

Monkchester Road Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108431
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	309688
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Bernadette Matthews
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Humble
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Monkchester Road Walker Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE6 2LJ
Telephone number	0191 2654579
Fax number	0191 2650905

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The children who attend the nursery are mainly of White British heritage with about 10% from other ethnic groups, most of whom are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Although the catchment area is mixed, there are high levels of unemployment and disadvantage. A very high proportion of the children receive free school meals and a higher proportion than is usual have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A Family Centre is situated on the same premises but is not part of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Monkchester Road Nursery school is outstanding and has maintained the same high standards observed during the last inspection. A highly committed headteacher and a very strong team of staff and governors work successfully to sustain improvement and to ensure children's excellent achievement and personal development. No matter what their starting point, every child receives the best care and support to make the best possible progress. This view is borne out by a very large majority of parents, who are delighted with the school's work. They make comments such as, 'I made an excellent choice choosing Monkchester Nursery, it is very family orientated'.

Children love coming to the nursery and their attendance is good and improving. They benefit extremely well from the excellent quality of care, guidance and support they receive. They know what is expected, feel safe and happy, are motivated to improve their skills and behave very well. Children achieve very well in their learning because teaching is excellent. The staff are highly skilled; they provide a wide range of interesting activities to match children's aptitudes and interests, both indoors and out, which ensure their rapid progress in all the areas of learning. As a result, children progress from having skills and knowledge in the key areas of personal development, language and numeracy well below those typical for their age to skills in line and sometimes exceeding those expected by age four. The special emphasis teaching puts on emotional development is particularly successful and promotes rapid progress in children's independence. Staff are also successful in bridging the gap between girls' and boys' early writing by helping them to develop positive attitudes to it.

Many benefits arise from the nursery's close liaison with the Family Centre: parents continue their own education and work with their own children on family learning. Many specialists such as the speech therapist, work with children in a familiar environment. Children who take advantage of the centre's playgroup and toddler opportunities have a smooth transition into nursery. These developments secure very good relationships with parents, further enhanced by the headteacher's excellent communication with parents and regular invitations to school events and consultations.

