

Monkton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118697
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291216
Inspection date	1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R Coles
Headteacher	J Graham
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002
School address	The Street Monkton Ramsgate CT12 4JQ
Telephone number	01843 821394
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school draws its pupils from a fairly wide area. The vast majority are of White British origin and all speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry varies from year to year due to the small number of pupils in each year group. Overall, it is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Since the last inspection, the number of classes has risen from three to four and the number on roll has increased by 12 pupils. The school is currently being redeveloped. At the time of this inspection, every class was being taught in temporary classrooms at the top of the school field.

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 a number of outstanding features. Despite the upheaval of a major rebuilding programme and much energy having to be directed to this, good leadership and management have ensured that pupils have continued to benefit from a good quality curriculum, good teaching and exceptionally high levels of care, support and guidance. The school's motto, 'Everyone is Special', is a key factor in its success. As one parent put it, 'Each child is treated as an individual and thrives at Monkton.' All of the adults who work in the school know each pupil very well and are able to cater for their individual needs. They are particularly good at building pupils' confidence and self-esteem, including them in decision making and taking account of their views when planning future developments. As a result, pupils really enjoy school and play a full part in all that it has to offer. Parents, too, are full of praise for the school, especially for its warm and welcoming atmosphere and teachers' approachability. The school works exceptionally well in partnership with parents as well as with other local schools and organisations to enrich pupils' learning.

Good teaching and a well-planned range of learning experiences help children to achieve well and fully meet national expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils also achieve well in Years 1 to 6 and reach well above average standards by the time they leave. Standards in English are exceptionally high because the teaching of reading and writing is particularly effective. Although standards in mathematics are above average, pupils do not always achieve quite as well as in English. The school's careful analysis of the reasons for this has revealed that insufficient understanding of mathematical language occasionally hinders pupils' ability to solve problems and apply mathematical skills in new situations.

Pupils make good progress because lessons are lively, fast paced and interesting. Pupils are given tasks that match their needs and abilities. Pupils' progress in physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) has been constrained by the limitations of both the original and present accommodation and resources. Pupils make steady progress in acquiring ICT skills but are not yet able to make full use of them across the curriculum to enrich their learning. The school makes good use of outside specialists and other local schools to provide additional sporting activities for the pupils. History is taught exceptionally well as it is brought to life by studies of the local area and its people.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are committed to healthy eating, recycling, composting and keeping fit. Their Walking Bus won the top award in Kent. Pupils embrace challenges with enthusiasm and take their responsibilities seriously. Staff and pupils alike are excited at the prospect of their imminent move into the new premises, not least because they will have their own hall for the first time in the school's history. A long-standing vision is soon to become reality and staff and governors are fully committed to raising the quality of education they provide to new heights. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and very effective teamwork of the whole staff give the school an outstanding capacity to achieve its goals and aspirations for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' understanding of mathematical language to enable them to solve problems more effectively and apply their learning in new situations.
- Develop more opportunities for pupils to use ICT as an effective tool for learning across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In this small school, the ability range within year groups varies considerably and this inevitably affects the results of national tests. Nevertheless, all pupils achieve well during their time in school and standards are well above average. In Reception, children make good progress as firm foundations are laid in all areas of learning. Standards in reading and writing are exceptionally high throughout the school and this represents outstanding achievement. Pupils do slightly less well in mathematics. Although standards are consistently above or well above average in the subject, a few pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Gaps in their knowledge sometimes result from insufficient understanding of mathematical language. This has a knock-on effect on their ability to solve problems and to apply their knowledge and skills in new situations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are extremely thoughtful, caring and considerate to others. They respond spontaneously to teachers' high expectations with excellent behaviour, especially when moving around the site and crossing the road to the village hall. Pupils' close links with the church have led to their adopting overgrown war graves in the churchyard, which they have cleaned and restored as a mark of respect. In addition to lessons, a variety of visits, visitors and special events helps pupils to develop a very good awareness of cultural diversity within society. A strong emphasis on citizenship, with pupils taking part in the democratic process, equips them very well for the future. Pupil councillors appointed to the school's committee (the ECHO group) take their responsibilities very seriously and contribute to decision making, as when they consulted their peers about choices of new playground equipment. As one pupil commented, 'Teachers always ask us for our ideas.' Pupils are enthusiastic learners and fully involve themselves in lessons and other activities. They feel safe and many take advantage of opportunities to learn first aid and safe cycling skills. Around 80% travel to school with the Walking Bus. They take part in village events such as the Art Show and participate with enthusiasm in charity fund raising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school good quality learning results from well-paced teaching that challenges pupils and builds effectively on previously acquired knowledge and skills. Teachers plan work that successfully meets the wide range of ages and abilities within each class because they make effective use of regular assessments to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for each pupil. Pupils are beginning to be involved in checking their own progress towards specific targets, but this is not yet fully up and running. Pupils agree that lessons are fun. They say that work is challenging but that teachers help them if they get stuck. As one explained, 'If we don't understand they split it down to make it easier.' Teaching in English is exceptionally good because teachers immerse pupils in a variety of texts and place a high value on daily reading. Writing is nurtured, not rushed, and teachers encourage pupils to write short, focused high quality pieces as a stepping stone to longer stories or factual accounts. Teachers bring history

