

Monyash CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112843
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311025
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Gill Broadbent

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	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Harris
Headteacher	Mrs Virginia Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Monyash Bakewell Derbyshire DE45 1JH
Telephone number	01629812413
Fax number	

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is very small. It serves a rural community with many pupils coming from farming families. Very few pupils are from other than White British backgrounds or are in the early stages of learning English. Few pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. Pupils usually start the Reception class with the skills expected for their age except in communication, language and literacy which are lower, but this varies considerably from year to year. Currently, below average proportions of pupils have learning difficulties and/ or disabilities.

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 some excellent aspects. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the school's Christian ethos. The key to success is the clear direction provided by the headteacher. This creates effective teamwork, high aspirations and a focus on each pupil's achievements so that they reach aspirational targets. Pupils' interests and needs come first. Staff, governors and parents work together harmoniously for their benefit. Consequently, pupils reach good standards, achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. The vast majority of parents appreciate all that the school provides especially its focus on the individual child.

Since the previous inspection, many aspects have improved which demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. Standards and achievement have improved in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT) from average to good and in mathematics to excellent. In science, they are not quite as high as in English or mathematics. In these last two subjects, a monitoring system is used very effectively to check regularly pupils' standards and progress to ensure they meet challenging targets. The school knows pupils' strengths and areas to improve accurately, and has identified that this system has the potential to help raise standards and achievement in science to match more closely those in English and mathematics.

Good standards of care, support and guidance help to develop pupils' good personal skills and ensure their well-being. Pupils enjoy school enormously and love learning. Their excellent attendance, behaviour, and the lack of bullying contribute to a happy and industrious learning environment. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and develop an understanding of the differences between safe and harmful drugs. They eat healthily and support the school's request to eat fruit or healthy snacks at school. They take every opportunity to play team games and enjoy physical activity. Good standards and excellent teamwork, together with their improved ICT skills, help to prepare pupils well for their future lives and economic well-being.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Marking is helpful and encouraging so that pupils know how to improve their work. Staff know how pupils learn and are usually adept at providing work at the right level for each pupil in their mixed age classes. The good curriculum provides rich experiences for pupils that they find fascinating and stimulating such as the visit to a Multifaith Centre. Pupils really enjoy topic work but do not have enough opportunities in all subjects and activities to use their ICT skills more widely. The staff take every opportunity to exploit opportunities to provide even more after-school activities. The pupils still talk about their success in winning a water polo tournament.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher focuses the school's work on ensuring that it adds good value to each pupil's learning. This is important in a small school where standards can vary from year to year, depending on pupils' capabilities. Staff teamwork has successfully ensured that the momentum in pupils' learning is maintained as they move from Year 2 to Year 3. Staff check how well they have succeeded in meeting their aims and revise their actions in the light of the rigorous evidence they have collected. Governance is good. Governors now hold the school to account for pupils' outcomes and ensure that the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children transfer from the local nursery school in their Reception year. Strong links between the schools ensure a smooth transition.

Relationships with parents are good and children thrive in the warm, caring environment. After a short time, the children settle quickly and confidently into their new surroundings. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks. Children enjoy learning to form letters and choosing writing activities. They learn, for example, to move programmable toys, join in counting activities and move in different ways to music. Staff make the most of the village hall and a small outdoor learning environment, to which children have free access. But space is limited for robust outdoor activities.

Staff identify children's strengths and the areas of learning that are less well developed, such as in communication, language and literacy. They plan activities to meet each child's needs based on frequent and accurate observations of their development in each area of learning. These records show that, depending on their different starting points and needs, some meet the expected standards for their age, and others exceed them. There are few children so that standards vary enormously from year to year, but progress is usually good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in science by using the school's effective monitoring system to check pupils' progress and provide timely intervention so that they reach challenging targets.
- Extend the use of ICT more widely across all subjects and topics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In Years 1 and 2 individual pupils continue to make the good progress started in the Foundation Stage, and achieve well to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 standards and achievement in mathematics are consistently high. Over time standards and achievement in science, although good, have lagged behind English and mathematics, which have been the focus for improvement. Science is now a whole-school priority. In English, standards are above average but this does not tell the full story because they are higher in reading than in writing. Action taken has reduced the gap between reading and writing. But staff are not complacent and continue to analyse pupils' work to identify future actions to bring about further improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoughtfully consider aspects of life, such as care for others, respect and tolerance. They understand the difference between right and wrong and are proud of their excellent behaviour on school visits. They care for each other and empathise with each other's feelings. Their cultural understanding encompasses all these qualities as they respond with respect towards people of other faiths and cultures, shown by their response to the Multifaith Centre visit. They make a strong contribution to the school and local community because they participate in events and express their views. Through involvement in the Village Plan, they have brought about improved facilities for children. They are proud to undertake tasks and responsibilities around school,

