

The Metheringham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120382
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380004
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2012
Lead inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Turner
Headteacher	Elspeth McMenemie
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Julie Price Grimshaw

Additional inspector

Sally Lane

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by nine teachers and held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and parents. They also observed a whole-school assembly and listened to pupils read. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including data on pupils' progress; pupils' work in a variety of subjects; self-evaluation and improvement planning; safeguarding policies; and curriculum planning. They scrutinised 83 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 98 completed by pupils in Key Stage 2 and a small number of questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving the village of Metheringham and some surrounding villages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage with few from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost all pupils speak English as a first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school, described by pupils as a 'friendly place where learning is fun.' All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school meets their children's particular needs and the almost all are extremely positive about the school. A typical view was expressed in the comment, 'The school is a lovely environment with polite, friendly and approachable staff.'
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the outstanding provision leads to rapid progress in all areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress overall although there is some inconsistency in the rates of progress across the school.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are above average. In 2011, a few of the most-able pupils did not reach the higher levels in national tests. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good, and often outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good. All teachers have good subject knowledge, build excellent working relationships with pupils and give helpful feedback and guidance through marking. The most effective teaching ensures that work is tailored to provide a high level of challenge for all pupils, especially the most able, and that pupils' understanding is checked regularly. These features of best practice are not yet sufficiently established across the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They behave well and have a good understanding of staying safe. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their well above average attendance.
- Good quality leadership and excellent governance have enabled the school to make significant improvements since the previous inspection. The curriculum has several outstanding features, particularly in relation to expressive arts.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to that of the best, so that pupils make rapid and consistent progress across all year groups, by ensuring that:

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- work is tailored to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able
- pupils' understanding is checked regularly throughout lessons
- staff develop their use of targeted questioning to accelerate the learning of individual pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's skills when they join the Reception class are broadly in line with expectations, although there is some variation between each new intake. Occasionally, children's communication, language and literacy skills are lower than those in other areas of learning. Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of highly effective provision based on an exciting and motivating curriculum. The Reception class children could not wait to explain to inspectors that, 'There's a wolf out there today and we're learning all about him!' Their high quality reading, writing and creative work linked to this topic reflected their motivation and love of learning. Excellent teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) in the Reception class ensures that children make very rapid progress in developing their reading skills.

This enthusiasm for learning is carried through into Key Stages 1 and 2 where pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. Attainment in writing, mathematics and reading at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen steadily over recent years, and is now above average. During Key Stage 2, the rate of progress varies across year groups although data indicate that pupils make good progress overall. The school has been quick to tackle the dip in attainment last year and narrow any gaps in performance compared with pupils nationally. Current data and all inspection evidence show that pupils' progress has accelerated significantly during this school year. Attainment, including reading, is above average by the end of Year 6. There is little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils and although some of the more-able pupils did not reach the higher levels last year. The school has taken appropriate action to ensure that this gap is now being closed. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs often make outstanding progress from their starting points due to the highly individualised support and guidance provided for them.

Good or outstanding learning was observed in almost all lessons during the inspection. Pupils work very well in pairs and groups as well as individually. Even the youngest are able to remain on task and maintain a sharp focus on the learning. They provide good support for each other; this was seen in a Year 1 lesson where one pupil helped her friend to solve a money-counting problem. In Year 6 where two pupils spontaneously shared their strategies for working out ratios in a real life context of planning the amount of food needed for a party. Almost all parents and

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carers agree that their children make good progress at the school and inspection evidence endorses this view.

Quality of teaching

Teachers establish exceptionally good relationships with their pupils and, as a result, pupils show great confidence when in the classroom. All teachers make their high expectations of pupils, especially in terms of behaviour, very clear. The involvement of support staff in planning means that their input is often of very good quality. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to marking and give pupils high quality guidance on the next steps they should take to improve their work further. However, on just a few occasions there is limited praise and encouragement in teachers' comments. The curriculum makes a positive impact on teaching, and teachers make good use of opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Communication, literacy and mathematics are taught well across all subjects. Almost all parents and carers are unanimous in the view that their children are taught well and the pupils themselves say that they feel the quality of teaching is good.

