

Monteagle Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130340
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	342834
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	677
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Medhurst
Headteacher	Nicholas Munns
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 25 lessons taught by 22 teachers. They held meetings with different groups of pupils, members of the interim executive board and school staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of school documentation including the development plan, policies related to safeguarding and information about pupils' progress. They also considered the views of parents and carers expressed in their responses to questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which teaching is improving in Key Stage 2
- the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the contribution of subject coordinators to raising achievement and improving teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of systems to track pupils' progress.

Information about the school

This very large primary school draws its pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. The largest group are of White British heritage and about one in four is of Black African origin. Most pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant minority are at the early stages of learning English. About one in four pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is higher than average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties and a few have emotional and behavioural problems. The school population includes a number of pupils from families who are refugees and seeking asylum. The school was judged to require special measures at the last inspection. The local authority subsequently withdrew delegated responsibilities from the governing body. Since then, the work of the school has been overseen by an interim executive board. A new shadow governing has now been appointed and there are plans to restore their full delegated responsibilities as soon as possible. The previous headteacher left the school after the last inspection and an executive headteacher from another local school was appointed in November 2008. There has been a considerable turnover of staff in recent years, but from September 2009 all but one of the teachers is a permanent employee.

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

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Monteagle has improved significantly since its last inspection under the clear and purposeful leadership of the executive headteacher, supported by his leadership team and the interim executive board. A unity of purpose and common drive for improvement has been established amongst all members of staff. This has resulted in considerable improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, which in turn has led to accelerated progress for pupils. Realistic and accurate self-evaluation shows that school leaders recognise that more needs to be done before this improvement is firmly embedded. This indicates that the school currently has a satisfactory capacity to sustain its trajectory of improvement.

A considerable strength of the school is the care it provides for its pupils and their families by offering a warm welcome to all. Of particular note is the very good support it gives to its vulnerable pupils, including those with learning and social problems. One parent, echoing the views of others commented, 'School staff are easy to approach and will always answer questions about your child's progress and general issues.' Almost all parents and carers believe that their children are safe in school and this is echoed by the pupils themselves, who express great confidence in the adults around them.

Consequently, the school is a very harmonious community and pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together. Pupils are friendly and polite and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. The school engages well with its parents and has a range of effective partnerships to support pupils' welfare and learning needs.

Children quickly become confident and eager learners in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the warm and stimulating environment for learning. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 because of mostly good teaching. In Key Stage 2, staffing difficulties have hampered development over several years. As a consequence, pupils' progress has been inadequate and attainment too low by the end of Year 6. Teaching is now much more consistent and continues to improve. As a result, pupils' progress is improving rapidly. All groups of learners are now making at least satisfactory progress with some doing better. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining at significantly higher levels and are on course to exceed challenging targets. Whilst this improvement is substantial, much of it is quite recent as a result, attainment remains low.

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. They use

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questions skilfully to develop pupils' understanding of what they are learning. In a few lessons, activities do not challenge pupils enough, particularly the more able, and teachers do not give them enough opportunities to discuss their ideas and consolidate their learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and conscientiously, but the extent to which it helps them to improve is variable. The school is making better use of data to track the progress of individuals and groups. Teachers' skills in assessing pupils' progress are improving rapidly but are not yet entirely reliable. As a result, leaders' analysis of data to compare the performance of different groups of learners is underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by January 2011 through:
 - providing consistently high levels of challenge for all groups of learners, particularly the more able
 - giving pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their own ideas and consolidate their learning
 - ensuring that marking consistently helps pupils to improve their work.
- Embed tracking and assessment systems to enable all pupils to make good progress and raise attainment through:
 - developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' progress
 - ensuring that assessment data are based on accurate information
 - the routine analysis of the performance of all groups of pupils to identify potential underachievement at an early stage and to set challenging targets for improvement.

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

Pupils display good attitudes to learning in lessons. They apply themselves diligently to the tasks they are given and seek to do their best. Pupils respond thoughtfully to the questions they are asked, for example in a Year 5 literacy lesson when they discussed the meaning of Bob Dylan's 'Blowing in the Wind'. They cooperate very well together when discussing ideas with their 'talk partners'. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities, for instance when measuring the quadrangle in a numeracy lesson and then working out how many times they would need to walk round it in order to complete a kilometre. Allied to better teaching, this illustrates why pupils' progress is accelerating in Key Stage 2. Although attainment is low, it is improving because pupils are now closing the gaps in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and emotional problems are helped to become confident learners and to make as much progress as their friends. A few pupils remain too reliant on the adults around them which inhibits the development of their independent learning skills.

Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to the school community as prefects and

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school councillors, for example, and are confident that adults listen to their ideas. They raise money for charities but their involvement in the wider community is more limited. Pupils' improving behaviour is evident in the significant reductions in exclusions this year. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy school. They enjoy all the additional activities they have to do and the sports activities, in particular, enhance pupils' good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Attendance has improved markedly in recent years which, together with improving basic skills, indicates that pupils are now satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and the world beyond.

