

Montpelier Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134803
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	341531
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	634
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Clarke
Headteacher	Richard Light
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, looked at data collected by the school on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and procedures for keeping pupils safe. A range of documentation and pupils' books were scrutinised. Over 200 parental questionnaires were returned and scrutinised by the inspection team.

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

- the impact of teaching and learning on all groups of pupils
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels on driving the school forward and contributing to school improvement
- the performance of all pupils, and especially boys
- the progress of all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The few ethnic minority pupils represent a wide range of groups. The current proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Mobility of both pupils and staff is now stable, following a period of staff restructuring. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in three Reception classes. The school has close links with several local schools and a wide range of external agencies. The school holds the Healthy School Award and various international awards, is fully inclusive and has access for those with disabilities.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Montpelier Primary School is an effective and happy school. The pupils and staff feel secure, rightly take a great pride in their school and are proud of its achievements. Pupils enjoy attending. Typical comments include, 'We all love coming here.' Attendance is above the national average. The interesting curriculum is broad, well balanced and well organised and, as such, presents the pupils with a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. The school is developing a more creative curriculum but this is in its infancy. A topic-based approach gives the pupils opportunities to study more advanced topics, such as 'Fight for Freedom' and 'Africa'. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The staff and pupils feel the school is highly supportive and members do all they can to make newcomers welcome. One staff member stated, 'The staff and leadership team were so helpful when I arrived.' The pupils make a very positive contribution to both the school and local community. They are very polite, well mannered and positive about their education.

The school has gone through many changes over the past three years and the leadership team has regenerated its very positive reputation within the community. This is due to the high expectations of the head, staff and governors, whose single vision has resulted in good pupil outcomes. The school development plan is well focused and informed by accurate self-evaluation. The good leadership and management team are accurate in their self-evaluation of the school. Leaders and managers have created an Early Years Foundation Stage which provides a good start to the pupils' time in the school. The gap between boys and girls and other groups has closed and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress. The school has worked hard to improve attainment and progress in writing and English. Due to the changes made throughout the school and improvement in the attainment of pupils, the school has good capacity for future improvement.

The focus and drive of the headteacher and staff have raised the level of teaching and learning, which is now good overall. However, the modelling of exemplary teachers is not sufficiently well utilised in order to guarantee consistency of teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 2. Children enter Reception at or a little below age-expected levels and make good progress, with attainment at the end of the stage being higher than in previous years. This continues throughout the school, with pupils leaving with levels above national averages. The school has generated a range of useful and in-depth data on individual pupil performance and has used these effectively to raise attainment and standards in general. Although marking and assessment are impacting positively on pupils' progress and attainment, the school is aware that this is in its infancy and has yet to be embedded consistently throughout the school.

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Montpelier has good links with several other local schools, which it uses effectively to provide a range of sporting and curriculum opportunities for the pupils. There are also good links with a wide range of external agencies. The work carried out with the education welfare officer on improving attendance is a good example of the school's inter-agency work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the consistency and quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, by using exemplary teaching within the school more effectively in order to develop greater consistency of teaching and learning.
- Develop the role of middle leaders to ensure that the monitoring of marking and assessment is robust and consistently matches the best practice within the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In most lessons observed, pupils made good progress, and in some lessons they made outstanding progress, with achievement for all groups being good. In an excellent English lesson, for example, pupils were developing autobiographical writing skills. The teacher used a range of skills and techniques to engage all pupils fully. They were clearly focused on the learning objectives and their own targets. The lesson was lively and challenging throughout, with the pupils clearly enjoying the whole lesson, and relationships were excellent. Good use was made of partner work and pupils were encouraged to question and challenge each other and staff. The result was that all the pupils made excellent progress and learned valuable skills for their future development.