Where teaching is outstanding, pupils' learning moves on at a brisk pace. Exceptionally motivating and imaginative lesson content ensures that pupils maintain a high level of enthusiasm and work is tailored specifically to the needs of individuals. This is most apparent in the high level of challenge provided for the more-able pupils. In such lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and are not afraid to deviate from planned activities to ensure that pupils have a secure grasp of the learning. As a result, pupils' progress in these lessons is at least good and often outstanding. Pupils have very well developed skills as independent learners and they remain focused on their work. Occasionally, where teaching is satisfactory pupils are left for too long without their learning being checked, and this can result in their progress slowing. Similarly, in these lessons, the most-able pupils sometimes spend too long on work that they find easy rather than moving more rapidly to more challenging tasks. Questions are often targeted at individuals and inspectors observed some impressive examples of pupils' learning being very effectively extended through questioning. Conversely, too much reliance on 'hands up' can mean that some pupils are not as fully involved in the lesson as they might be.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. In the classroom they listen carefully to staff and to each other, and their conduct is exemplary. This outstanding behaviour for learning contributes strongly to pupils' good progress and it is extremely rare for lessons to be interrupted by lapses in behaviour. Pupils behave well out of lessons and many have well-developed social skills, showing sensitivity and empathy towards others. The pupils themselves are happy with the standard of behaviour in the school.

Pupils have a secure awareness of the different forms of bullying, including cyber

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bullying. They understand that this type of behaviour is unacceptable, as shown in the comment 'racism is very, very bad indeed!' They say that occasional incidents of name-calling are resolved quickly by staff and that other forms of bullying are not an issue. A very small minority of parents expressed concern about alleged incidents of bullying; inspection evidence shows that the school works effectively with pupils to raise their awareness of bullying and is strongly committed to eliminating such behaviour.

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in the view their children feel safe at school. Pupils endorse this view. They have a good and growing awareness of staying safe in and out of school, and keeping fit and healthy.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's strong leadership is a key factor in the school's ongoing improvement. All teachers and support staff play an active role in evaluating the school's work, being organised into teams that focus on current development priorities. This corporate approach to school improvement is having a positive impact on the quality of provision and outcomes across the school. Management of teaching and learning is good; regular observations of classroom practice enable leaders to identify accurately strengths and areas for development, with teachers' skills being developed through the school's coaching programme.

The governing body is highly effective. Members are extremely committed to the school and are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's work. They have a good understanding of data on pupils' achievements and are regular visitors to classrooms. Their detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement mean that they are able to provide a good level of challenge to school leaders and also make an important contribution to self-evaluation. Improvement planning, linked to clearly identified milestones, ensures that all staff are fully aware of the school's progress in meeting its targets. The school's incisive vision for the future, together with the improvements to the curriculum and other areas made since the last inspection, show that there is good capacity for sustained improvement. Safeguarding procedures are effective and fully meet statutory requirements.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and the topics covered appeal to pupils' interests. Pupils thoroughly enjoy film making, music and art. They also benefit from visits that enrich the curriculum, such as the visit to Hardwick Hall as part of their work on Tudor kings and queens. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with assemblies supporting pupils' personal development. One pupil in Key Stage 1 was seen talking on the day's assembly theme of 'perseverance' in a science lesson; as he tried repeatedly to make a boat that would float effectively, he said, 'I'm never giving up!' Displays of pupils' work are of a very high quality.

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Equality of opportunity is promoted well. This is particularly evident in the highly personalised curriculum provided for disabled pupils, enabling them to make good and often outstanding progress. The school is a friendly and inclusive community where pupils get on well with each other and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



8 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Metheringham Primary School, Lincoln, LN4 3BX

As you know, I visited your school recently together with another inspector so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

You attend a good school. The youngest children get off to a great start in the Reception class and progress across the school is good overall. By the end of Year 6, you reach standards in English and mathematics that are generally above average. One of the things that impressed us most of all was your excellent behaviour in lessons. You listen carefully to your teachers and work extremely well together. The school provides you with lots of interesting topic work and we know that you particularly enjoy your work in art; the displays around the school are really beautiful. You told us that you feel safe in school and your parents and carers agreed with this. Although you said that there is some name-calling at times, you also said that the teachers will stop any bullying if you tell them about it.

Many of you told us that your teachers make learning fun. We agree with you and we can see that the teachers spend lots of time preparing lessons so that you can make rapid progress in your learning. We have asked the staff to try and make every lesson as good as the very best by:

- making sure that the work you are given is at just the right level for you and not too easy
- checking regularly that you understand everything during your lesson
- asking you questions that help you to develop your thinking skills and learn even better.

Your headteacher and all the staff are keen to support you in your learning. We are delighted that you are proud to be pupils at The Metheringham Primary and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Julie Price Grimshaw
Lead inspector

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