to life through 'hands-on' research such as checking local census records and the school log book. There are occasions in mathematics lessons where mathematical language is not used or explained carefully enough to ensure that all pupils fully understand its meaning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers are constantly seeking ways to make the already good curriculum even better. It offers pupils a wide variety of experiences and makes very effective use of the local area. The main focus at the moment is on developing creative links between subjects to make them more meaningful for the pupils. There are already some good examples of where this works well, especially where history is the central topic. Literacy skills are developed exceptionally well through other subjects and the school is now looking for ways to incorporate mathematics in more cross-curricular topics. Provision for ICT is limited, especially in the current temporary classrooms, and its use as a tool for learning across all subjects has not been fully developed. Similarly the constraints of the accommodation have limited provision for indoor physical education for many years. The school does its best to compensate for this through its links with other schools and outside specialists but ambitious plans are already being drawn up to make the best possible use of the new facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Every child really does matter at Monkton. Pupils say the school is like a family where all the adults know them and help them to feel safe. Staff and governors are vigilant about health and safety. All necessary procedures are in place and they have worked hard to ensure that the site is safe during the building works. Every teaching assistant is trained as a crossing patrol officer so that the pupils' regular trips to the village hall for lunch, assembly and physical education lessons run smoothly and safely. The teachers' close partnership with parents keeps them abreast of pupils' specific needs. There are excellent arrangements for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and medical needs and for providing additional guidance and support for pupils with particular gifts and talents. Careful tracking of every pupil's progress ensures that their academic achievement is rigorously monitored and action taken promptly if problems arise.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with outstanding vision, energy and commitment. Very well supported by staff and governors, she has not allowed the disadvantages of working in the middle of a building site to detract from providing pupils with a good quality education. Strong teamwork is the key to the school's continued success since the last inspection in sustaining high standards in pupils' academic and personal development. Teachers and support staff are becoming increasingly involved in leading curriculum developments. They value the headteacher's encouragement to extend their roles in this way and her readiness to let them run with their ideas. The headteacher undertakes a rigorous programme of lesson observations, checking teachers' planning and pupils' work and analysing data about each pupil's progress. Teachers and governors are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring procedures, and, as a result, all have an accurate view of the school's performance. They have identified exactly what the

school needs to do to improve the quality of education for the pupils and have already begun to look for ways to boost pupils' achievement in mathematics. For the past year, energies have been directed mainly towards managing the challenges presented by the building project. Morale has remained high, nonetheless, and staff and governors are now poised to resume their pursuit of excellence in all aspects of school life.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	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	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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.

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	1
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

2 May 2007 Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Monkton Primary School, Monkton, Ramsgate, CT12 4JQ

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and talking to some of you about your work. I can see that you enjoy school very much (despite all the building work!) and I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you look after each other. Many of you told me that you think Monkton is a good school and you are right. Here are some of the reasons why:

- You all work hard and make good progress. You reach higher standards than pupils in many other schools. You make excellent progress in reading and writing because the teachers know how to get the best out of you.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and give you work that is challenging. They also give you plenty of help if you get stuck.
- Mrs Graham and the teachers keep a close eye on how well you are all doing so they know immediately if one of you needs extra help.
- All of the adults take excellent care of you and make sure that you feel safe.
- The school helps you grow into mature and well-rounded young people. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit, safe and healthy and you take your responsibilities very seriously.
- Mrs Graham, the staff and governors work hard to keep improving your school. They have done a remarkable job of keeping the school running smoothly during all the building works.

There are a couple of things that I have asked your school to do to make things even better:

- Although you do well in mathematics, you do not reach the very high standards that you do in English. I have asked your teachers to improve your understanding of mathematical language as this will help you to solve problems and use your skills more effectively.
- Until now you have not really been able to use your ICT skills enough as you have had limited access to computers. I have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to use ICT in other subjects. This should be much easier when you are in your new buildings with new equipment.

I know how much you are looking forward to moving into your new classrooms. Enjoy your new school and carry on working hard!

With best wishes,

Carole Skinner Lead inspector