

Inspection of a good school: Monkston Primary School

Wadhurst Lane, Monkston, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK10 9LA

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

Monkston Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils relish the challenges of the school's interesting and varied curriculum. They enjoy learning and are particularly keen to take part in the wide range of trips, clubs and visits on offer. Pupils strive to be like their 'learning superheroes' by being creative, inquisitive, reflective, resilient, resourceful and cooperative. They love earning 'Monkston points' in recognition of their efforts.

Pupils are friendly and kind. They are supportive and encouraging of one another. They celebrate the successes of their peers by offering praise to each other. For example, one boy was heard during the inspection whispering, 'Good job!' to his partner. All members of the school community are valued and cared for. One pupil said that even when they have left the school, 'we will always be part of the Monkston family.'

Pupils feel looked after and they feel safe. They say that there are trusted adults in school that they can go to for help if they are worried. Bullying is extremely rare. One pupil said, 'From the very first minute you enter the school you are taught not to bully, so this never happens.' Pupils know that if it did happen, teachers would deal with it really quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum that teaches pupils important knowledge in the right order. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Learning to read is a priority. Teachers and teaching assistants follow a well-sequenced programme in daily phonics lessons. Teachers regularly check which sounds pupils have remembered. Adults then plan extra activities to help pupils learn any sounds they have forgotten. Children make a strong start to learning phonics in the early years. They secure firm foundations of important knowledge, ready for future learning. As pupils move through the school, their reading knowledge and skills develop well. They become confident, fluent readers by the time they leave school.

Leaders also give high importance to nurturing pupils' love of reading. Teachers read to pupils every day. Teachers select books that pupils enjoy and that support pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, teachers in the early years sometimes choose books about counting and number. Pupils thoroughly enjoy story times. They show genuine excitement while listening to a story.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They have high expectations for what pupils can do. Teachers explain important concepts clearly using subject-specific vocabulary. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' language. Teachers use rich language to extend pupils' vocabulary. This helps pupils to explain their thinking. Pupils rise to this challenge. They use the words they have learned confidently when they are explaining their ideas and when reading and writing.

Teachers use quizzes and questioning to check what pupils have remembered. Teachers use this information well to recap important learning and to give pupils the help they need to remember essential knowledge. Leaders and teachers know pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from extra support that is carefully tailored to their individual needs. This helps pupils with SEND to be successful in their learning.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified precisely enough when key concepts will be revisited in each topic. In these subjects, pupils occasionally find it difficult to draw on their prior learning when learning a new topic. In some subjects, the content that pupils study does not sufficiently reflect the diversity in British society. Leaders know what needs to be done to further improve the curriculum. Work is well underway to address this.

Pupils listen attentively during lessons. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions. Pupils are eager to learn. In the early years, children concentrate on their tasks and are curious when learning new things. For example, they persevere when counting, checking to make sure that they are correct. Lessons are not disrupted and no learning time is wasted.

Leaders arrange a variety of experiences to enhance pupils' learning at school. For example, the school holds a careers fair to encourage pupils to have high aspirations for their future. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They take part in road safety workshops and learn how to make an emergency phone call.

Leaders have created a positive working environment for all staff. Staff say that leaders are supportive of their well-being. Staff value the training, support and guidance that they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where all adults make pupils' safety and well-being their top priorities. Leaders train staff so that they have a good understanding of the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. All staff are vigilant in their approach to keeping pupils safe.

Leaders work with different agencies to make sure that pupils, and their families, get the help and support they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online. They know that if they receive a worrying message, they should take a screenshot and report it to an adult straight away.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have planned a well-sequenced, ambitious curriculum. In a small number of subjects, however, the specific key concepts that pupils will study have not been identified precisely enough. Leaders need to continue with their work to refine subject plans, making sure that there is sufficient detail regarding the crucial key concepts that pupils will be taught. Leaders should ensure that this work is completed quickly so that pupils can draw more effectively on their prior learning.
- In some subjects, the content that pupils study does not sufficiently reflect the diversity in British society. For example, pupils do not learn enough about artists from different backgrounds. Leaders should continue to explore further opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity and difference across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Monkston Primary School, to be good in February 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	144137
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10200845
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Megan Crawford
Headteacher	Hannah Williams
Website	www.monkston.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Kingsbridge Educational Trust.
- The school offers before- and after-school childcare provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector also met with representatives of the school's local governing body and the board of directors of the Kingsbridge Educational Trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- The inspector met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training records.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views. This included formal meetings with pupils and informal discussions during playtime, lunchtime and in lessons. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector spoke to parents and staff to gather their views. The inspector also considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and staff's responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Leah Goulding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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