The focus of the leadership and management team on improving the education for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities has resulted in improved outcomes for this group of pupils. These pupils now make progress in line with their peers and the previous gap has been narrowed. Pupils value both the support and the resources given to them to enable them to overcome their difficulties. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment has also narrowed, mainly owing to the extensive work by the school on writing and English skills in general. The more creative approach to the curriculum has given pupils opportunities to develop a greater range of skills and knowledge, which in turn have impacted on other areas of learning. The research skills developed in the Years 2 and 6 topics on 'Africa' and 'Fight for Freedom' are excellent examples of this.

Children are given a positive start to their learning and the school has worked hard to overcome the issues it had in promoting writing. Throughout the school, pupils are confident, polite and enthusiastic in their learning, particularly so where teaching is at its best. The very few pupils who enter the school late, or who have language difficulties, are very well supported and settle in quickly and effectively.

The pupils enjoy their learning and this is reflected in their good and improving attendance. They demonstrate good social skills and are polite and helpful both to each other and to adults alike. The pupils' spiritual, social and moral understanding is strong

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and the effect of this can be seen in all they do and the way they behave. Pupils have an inquisitive approach to other cultures and faiths and, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, the school ensures that pupils' understanding of diverse cultures is strong. The school has various international awards in this area. It also has the Healthy School Award, which reinforces and develops pupils' positive understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school is working hard with a minority of pupils/families to develop this further. Pupils have a good understanding of staying safe and are confident in raising concerns to the leadership and management of the school should the need arise

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and the skills to use different approaches in order to enhance lessons. Good use is made of a range of resources and equipment, such as interactive whiteboards, to help make lessons fun and interesting. In outstanding lessons, the level of challenge and pace enthuse and motivate the pupils. Where lessons were satisfactory, the pace is slower and too teacher-directed. Generally,

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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good use is made of partner work and pupils find this informative and helpful in forming ideas. Pupils generally know their targets and lesson objectives but these are not consistently reinforced during lessons or through the marking and assessment processes. Thus, in some classes opportunities were missed to reinforce learning and gain accurate an assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Teachers set targets for their pupils and their progress is monitored, which has helped towards the improvement in pupil progress throughout the school. Middle managers, however, do not monitor these effectively enough to ensure the highest level of challenge for all.

The changes in, and approach to, the curriculum have resulted in its supporting learning to a much greater degree. All staff have worked hard to develop and introduce an approach which intermixes skills, knowledge and understanding, in a way that allows pupils to think and learn in a broader way. A wide range of visits and visitors are used to enhance learning and resources are carefully selected to support and develop understanding. There is also a wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular clubs that enrich and enhance the pupils' learning opportunities. For those for whom learning does not come so easily, the school has developed a very personal approach, effectively matching the curriculum and its content to the needs of the individual. This is further supported by excellent inter-agency links, which ensure the needs of these pupils are fully met.

The school is a very happy, caring and supportive environment. Pupils feel very safe and generally free from difficulties such as bullying. Parents have a very high opinion of the school and are overwhelmingly supportive of it. Pupils play a vital role in the life of the school and community, as peer mentors, members of a very active school council which works closely with the parent support group, house team captains and in raising money for a wide variety of causes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement, which is successfully communicated to and shared by most staff. Senior leaders know the school well and have accurately identified its strengths and weaknesses. With clear knowledge of its areas for development, senior leaders plan appropriately for improvement. They are well supported by knowledgeable, active and supportive governors, who effectively challenge

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and monitor all aspects of the school. Middle managers are not yet effectively involved in monitoring target setting and marking processes. This has resulted in inconsistent application throughout the school, with restricting effects on pupils' progress. Opportunities are missed to model and make the most of 'best practice'.

The school has excellent parental links, which have resulted in an effective partnership. Parents appreciate the school and actively engage in promoting its improvement. There is a very active 'Parents and Friends' group, with regular coffee mornings to bring the school and parents closer, as well as a wide range of fundraising events. Parents participate fully in various other aspects of school life, such as leaving events and open days/events. There is a weekly newsletter and well-presented website, to which staff, parents and pupils are welcome to contribute.

