

Montem Primary School

Chalvey Grove, Slough, SL1 2TE

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too many pupils are leaving school at the end of Year 6 without reaching the expected standards for their age in English and mathematics.
- There is too much teaching that requires improvement in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The most-able pupils are not always given work or questions that really stretch them in lessons, so they do not make as much progress as they could.
- The leaders' self-evaluation and development planning are not based on a rigorous enough assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors have not been vigilant enough in challenging the leaders about pupils' standards or the link between staff pay and performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are invariably positive and they behave well in lessons and around the school. Their attendance has improved considerably over the past few years.
- Children are given a good start in the early years because of the good teaching they receive there.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons, assemblies and a wide range of clubs and educational visits.
- Recent improvements in the teaching of reading and how this is monitored are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place over two days, with a team of five inspectors, three of whom were present on the second day only.
- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, or part lessons, small group work, one-to-one sessions, a learning walk, two assemblies and lunchtime activities. They listened to children reading and talked to them about books.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils during lessons, around the school and in two organised meetings. They spoke with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body, teachers with subject and other responsibilities, other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with a local authority adviser who has been working with the school and with the principal of a local federation trust that has established a partnership with Montem Primary.
- Inspectors analysed the 70 responses to the staff questionnaire. It was not possible to analyse parents' views as there was only one response on Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school development plan, draft self-evaluation form, reports following visits by the local authority adviser, pupils' progress data, safeguarding documents and records, policies, a range of pupils' work, performance management targets and outcomes, and records of the monitoring of lessons.

Inspection team

Helena McVeigh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Philip Littlejohn	Additional Inspector
Olson Davis	Additional Inspector
Derek Watts	Additional Inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Montem Primary is a much larger-than-average school, with a roll that has risen each year over the past few years. There has been extensive building work to accommodate an extra form of entry. There are currently four forms in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3. Other year groups have three forms and the Nursery accommodates 22 pupils each morning and afternoon.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funds through the pupil premium is above average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very wide range of ethnic groups are represented, with the largest groups of Pakistani, Black African and Romany heritages.
- Nearly three quarters of pupils are learning English as an additional language, which is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive extra support through school action because of their disabilities or special educational needs is in line with the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- The school has a much higher than average proportion of pupils that start or leave school at times other than the beginning of the Reception Year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve
 - encouraging teachers to adopt a greater sense of urgency in lessons so that learning proceeds at a faster pace
 - reducing the time spent by teachers talking to the whole class to give pupils more time to try things out for themselves
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in speaking in class
 - ensuring that when marking pupils' work, all teachers include constructive comments that show pupils how to improve, and that pupils are given time to respond.
- Ensure that the most-able pupils make faster progress in their learning by:
 - giving these pupils tasks or asking them questions that really stretch them to think hard and apply their understanding to novel situations
 - providing them with more time to work independently on tasks.
- Ensure that more pupils reach the standards expected in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching across the school (see above)
 - setting more ambitious targets for pupils' progress and attainment in each year group
 - applying the effective approach adopted for improving the quality of reading to improving writing and mathematics
 - providing pupils across the key stages with more opportunities for extended writing.

- Improve the leaders' self-evaluation and development planning by:
 - monitoring teaching and learning more systematically and rigorously, with a clearer focus on pupils' progress, including the progress of different groups, with dates of observations and an analysis of the observations
 - setting more measurable and ambitious targets for achievement.

 - Improve the governors' role in challenging the school's leaders by:
 - ensuring that they have a clear understanding of the performance data and what schools in similar circumstances can achieve
 - ensuring that they know how to hold the leaders to account and how to make decisions about, and link between, the outcomes of staff appraisal and about movement up the pay scale
 - An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Too many pupils are not attaining the age-expected standards at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school does not always have high enough aspirations for what pupils can achieve. This is reflected in the lack of high-level targets for pupils to achieve at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The most-able pupils do not always make enough progress when they are given the same tasks as everyone else in the class and the work does not stretch them to think hard and apply their understanding to novel situations.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress, often better than their peers. The school looks after its vulnerable pupils effectively.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive effective additional help and make rapid progress in the early years. They make more progress than other pupils in the school through Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils from the main ethnic groups in the school also often make more progress than others in the school.
- Many pupils lack confidence in speaking aloud or at length in front of their peers. There are, though, some excellent opportunities for them to speak in front of their peers, such as when Year 5 presented a play during assembly, but not enough particularly lower down the school.
- Pupils get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Their attainment on entry is below the expected levels for their age and around one third are at an early stage of learning English. By the end of Reception, pupils' attainment is much improved, but still just below expectations in some aspects of their learning.
- Progress in reading has improved considerably in Key Stage 1 this year because of regular and relentless monitoring by the phase leader, who is acting literacy coordinator. There has been well-received training for staff in phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) as well as demonstration lessons, peer observations, half-termly tracking of progress, use of benchmarking kits, and effective one-to-one reading recovery sessions for four pupils.
- Pupils in nearly all year groups are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 5 are making particularly rapid progress and around a third of them have already reached Level 4 in mathematics, which is the expected level for the end of Year 6.
- The school has been successful in closing the gap for its less advantaged pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who receive pupil premium funding, outperformed their non-eligible peers in the 2012 national tests. For example, the average point scores for eligible pupils were 25.5 and 26.0 for English and mathematics respectively, compared with 24.3 and 24.8 for other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much of the teaching requires improvement. While there is much good teaching in all year groups, in the past this has been inconsistent and has failed to bring about rapid enough progress in pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. The most-able pupils are sometimes given the same work as the rest of the class; it is too easy for them so they make less progress than they should.
- Teachers often spend too long introducing the lesson and talking to the whole class, which slows the pace of learning and limits the amount of time that pupils have to try things out for themselves. Also teaching assistants have little to do during these over-long sessions.
- The over-use of worksheets constrains what pupils can write and reduces the amount of extended writing.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of

