

Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114741
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311689
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Long
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Chadbourne
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	School Road Colchester CO2 8NN
Telephone number	01206 573849
Fax number	01206 768610

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2007
Inspection number	311689

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage, it includes some temporary accommodation for homeless families. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school during the year is high. There is an average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals but a higher-than-average proportion have learning difficulties and disabilities. A small but increasing number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. There is a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. On entry to the Nursery, children's attainment is very much lower than that expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in personal development. A high number of children, particularly boys, have extremely limited language skills.

The school has the national Healthy School award and is part of the local authority's 'Improving Success Programme'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Monkwick Infant and Nursery is a good school. It is correct in its judgement that it provides a good education underpinned by excellent care, guidance and support for its pupils. The headteacher, staff and governors have a strong and successful commitment to providing a happy school community where pupils and their families feel valued.

Achievement is good. This is because pupils feel safe and secure in school and are keen to take advantage of all it has to offer. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress. Proficient teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' good progress and self-esteem. However, standards at the end of Year 2 remain below average because pupils start from an exceptionally low baseline on entry to the school. Pupils make particularly good progress in developing speaking and listening skills. Whilst reading skills are taught well, progress in reading is satisfactory rather than good, because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and consolidate these skills by reading to adults.

Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school and their love of the many clubs and sports activities results in a high take-up rate across the outstanding range on offer. Lessons capture pupils' interest because teachers work hard to provide a good curriculum, taking themes and making relevant links between subjects and enlivening these with visits and visitors. Through activities such as aerobics and keep fit and a good choice of fruit and vegetables at snack time, for their age, pupils know a good deal about a healthy diet and the need for regular exercise.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their social skills develop well and, because teachers manage pupils' behaviour extremely skilfully, behaviour in school is good. Pupils are confident that any adult will 'sort out' any worries they may have. Most pupils show care and respect for one another when they work and play together. These qualities go a long way towards helping them to prepare for their future learning and economic well-being, but this preparation is no better than satisfactory because standards of basic literacy and numeracy are below average.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has continued her very good work noted at the last inspection and is very well supported by the two assistant headteachers. The school has good systems in place to check on its work and is well aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. The capacity for further improvement is good. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Nursery and Reception classes provide a good education. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well, with a strong focus on ensuring that children feel safe and secure. Parents are especially pleased with the care provided for their children. All staff work very well together to plan interesting learning opportunities within classrooms and in the outside learning environments. From exceptionally low starting points, in response to good teaching and strong links with outside agencies, children make good and often very good progress, particularly in developing their speaking and appropriate social skills. This development helps children to work and play together happily and prepares them well for their work in Years 1 and 2, even though standards on transfer to Year 1 remain well below those normally expected of five-year-olds. A sound start has been made on teaching children to hear and use letter sounds but not enough time is prioritised for this important learning. Progress in this particular respect

is therefore steady rather than good. Parents are positively encouraged and helped to be involved in their child's learning. Staff work very hard to reach out to parents who lack confidence in their ability to help their child.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in reading, by giving pupils more opportunities to read at a level where they can consolidate and develop their skills.
- In the Foundation Stage, provide even more opportunities for developing communication, language and literacy skills, particularly letter sounds.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From exceptionally low, though wide ranging, starting points, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, as do pupils arriving at school with very little English. These pupils are provided with well targeted help. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 boys do not do as well as girls, but from their lower starting points they progress at the same rate as girls

Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. They have remained steady even though since the last inspection, there has been a decline in children's attainment on entry to Year 1. The group of pupils assessed in 2007 had just over half with significant levels of learning difficulty or disability and a turnover of just under a quarter of the year group. Tracking data show that almost all pupils in the group made good progress, with a few making exceptional progress from very low starting points in Year 1. However, standards in reading were exceptionally low. The current Year 2 pupils also had very low starting points in Year 1 but they too are making good progress, except in reading, where progress is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They value themselves and respect others. Their moral development is reflected in their good behaviour and strong support for charities. Relationships are good amongst pupils and excellent between pupils and adults. Pupils learn much about culture through the enriched curriculum and clubs. They take opportunities for responsibility seriously. For example, Year 2 pupils are members of the buddy patrol. Attendance has improved; it is still below the national average, although it meets the local authority's target. Pupils' good involvement in the local community and the effective school council contribute strongly to their social development and understanding of citizenship.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Parents appreciate that teachers are 'helpful and approachable'. Pupils like and respect their teachers. Excellent relationships underpin the way teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils and help them to concentrate in lessons and do as well as they can. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well, and pupils make good gains from their very low starting points. Teachers take many opportunities to help pupils improve their

speaking and listening skills. The school has introduced a new scheme for teaching letter sounds and already knows that it needs to modify this in order to meet the needs of all its pupils.

Assessment practices are good. Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils know and need to learn next, and use this in their planning. Pupils with learning difficulties are very quickly identified and a high level of proficient support to help them is put in place. A new system to help pupils think about how well they are doing is very successful. Most pupils have a good idea of what they need to do to meet their targets and take pride in achieving them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Lessons and other activities are made interesting, which supports pupils' enjoyment of learning and their achievement. Links with local secondary schools give pupils many opportunities in physical education and sports. Each class has a short session of German each week, which pupils enjoy a great deal. The good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education strengthens their understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent pastoral care of pupils contributes to their feelings of security and self-worth, which in turn contribute to their good progress. Pupils enter the school with low levels of personal development but make rapid strides because of the outstanding provision. The school takes an effective range of actions to encourage good attendance and punctuality. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and for those who are vulnerable. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety fully meet current requirements.

Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils have short-term targets for improving their standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are also shared with parents. Pupils find these helpful and work hard to attain them. Teachers assess pupils' current standards accurately and know the standards they should reach by the end of the year. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is used exceptionally well to check that enough progress is made each term and, if it is not, for putting measures in place to help maintain good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team share an exceptional commitment to the care and support for pupils and their parents. Excellent links with outside agencies such as social services and mental health team promote pupils' well-being beneficially. A regular programme of lesson observations and looking at pupils' work gives the headteacher and senior team a good understanding of standards across the school. The local authority's 'Improving Success' programme has helped the school to refine its system for tracking pupils' progress. The headteacher has a crystal clear picture of progress which has helped the school direct resources to ensure even more success for both the most and least able of its pupils. The school sets realistic but challenging targets for pupils' attainment. By

determined management it has easily exceeded the targets set by the local authority. Currently, not enough resources are directed towards ensuring that pupils read to an adult more than once per week. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards remain similar even though data show a decline in standards at the end of Reception Year.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors find it difficult to recruit and retain members but a small core of enthusiastic governors work hard to ensure the school meets its statutory obligations and give the headteacher and staff their full support.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 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	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

8 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Monkwick Infant and Nursery School, Colchester, CO2 8NN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We enjoyed meeting you and were pleased that you shared your ideas and views about your school with us. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school and how it can be even better.

You go to a good school and everyone looks after you well. You like your teachers very much and know that any adult in the school will help you if you are worried. We thought that the teaching is good in your school. When we visited your classrooms and looked at your work we could see that your lessons are interesting, especially when your teachers use puppets or 'hot seating'. You told us that you like your clubs and we can see why. You are so lucky to have such a great choice and they help you to keep fit and healthy.

Your headteacher and assistant headteachers are doing a good job running your school and are improving things for you at a good rate. We have asked them to do some things to make it even better. Some of you could do even better with your reading if you have more time to practise reading books in which you know nearly all the words. We have also asked that children in the Reception and Nursery classes have more time to learn literacy skills such as letter sounds.

Thank you all again for your helpfulness. We hope you have raised lots of money with your Jeans for Genes day.

All good wishes,

Cheryl Thompson Lead inspector