The school makes good use of a range of other partnerships, such as its 'cluster group' to help support and develop staff and provide learning and sporting opportunities for the pupils. Links with the local high school also enhance learning, as well as provide the older pupils with the opportunity to prepare for their future learning. Local sports clubs and facilities are also utilised to bring expertise into the school and allow pupils to use high-quality resources and centres.

The school successfully promotes equal opportunities, does not discriminate and is very inclusive. School principles are well modelled and taught by all staff, and have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development. The school promotes community cohesion well, as is demonstrated by its international awards and close links with several schools overseas. Local links are also strong and the pupils' responsible attitudes and behaviour in and around school reinforce the school ethos and teaching.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements well, and both staff and pupils state that they feel safe and secure in school. There are good safety and security systems in place for online learning and pupils understand the need for these measures well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
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	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well and make good progress towards the early learning goals. This is due to consistently good, and some outstanding, teaching. A prime example was a session related to model making, where a puppet was used to gain the children's attention and interest. Careful and thoughtful questioning and interaction between the adult and children, resulted in outstanding responses and language use from the children. One child responded, 'I think it is very stylish.' There is very good use of observations for assessment for learning, which are, in turn, used to plan future learning effectively.

Children acquire the qualities they need to enable them to make good progress in developing the skills they require in the future. This is developed through the consistent use of routines, giving children responsibility for small tasks and allowing them to initiate their own activities, so that they can be confident enough to make appropriate decisions and choices.

Children demonstrate how to stay safe and healthy through their good and sometimes outstanding behaviour. Relationships between peers, children and adults are very good. Excellent positive role models reinforce and develop this further.

Assessment is used effectively throughout by all staff, who carefully monitor children's progress and record it in their 'Learning Journeys'. Group and individual observations are utilised effectively to create baseline judgements. Leaders and managers give a clear direction, with a strong focus on achievement. Transition arrangements are strong and these are closely linked to the strong relationships with parents. There are good links with external agencies for staff development and to ensure the needs of all children are met. The monitoring role of the leadership and management is not yet embedded and so the school is missing out on the opportunity to refine and enhance practice further. All policies and safeguarding procedures are in place and meet requirements.

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

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Parents who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to the inspection team, are overwhelmingly supportive of and happy with the school. They feel the school is well led and has a strong and capable staff team. Parents feel the school is warm and supportive, with a positive learning atmosphere. They feel pupils make good progress, although a few felt this was not the case for all pupils. A small minority feel that communication could be better between school and home. The school has taken note of this and is assessing the impact of its current arrangements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Montpelier 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 201 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 634 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	113	56	83	41	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	54	90	45	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	33	115	57	12	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	37	113	56	6	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	75	37	113	56	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	35	117	58	9	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	34	127	63	4	2	1	1
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)	70	35	113	56	4	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	76	38	112	56	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	27	128	64	10	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	25	124	62	17	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	32	123	61	5	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	94	47	102	51	2	1	1	1

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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Montpelier Community Primary School, Plymouth, PL2 3LJ

Thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome. Your polite and very helpful attitude towards us helped to make our visit enjoyable. We were especially impressed by your positive approach and the pride you rightly take in your school. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You contribute to your local school community well and take pleasure in raising the reputation of the school. Many of you highlighted how secure you felt in school because the teachers and staff take good care of you all. You also stated you felt yours was a good school and we agree with your views.

The good relationships you have built up with the teachers and other staff encourage you to try hard and always do your best in lessons. The links you have with schools both locally and overseas give you a wide range of opportunities to broaden your understanding and knowledge of the world. The headteacher, governors and staff have all worked hard to make your school successful. In order to make your school even better, we have asked them to work on the following things:

- make sure you receive at least good teaching in all your lessons
- mark your work better so that you know how to improve it in the future
- have the right kind of information to ensure your teachers can make your learning challenging and enjoyable for all of you.

I wish you all the best in the future and I am sure you will all continue to help make your school an even better place for you to learn.

Yours faithfully,

Ronald Hall

Lead Inspector

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