The headteacher and staff are always looking for ways to improve the nursery, recognised in the Investors in Children Award. They have successfully modified how and what they teach to incorporate and develop children's ideas. They have also adapted the accommodation, including the outside area, to make it more open, attractive and serviceable to support children's learning. They are keen to make provision even stronger. Governance is very effective and governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life, as well as monitoring outcomes. The nursery school provides excellent value for money and is in an excellent position to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no areas for improvement that the school has not already identified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Most children begin nursery with skills and knowledge well below those typical for this age group in the key areas of language, calculation, and personal and social skills. These areas are given priority and as teaching and learning are very effective, children make excellent progress. As a result, the majority transfer to reception classes having reached the levels expected for their age, with an increasing number exceeding these levels. Staff have been particularly successful in raising standards in boys' early writing. This has been achieved through the use of better resources, improvements in matching sounds to letters and targeted staff training. The school's rigorous self-evaluation is used well to identify individual priorities for all children. Children learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress, similar to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Attendance is improving, underlining how much children enjoy school. They comment enthusiastically about activities using metal detectors, role-play in the Airport Lounge and playing with puppets. They say their teachers are kind and teach them how to stay healthy by eating well, exercise and sleep, recognised in the Healthy School Award. They feel safe in school because staff watch over them, teach them to use equipment correctly and lead them to safety during fire drills. Children have continuous access to interesting activities from the start of the day and there are many enjoyable learning opportunities, both indoors and out. This develops their confidence very well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The happy family atmosphere at lunchtime reinforces language development and greatly enhances social skills. In the sensory room children experience the delights of quiet reflection and discuss their feelings well. Staff provide excellent role-models of courtesy and consideration, explaining carefully what behaviour is acceptable. As a result, children copy them, helping each other, taking turns, sharing and behaving well. They are keen to accept responsibility and participate in cultural and community projects, including fund-raising. By the time they leave, the children are very well prepared for Reception.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Children make very good progress because the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers establish very positive relationships with the children who grow in confidence. Learning areas are organised to encourage independence and ensure that activities match children's interests and abilities. The staff listen to children well and help them develop and extend their own ideas. All adults are particularly skilful at working alongside children, developing their language. They ask questions, comment sympathetically and give commentaries to clarify ideas and expression. They encourage children to give extended answers to questions and expect others to listen carefully. Phonics are very well taught and teachers' insistence on correct speech motivates children to speak clearly. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included in all aspects of teaching and learning and the staff promote their confidence and skills very effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is vibrant, very well planned and organised and there is something in it for everyone. Staff harness children's ideas into the planning of topics and adjust activities as they observe children's responses and progress. This effective evaluation helps sustain children's interest and concentration. Priority is given to learning letter sounds, writing, number, personal and social development and these are imaginatively developed across the curriculum. Children experience a wide range of stimulating activities and interesting resources. The outdoor area gives them access to vigorous play on tricycles and climbing frames and offers opportunities to develop aspects of learning, such as planting and growing, sculpting in willow and hunts for mini-beasts in the bog garden! There is a good variety of visits and visitors as well as recycling and international projects, which has led to the achievement of Bronze and Silver Eco Awards and the International School Award. No wonder children are excited about their learning. One day they prepare sandwiches and orange juice for lunch, the next they give presentations using information and technology skills for other schools!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. The integrated approach to working with children and their families through all the facilities available in the Family Centre and nursery is extremely well planned and successful. This ensures a seamless transition from toddler group through to primary school. All staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe and supported at all times. The required procedures are in place to safeguard children and health and safety systems are regularly reviewed. The headteacher ensures that staff are well trained to meet the needs of all children. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is identified from information gathered before they enter the school in order to improve the effectiveness of learning. All staff carefully monitor children's learning, including their personal development, to identify strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, the staff's planning is based on previous learning and children are continuously given support to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The school is very well managed by a highly committed headteacher, who successfully communicates her clear vision for the school to staff, governors, parents and children. A talented assistant headteacher and a strong team of highly professional staff ably assist her. Accommodation is limited but recent refurbishment, incorporating staff ideas, has made it more attractive and fit for purpose. The headteacher has successfully led initiatives to make learning opportunities more child friendly and has empowered staff to lead other developments to raise achievement. As a result staff are a well trained team, promoting high quality care and education.

Governance is excellent. Governors have managed resources very effectively to improve facilities and are well equipped to make future decisions because they are active in school life and in the monitoring of provision. They have a very good knowledge of the school and the adjacent Family Centre. They have learned well from their experience of running these facilities and

together with staff, have excellent capacity to make any necessary improvements. The school provides excellent value for money.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

28 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Monkchester Road Nursery School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2LJ

I really enjoyed my two days in your lovely nursery school. Thank you for being so kind when I was with you.

Your school is an excellent school. Your teachers take great care of you and their teaching is outstanding. No wonder you are learning so very well! They know what you have to learn and they make sure everyone is successful. I enjoyed your activities, especially in the Sensory room. I wanted to join in myself. I also loved seeing the butterflies hatch and was very excited when you found a mini-beast in your bog garden. You are caring for your plants very well. They look so healthy and I know you'll enjoy eating the vegetables. I noticed you enjoyed riding on your new 'road' and was very pleased to see you stop at the 'STOP' sign. It seems good fun learning your letters. Your actions help you remember very well.

I know your parents, grandparents and carers love your nursery school. They told me in their letters. I have never read so many good comments! They think your headteacher and teachers are so kind and understanding. 'Monkchester Road Nursery is a very well run school', they write. I agree with them and I am very glad they wrote to me.

I am really pleased you are doing so well. I hope you carry on enjoying school and learning lots of interesting things.

Yours sincerely

Joan Elton

Lead inspector