young children and assess them very thoroughly. The way that they help children learn their letters and sounds (phonics) is particularly good.

- Aspects of effective teaching are evident in all year groups. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good relationships with their pupils and mostly manage behaviour extremely well. They consistently share the learning objectives with pupils as well as the success criteria, although these are not always sharp enough. The way that teachers question pupils to encourage them to think is very good in some cases.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and all provide encouraging feedback. Some teachers include constructive comments that indicate what needs to improve. However, pupils rarely respond to the comments and some continue to make the same mistakes as before.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they feel safe and they are not concerned about bullying which is dealt with quickly by staff.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly from 91% two years ago to around 95% currently, which is in line with the national average. The school has worked hard to achieve this.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is nearly always good. Some pupils present challenging behaviour, but the staff usually manage this well. The school has never excluded a pupil.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they sit quietly during long lesson introductions and assemblies. They were extremely well behaved during an assembly when they clearly enjoyed watching the Year 5 class acting *The Tempest* and laughed spontaneously at the humorous acting by 'Caliban'.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet robust enough, although it has improved this year with support from an external consultant and the local authority adviser. Leaders are not focusing enough on pupils' progress and learning, particularly of different groups of pupils and the most able. Observations of lessons and pupils' work have become more regular, but these are not recorded in a systematic way and often not dated or analysed, so it is hard to track improvements for individuals or the school as a whole.
- The school's self-evaluation is not based on a rigorous enough assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The priorities in the school improvement plan are appropriate, but targets are not always ambitious or precise enough for senior leaders to be able to judge if their implementation has been successful or for governors to hold the leaders to account.
- The leadership team has been reorganised this academic year as a result of key staff leaving or going on maternity leave. There has been greater involvement of middle leaders (subject and key stage coordinators), who have responded well to their increased responsibilities. They have been given training and support by the local authority adviser.
- The monitoring of the performance of staff and the setting of targets have improved and are now managed well. There is an appropriate link between progress up the pay scale and performance of teachers, though this was not always the case in previous years.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its broad curriculum that includes a good focus on creative subjects such as art and music with, for example, children learning to play a musical instrument each year. Pupils are provided with good opportunities for learning outside the classroom through trips, for example, to Windsor castle and theatre. Pupils in Year 3 spoke with great enthusiasm about the trips and remembered what they had seen and what they had learned.
- The school meets all requirements relating to the safeguarding of its pupils. It promotes equality

of opportunity effectively and makes good use of the extra pupil premium funds to enhance opportunities for eligible pupils during lessons and through enrichment activities. Pupils new to learning English make good progress through targeted support within and outside of regular lessons. The school has recruited staff who can speak the languages of these pupils to help them settle in quickly.

- The local authority support has increased in the past year and has helped to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and middle leaders' involvement in the leadership and management of the school.
- The recent partnership with a local federation trust is viewed favourably by staff and governors and is starting to have a positive impact on the way the school is led and managed. The partnership also includes direct support and training for seven teachers to take their teaching to 'good' or 'outstanding'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive of the school and its leadership. The relatively new Chair of the Governing Body has helped to sharpen governors' understanding of how to challenge leaders and there is clear evidence of governors asking searching questions during meetings. However, there has not been enough challenge about pupils' performance based on an understanding of what can be achieved when compared with other schools nationally. They have also tended to 'rubber stamp' some decisions, such as the link between teachers' performance and movement up the pay scale without being sufficiently aware of the quality of teaching. They have a secure handle on the school's finances and are monitoring the use of pupil premium funds appropriately. Governors have benefited from training provided by the local authority.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133327
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	406512

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	780
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Dollimore
Headteacher	Charles McGeachie
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 March 2011
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