

# Monksmead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117219
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	290758
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Mann HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Kevin Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lorraine Fairbank
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Hillside Avenue Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 1HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8953 3328
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8905 2338

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Monksmead Primary School is about average in size, located in a mixed residential area of Borehamwood with pockets of social deprivation. The children's starting points in the reception are generally in line with national expectations but low in communication, language and literacy skills. An average number of pupils experience learning difficulties and the proportion entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The majority of pupils are White British but about a fifth come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils whose home language is not English is average overall, with several pupils at the early stages of language acquisition in English. The school has gained several awards including National Healthy School Status and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school, through its self-evaluation, judges itself to be good in all aspects of its work. Overall, the inspection findings are in general agreement with this view but they also identify a number of outstanding features. For instance, this is a school that sets out to create a happy, stimulating climate for learning where everyone is valued and respected. It achieves this with great success. This is because under the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, the staff work as a very effective team to provide a very extensive range of vibrant, exciting and relevant learning opportunities for all pupils. Everyone counts in this very inclusive and effective school, where pupils achieve well to attain high standards in many subjects by the time they move on to secondary school.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are excellent. The very good behaviour of pupils and their extremely positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their overall achievements. Pupils speak with great pride and affection about their school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Attendance is good because all pupils love coming to school. Pupils respond particularly well to the many opportunities provided for them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Displays of their stunning artwork created to celebrate the cultures of others fully exemplify this outstanding provision.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with examples of outstanding work evident within the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the staff and one commented, 'It is a wonderful school, the staff are always approachable, courteous and professional'. Teamwork amongst the staff is a significant strength. The core skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Lessons are very well planned and a wide range of resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning. All teachers record the individual progress of pupils in great detail but the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality. As a result, not all pupils are provided with good information about what they need to do next to improve.

The curriculum for all pupils, including those children in the Foundation Stage, is outstanding. A strong emphasis is placed on practical activity and very effective links are made between subjects to make learning lively and meaningful to pupils. Excellent levels of care, support and guidance are provided for all pupils and the monitoring and assessment of their progress is very thorough. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are very robust. Very strong partnerships exist with other organisations and individuals to promote the achievement and well-being of pupils.

Governance is good overall. Governors are very supportive of the school's work and they play a vital role in its overall development. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is based on informal observations rather than on systematic and more formal evaluation of its work. Taking all factors into account the school provides very good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teachers' marking and target setting for pupils.
- Involve the governors more effectively in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. The starting points of children who enter the reception class are generally in line with national expectations. These children make good progress and standards are generally above expectations in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1.

Consistently good teaching ensures that pupils continue to make good progress across the school. This is especially so in English and science, where significantly above average standards are confirmed by the 2006 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2; however standards in these tests are only average in mathematics. Analysis of this data indicates that boys in this year group out-performed girls by a significant margin.

Inspection evidence confirms that the school is successfully reversing this difference through the more effective teaching of numeracy skills. All teachers now place a stronger emphasis on practical activity and problem solving. As a result, achievement in mathematics is now good, with that of the girls in Year 6 now matching that of the boys. This better achievement is because girls find the practical activities fun and teachers set challenging targets for them to achieve. Teacher assessments confirm that standards in mathematics are now back to the previously high levels seen in 2004 and consistent with the high standards being attained in English and science.

The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because support is very carefully matched to their needs. Those pupils whose home language is not English make equally good and sometimes rapid progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. All pupils are very proud of their school and many talk with considerable pride about all the interesting things provided for them to do and learn. Levels of attendance are good. Behaviour is very good and confirmed by the very positive comments made by parents during the inspection. Pupils state that there is an absence of bullying and racist behaviour. However, they confirm that when it has occurred it has been dealt with very quickly by staff. Detailed records kept by the school support this view.

