

Montem Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131218
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	341111
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Elliott
Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Tait
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan. They looked at pupil and staff surveys, the tracking of pupils' progress, examples of pupils' work, case histories of some vulnerable pupils, minutes of governors' meetings and 61 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' achievement
- the effectiveness of provision for the more able
- middle managers' impact on driving improvement
- how well the curriculum responds to need and supports pupils' enjoyment and their achievement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school which serves a culturally diverse community. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around half speak English as an additional language. More pupils arrive and leave during the year than is the case in most schools. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than is usual, mostly for severe learning difficulties or emotional, behavioural or social difficulties. Extended services are provided, run by the governing body, so that the school operates from 8.00am to 6.00pm during term time offering a range of additional provision such as breakfast club, a play centre and after-school activities. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2009. A special school is housed on the site but this is not run by the governing body and is not part of this inspection. The 112 place Early Years Foundation Stage is housed in two Nursery and two Reception classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Montem Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher has quickly established his vision and focused the drive for improvement. He and his senior team are fully committed to raising attainment while maintaining the strong nurturing ethos for which the school has a justified reputation. As a result, all pupils are offered excellent levels of care, support and guidance which are instrumental in helping them learn and to develop self-control and self-esteem. For those who need additional support, the school's partnerships with others in the community are a strength.

Children get off to a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where all aspects are good and some outstanding practice is just emerging. Despite their good progress, children enter Year 1 with below average attainment because their starting points are low. By the end of Year 6 in 2009, overall achievement of the majority of pupils was satisfactory. However, attainment in mathematics and science improved from below average to average and this represented good achievement and progress in these subjects. The improvements were the result of more rigorous assessment procedures in these subjects, with learning targets identified for individual pupils, and better teaching. Attainment was below average in English overall, and in writing it dipped to well below average. Few pupils attained the higher national curriculum levels. Pupils' personal development is good, with clear strengths in moral and social aspects. Pupils get on well together at work and play. They are happy to be at school and they respond appropriately to learning opportunities provided by their teachers, with positive attitudes and mostly good behaviour.

Although effective action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and the use of assessment, some inconsistency persists. In some lessons, assessment is not used well enough to match tasks to ability, or to set targets and monitor pupils' progress. When this happens, pupils' attention falters and progress slows. Some good lessons were seen. These featured excellent relationships, good questioning, and the well-directed contribution of teaching assistants. Until recently, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning has been further restricted by the quality of curriculum planning. The school has recognised this and begun a process designed to develop links between subjects, using a thematic approach to make learning more relevant to pupils' future lives. Pupils enjoy the extended provision, particularly the broad range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has clear educational direction from the top, founded on accurate self-evaluation. Middle managers, while enthusiastic, are at an earlier stage of development and are being trained to take key monitoring roles. A number of factors indicate the school's good capacity to improve further. Senior leaders exhibit a passion

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for making improvements based on effective analysis of data. The positive impact of this is already evident in improved attainment in mathematics and science. The headteacher has very quickly established a strong teamwork ethic with staff, parents and governors who are working together with local authority expertise to raise attainment and rates of progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise standards, especially in writing by:
 - extending the good practice emerging in the use of assessment to
 - measure progress and set clear subject-specific learning targets for pupils
 - improving the way staff challenge more able pupils.
- Develop cross-curricular planning to improve links between subjects and help pupils understand the usefulness of the skills they are learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by developing the skills of the middle managers to monitor their departments and drive improvements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Progress and achievement are satisfactory overall. In 2009, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 was below average. Attainment in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 was broadly average overall. Learning and progress in mathematics and science accelerated in response to initiatives introduced to improve achievement. However attainment in writing fell as over half of the 2009 cohort failed to meet the expected levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make as much progress of others of the same age. The many pupils at an early stage of learning English also make equivalent progress because they are all supported well. Inspection evidence, in the classroom and in books scrutinised, shows that successful strategies used to improve attainment in mathematics are now being used to improve learning and progress in reading and writing. Although this is not yet consistent across the school, it is helping pupils understand what they need to learn next, and make their own checks on their learning, so that progress overall, in all the key subjects, is accelerated.

Pupils are interested in learning and show that they are prepared to listen. Pupils show good awareness of why they need to lead healthy lifestyles and the majority of pupils feel safe and secure in school. In the questionnaires, a minority of pupils and parents suggested that they were sometimes worried about behaviour. Inspectors talked with pupils and staff about this and looked very carefully at behaviour in and around school. They found that pupils' behaviour is good overall in the playground and in school, with few instances where it slips below the school's expected standard. In the Remembrance Day assemblies, behaviour was exemplary and pupils showed sustained reverence for the subject matter. Attendance is average. Outcomes in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Relationships throughout the school are good and pupils

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are well aware of right and wrong. Pupils routinely discuss ideas and reflect on what they are learning. Awareness, understanding of, and contribution to, the local community are good, and pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their futures through their attainment in literacy and numeracy and in their use of new technology.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The average and satisfactory nature of outcomes in pupils' attainment, achievement and progress is the result of predominantly satisfactory teaching. Some good lessons were seen. In these, good questioning, which requires pupils to draw conclusions and offer opinions, and good use of learning objectives to show what is expected are highlights. However, inconsistencies in the effective use of assessment information to plan lessons mean that some pupils are not given challenging enough tasks and others are not clear as to what success looks like in the tasks they are given. Good use is made of advice and training provided by officers of the local authority. Internal and external monitoring records indicate that teaching is improving and a greater proportion of good teaching is evident than at the time of the last inspection.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Work is in hand to develop the relevance and enjoyment value of the curriculum. There are some good features. An exciting range of additional activities is on offer, and useful partnerships with other groups, such as the adjacent special school, offer good support for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The personal, social and health education programme works well to support pupils' personal development. However, the work to introduce a more cross-curricular approach for several subjects, to make learning more meaningful, is at an early stage and the impact has not yet been assessed.

