupils make good headway in the development of thinking skills and independence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, and valuable links with other schools and outside services to provide wider support for pupils and their families. Equally there is a good range of activities, visits and clubs including plenty of sporting activities that extend and encourage participation. Enrichment and extension activities increase pupils' understanding of local history and traditions, art and music from around the world. The breakfast club is a hit with the pupils who come along and do their 'homework'. There is good provision to develop the skills of literacy and some good links between subjects through the use of ICT. Newly organised teaching groups are helping to improve provision in mathematics and meet learning needs more closely. However, lesson plans that do not always stretch the more able or tasks foster independent thinking skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The level of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. Effective teamwork between teachers, the learning mentor, teaching assistants and outside agencies ensure that pastoral care is good. Additional support for pupils who have personal worries is invaluable in developing confidence and self-esteem. Pupils feel safe and valued; most respond well as a result. Child protection procedures and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and include risk assessments. The school's assessment information to track pupils' progress is now used effectively by school leaders to identify underachievement. Recent developments show pupils how to appraise the work of their classmates, but most do not know how to improve their own work because this is not explained to them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the new headteacher is sharply focused on raising standards for all pupils. With the support of the staff, she has raised levels of expectations, led the rise in standards throughout the school in English, and implemented changes that are having a positive impact on standards in mathematics. The school's improvement plan focuses sharply on the actions needed to raise standards in mathematics. Good use of external specialists broadens the range of skills the school can draw upon and helps members of the leadership team improve their skills in managing the implementation of improvements. In addition, external advice has ensured robust arrangements for health and safety, increased the support for pupils and is positively influencing school improvement procedures. Pupils' personal development and well-being are central to the school's work. Good relationships with families and enjoyable workshops encourage parents to help with their children's learning. This is why parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views about the school. Governance is competent and the governing body has recently revised its working committees better to serve the school. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Monkway Junior School

Monkway Brow

Whitehaven

Cumbria

CA28 9DT

5 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Do you remember my visit to your school recently? You were very kind and polite during our conversations. I was pleased to hear about all the activities you like and what you think about your school. I am writing this letter to tell you that I found your school to be a satisfactory one that is improving. I really enjoyed reading your writing and hearing about all the sports and activities you get involved in.

It was good to hear that the school tries to make sure that you are well looked after, especially those of you who need a bit more help. I'm sure that you will be pleased to know that I found out that you behave well and that you work hard even though, at times, some of the work you do is not as interesting as you would like it to be.

To help the school to improve and make things better for you, I have asked the staff to:

- help you to achieve more in mathematics, especially those of you who can work faster
- make the activities in some lessons a bit more exciting and more of a challenge
- help you to improve some of your work yourselves.

Keep up your hard work and look after each other. I do hope that you decide on a good, healthy balance of fruit and puddings for lunchtimes.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Delia Hiscock

School Inspector