such as caring for younger pupils, especially at play and dinner times. The pupils say that they really enjoy their learning in a small environment. They are mainly well prepared for their future lives, except for the limited opportunities to practise their ICT skills; the school also knows that there is more to do to improve skills in writing and science.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Strengths of teaching are the positive relationships developed between all staff and pupils, who show each other mutual respect. Planning for a variety of abilities and ages in each class is good. The robust and accurate checks and assessments of pupils' progress and their use in planning for learning, especially in English and mathematics, are real strengths. This is not the case in science, where these checks are not made. Therefore, work is appropriate but not quite at the precise level as in English and mathematics. Good questioning skills used in lessons help to develop pupils' understanding. Routines are well established so that pupils are prepared well to work independently, with a partner, or in groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to take account of national initiatives. Every opportunity is seized to provide a rich, varied and well-balanced curriculum despite the limitations of the site. The curriculum is carefully organised so that pupils do not repeat work in the three mixed age classes. Projects such as The Victorians are well planned to develop historical skills of enquiry. Good quality artefacts and visits to places such as Chatsworth bring the work to life and provide experiences of a White British heritage. Visitors provide exciting experiences of music and dance from other countries. The school has no hall or school field but the staff do all they can to limit the impact this has. Pupils take a short walk to the village hall for physical education and after-school clubs for netball and football are a vital part of the curriculum. There are too few opportunities planned for using ICT to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

These are good and some aspects are excellent. The school meets the latest statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils. It provides a safe, caring and supportive environment in which pupils thrive and do well. Staff's excellent liaison with other agencies, schools and partners provides pupils with the support and guidance they need to ensure their well-being. They provide lessons in farm safety which is important in this farming area. As a result, pupils say they feel well supported and well cared for. The guidance provided by staff through their checks on progress, supportive marking and setting challenging targets with pupils and their parents is good in most respects, but not yet in key science skills. The staff identify the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities and those learning to speak English as a second language and provide support so that they are well catered for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, governors and staff share high aspirations to achieve excellence. They are determined to improve good aspects even further. The headteacher's clear vision is reflected in the school's self-evaluation, which is rigorous and accurate, and takes account of the views of staff, parents and well-informed governors. The initiative to improve the provision for drugs education was at the instigation of parents through responses to an annual questionnaire. Governors' and pupils' involvement in the Village Plan has contributed towards plans to redevelop a village field for use by the local community for sporting activities. This will also be available for use by the school in the near future. All staff contribute to the succinct school improvement plan through their regular discussions and meetings. Priorities for development are manageable and the most important ones to help the school move forward. Governors are supportive and challenging, but visits to school are not always as well focused as they might be to add further support to its monitoring. Staff support each other by sharing their expertise and providing leadership on national initiatives. The school promotes racial tolerance and awareness very well. Performance management supports school improvement effectively. It is rigorous, well established and sets challenging targets that are achieved.

Annex A

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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

26 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Monyash C of E Primary School, Monyash, DE45 1JH

Thank you for your kindness and making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things that I found out about your school.

Your school is good and does some things exceptionally well. You usually reach good standards and achieve well by the end of Year 6. You do very well in mathematics where standards are outstanding. In English, you do well, but you are much better at reading than writing. In science, you do well but not as well as in English and mathematics. This is because the staff have focused on raising standards successfully in English and mathematics. Your personal development is good and your behaviour, attendance and some aspects of your development are excellent. For example, you think about others and show respect, tolerance and understanding towards those who are different. You enjoy the topics you study at school, but don't have enough opportunities to use your improved ICT skills to help you learn in other subjects. You make an excellent contribution to your school and the community. This has led to improvements to the play area through your work with the Village Plan. You also told me how much you enjoy learning in a small school where you know everyone and there is no bullying.

All the school staff put your needs first and work very hard to make sure that each one of you does as well as you can so that everyone makes good progress, no matter what your starting points and needs. However, they want the school to be even better. I have confirmed with the school that they will

- raise standards and achievement in science;
- improve your use of ICT in other subjects and topics.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gill Broadbent

Lead inspector