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	4
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	3
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 care and welfare of pupils are a high priority for all members of staff. The school's commitment in this area is evident in the work of the parent support adviser who provides an important bridge between home and school and keeps a close eye on vulnerable pupils. This work is invaluable in supporting families experiencing difficulties, for example asylum seekers and refugees. A number of pupils speak little or no English

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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when they first join the school. Good support is provided for these pupils and their families so they rapidly acquire the language they need to make sense of the curriculum. Those with behavioural difficulties are given individualised programmes of support which allow them to remain in school without disrupting the learning of others. Pupils know the school's expectations of their behaviour and say that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. There are an increasing range of effective strategies to help those who find learning a bit more difficult and who are in danger of falling behind. The school has been extremely effective at working with parents to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

The school's provision for the development of basic skills, including information and communication technology, is improving. This is helping to raise pupils' attainment and enjoyment of learning. Sometimes, however, teachers plan to extend more able pupils in particular, through additional, rather than harder, work which curtails their progress. Pupils' experience is considerably enhanced through additional activities, notably in sports and visits and visitors to the school. The way that teachers link different aspects of the curriculum together is currently underdeveloped. As a consequence, pupils do not always see how their learning fits together.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher has been conspicuously successful in communicating high expectations and galvanising the enthusiasm of staff in securing improvements. An effective focus on improving the quality of teaching has led to clear improvements, although there is still a way to go to ensure consistently good teaching. Leadership is becoming more widely distributed and subject leaders, for example, are now having an impact on raising achievement and improving teaching and learning in their areas. The interim executive board has provided good strategic support to the executive headteacher and is currently training the shadow governing body so that it is well equipped to take up its duties as soon as possible.

School leaders are successful in promoting the welfare of pupils and this is evident in the extremely robust arrangements for the safeguarding of children which go beyond legal requirements. The school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination are evident in its work to eliminate discrepancies in the performance of difference groups of learners. For example, last year the school

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identified that the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those from Black African backgrounds was particularly weak. Concerted efforts in these areas have resulted in better progress for these pupils and a reduction in the gaps between different groups of learners. The school's success in promoting community cohesion locally is evident in the harmonious atmosphere within the school, although its work at the national and global levels is currently more limited.

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	3
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	3
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

When children begin school their skills and understanding are below those that are typical for their age, especially in their language and communication skills and personal and social development. They settle down quickly and respond very well to the well-established routines and the expectations of staff. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes children from a wide range of cultural backgrounds learn to cooperate very well and play together harmoniously. Hence, they make exceptionally good progress in their personal and social development which provides a very firm foundation for their future learning. Staff devise exciting activities which develop children's skills and understanding in all areas of their learning. There is a good balance of activities between those that are led by adults, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and those that children choose for themselves. The outdoor spaces are used well to extend learning, but can be quite crowded in the Reception area because of an additional class, which limits the opportunities for staff to extend children's learning. There are good systems in place to check on how well children are doing and this information is used effectively to plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, children make good

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progress in all areas of their learning but overall do not reach the expectations for children of this age by the time they start in Year 1 particularly in their communication skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Staff work well together as a team and set clear priorities for improvement based on accurate monitoring of provision and the progress of pupils.

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

Ofsted did not invite parents and carers to complete a questionnaire because this was a section 8 inspection that became a section 5. However, the school had sent out a questionnaire based on the Ofsted model shortly before the inspection. Over a 100 parents responded and this analysis of the views of parents and carers is based largely on their responses.

Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were very positive, confirming the school's good engagement with them. Virtually all said that their children enjoy their education and are safe at school. There were relatively few written comments in response to the questionnaire. However, parents and carers commended the approachability of staff and the quality of the care and support that had been offered to children who are vulnerable. A few pointed to improvements in the school, for example, 'The school is doing a great job with the new headteacher.' Inspection evidence supports all these positive views. A few parents expressed concerns about the way that bullying is dealt with. However, inspectors found that procedures for dealing with bullying are effective and pupils told them that they feel safe and that any incidents are dealt with effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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.



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11 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Monteagle Primary School, Dagenham RM9 4RB

You may know that I have made several visits to your school over the last year or so to see how you are getting on. As you will know, I made my last visit recently with two other inspectors. I have really enjoyed coming to Monteagle and I want to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. I thought you might like to know what we found out.

You will be pleased to know that the school no longer requires special measures. This means that it has improved a lot and is now giving you a satisfactory education. The headteacher and all the staff have worked hard to make the school better for you all. We are especially pleased with the improvements to teaching in Key Stage 2. This is helping you to make better progress in English, mathematics and science. Your attendance has also improved a lot. Well done and keep it up!

You told us that you enjoy school and that you feel very safe. We found that everybody in school looks after you very well, especially those of you who have difficulties from time to time. We were impressed with how hard you work in lessons and how well you all get on together.

Your headteacher and staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have suggested a couple of things that we think will help.

- Although the teaching has improved it could still be even better. We have asked the teachers to make sure that work is not too easy for you. We also want them to give you plenty of chances to discuss your ideas with each other and to provide you with good advice on how to improve your work when they mark your books.
- We have asked the school to make sure that they keep a careful track on how well you are doing so that they can quickly spot if any of you are struggling. This will also help them make sure that you make even better progress.

All the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee
Lead inspector

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