The outstanding pastoral and physical care and support the school provides for its pupils is a fundamental reason for the positive features evident in pupils' personal development. Staff know pupils well. Support for those who need additional help is exceptional; a clear strength of the school which is overwhelmingly recognised by pupils and parents. The activities which extend the school's provision at both ends of the day ensure a continuing ethos of pupil care.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and managers have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have made an accurate analysis of its current quality. They are driving improvements. Planning and performance management are robust, with challenging, measurable targets based on improved progress by pupils. Progress is analysed in detail so that support can be given to any pupils that fall behind, or action taken if this applies to a group of pupils or subject, as was successfully identified and tackled in 2008'9 for mathematics and science.

Inexperienced middle leaders and managers are now receiving the necessary training so that they can carry forward the senior leaders' vision for improvement and monitor classroom practice more accurately. The governing body takes a keen interest and is holding the school to account well. It has taken active steps to enhance collaboration with other schools, especially with the special school in the same building. The school has made significant gains in cohesion with its parents in this diverse community and is beginning to extend its efforts in the wider community. The inclusive ethos of the school and the diversity of its community ensure that equality of opportunity is well embedded. Diligent safeguarding ensures pupils are safe, underpinned by the excellent level of care. The current level of pupils' attainment and progress achieved confirms that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Based on their starting points, outcomes for children are good, even though by the time they start Year 1, most have not reached the standards expected of five year olds nationally. This year has seen significant improvement in the standards reached over 2008, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners. Progress in key skills and in the development of personal skills is good because of effective teaching, some of which is outstanding, and good leadership. This ensures individual needs are identified and provided for and children's welfare is promoted carefully. Children enjoy taking responsibility for small tasks such as putting away toys and this helps them develop skills for the future. Planning fully embraces the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and assessment is sharply focused on the individual. The space is extremely well planned with a wide variety of exciting and appealing activities so that children receive a balance of adult-led activities and those they choose for themselves. For example, the 'jelly corner' was not only very popular, but an excellent scientific learning area. Outdoor learning is an integral part of the day. Every area of learning has well-planned activities laid out and children show keen interest in enjoying the full range on offer. These are very well supervised by adults and progress is carefully assessed. The 'key person' role is well established to support children's needs and a good partnership is evident with parents, carers and outside agencies.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Nine out of every ten responses from eligible parents in this multi-ethnic community were strongly supportive of the school and its work. Parents rate very highly the way the school informs them of their child's progress and say their children enjoy school very much. Parents feel the school helps them support their child's work and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. A few parents questioned whether the school keeps their child safe, meets their needs, or takes account of parents' suggestions. A small number indicated that pupils' behaviour is not dealt with effectively and questioned whether the school prepared its pupils well enough for their futures or whether their child makes enough progress. Inspectors investigated the concerns expressed and agreed that although behaviour is good overall, just occasionally pupils' behaviour is not as good as the school wished it to be. They found no evidence to substantiate the other concerns. Pupils' progress and the way the school prepares pupils for their futures are satisfactory, given their attainment in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Montem Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	59	23	38	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	46	26	43	7	11	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	52	29	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	39	28	46	6	10	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	25	41	28	46	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	39	32	52	2	3	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	41	31	51	3	5	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	33	26	43	8	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	36	28	46	9	15	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	31	29	48	7	11	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	33	31	51	7	11	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	19	31	34	56	5	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	48	25	41	7	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Montem Primary School, Islington N7 7QT

A huge thank you for your warm welcome and help when I came to inspect your school. The tour guides gave us a super start to getting to know what you think of your school and what life is like at Montem.

I can tell you that the school is satisfactory. That means some things are fine and some things could be better. As I am sure you know, it is improving fast. Most of you can be proud of your behaviour and attitudes which show you are willing and eager to learn. Well done! In just one or two lessons, though, your behaviour is not so good. See what you can do about it as it slows down your learning.

Your headteacher and staff make a good team. They make sure you are safe and take extremely good care of you. Support for those of you with special learning needs is good. You told us you feel lucky to have an interesting range and number of clubs and activities and we agree. You obviously enjoy being at school. The school has started planning to link subjects together more. This makes subjects more interesting for you and we have asked the school to put more of its plans into action with this work.

Standards of writing were not high enough last year and we have asked the staff and governors to concentrate on improving your writing. They can do this by making sure all lessons are as good as the best and using the information they have about your progress to make sure they give you tasks that make you think a bit harder, especially those of you who find learning easy. They can also help by making sure you know exactly what to do to improve. You can help by listening to your teachers and working as hard as you can.

Your headteacher and deputy headteachers are doing a good job and they share some of the work with other staff with responsibility for various things. But we have asked that these other staff do a bit more to make sure all is as good as it can be in class.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane

Lead Inspector

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