All pupils respond very well to the school's inclusive climate for learning, good teaching and outstanding levels of care and support. Their attitudes towards learning are excellent. All of them are growing into responsible and mature individuals with a clear sense of right and wrong and a healthy approach to life. They respond very well to opportunities for learning cooperatively, practical activity and solving problems. The very high quality art work, singing and music-making by pupils is a reflection of the outstanding level of provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the creation of indigenous Australian paintings, Indian door hangings, miniature Japanese gardens and African drumming are providing a real insight into the cultures of others around the world. Furthermore, pupils exhibit a strong sense of citizenship and community spirit through their contribution to the school council and charitable activity.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence and the headteacher's very effective monitoring confirm that teaching and learning are good overall. Much of it is good, with examples of outstanding practice evident around the school. Very good planning, brisk pace to learning and the very good use of resources are key strengths observed in many lessons. Information and communication technology is used especially well to support pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to be fully engaged in practical activities and partner work are common features, making a significant contribution to achievement. Although all teachers gather a wealth of information about the pupils' achievements and personal development, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality; ranging from just satisfactory to very good. In the best examples, marking is detailed, informative and makes good reference to targets. This is not always the case and some pupils are not always clear about what they need to do next to improve. Some do not fully know their targets for literacy and numeracy. The school has rightly identified the need for teachers to improve marking and provide more opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It is broad and balanced, with an extensive range of interesting and varied activities planned for pupils both in and out of lessons. Good links are built into termly topics to ensure that learning is very meaningful for pupils. For instance, excellent use is made of the outdoor environment to develop pupils' numeracy skills and levels of mathematical understanding. A very strong feature is the development of cultural understanding through art and music. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding because learning is very well structured and there is a very good balance between adult directed activity and children learning through play. Furthermore, provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Likewise, those pupils whose home language is not English are very effectively supported in the classrooms. The very experienced team of teaching assistants play a vital role in this level of support and provision for pupils in extra need.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The level of care, guidance and support provided for all pupils is outstanding. As a result, pupils feel safe in the school and know who to turn to if they are in difficulty or worried. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very robust and the vetting of all adults working with pupils is rigorous. All staff provide very good levels of care and guidance for all pupils. The pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored comprehensively and action is quickly taken to provide extra support if needed. Further guidance and support is provided through well managed homework programmes and very good levels of communication with parents and carers of pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall, with some significant strengths. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is driving forward school improvement effectively. Expectations are very high, and all pupils are provided with equal opportunities to develop their talents and succeed. The headteacher is supported by capable senior leadership team and staff who work together as a very effective team. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection and the capacity for further development is excellent.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning are good overall. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very impressive. It is very carefully aimed at improving the quality of pupils' learning through the systematic development of teaching skills across the school. Governors are very supportive and play a vital role in school improvement. Their monitoring role is more limited and based on informal observations rather than focused evaluations. This limits their ability to make well-informed strategic decisions based on a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their overall governance of the school is good and individual governors are fully involved in the life of the school.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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**

15 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Monksmead Primary School, Hillside Avenue, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 1HL

I would like to thank you all for making me feel so welcome during my short visit. It is obvious that you all love being at school. This became very clear to me when you sang with such feeling in assembly, 'What have you done to make you feel proud'.

Many of you told me that you like school because the teachers make your lessons interesting and help you in your learning. I agree with you because Monksmead Primary is a good school with a number of very special features. I noticed that you all work very hard in lessons and your behaviour is excellent. This is because the teachers throughout the school plan an exciting range of interesting things for you to do. Mrs Fairbank manages the school really well and under her excellent guidance all the staff work together to ensure that you all make good progress in lessons. I am particularly impressed with what the older girls and boys can do in mathematics. Teachers mark your work regularly but they do not always make it clear what you need to do next to improve. They also set targets for you to achieve but not all of you are sure what they are. These are things that the teachers are going to work at in order that you can make even better progress.

The governors make every effort to make sure that your headteacher and staff are given all the support that they need to ensure that the school is run smoothly. Several of them actually work with you in lessons to teach you new things. In the future the governors are going to work more closely with the staff to learn what might be needed to make the school even better.

Once again, thank you for making me feel so welcome and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann

HMI