

Micklands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109926
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	356653
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Jameel Hassan

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	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Bennet
Headteacher	Janie Archer
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seventeen lessons were observed with 10 teachers seen. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities and representatives of the governing body. In addition to observing the school's work, evaluating documentation such as school policies, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress, they examined 90 questionnaires from parents.

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

- The impact of strategies to ensure all pupils make progress and achieve consistently across all subjects, in particular, writing across the school.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school to meet the needs of all pupils but in particular vulnerable groups and more-able girls.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management and governance in demonstrating the impact of their monitoring and evaluation on pupils' outcomes throughout the school.

Information about the school

Information about the school The school is larger than the average sized primary school. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds but nearly two fifths of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils have varying needs including, speech, language, writing, numeracy and social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher has been appointed to be the substantive headteacher. The school's national awards include the Healthy Schools status and the International Schools award. The school provides an after-school care club daily, for pupils from Reception to Year 6. There is a pre-school setting on site but it is not managed by the school governing body and so was not part of this inspection.

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

Micklands Primary is a good school and is improving under the leadership of the headteacher, supported very well by her senior team. Pupils enjoy school, make good progress and reach broadly average attainment by the time they leave in Year 6. There is a good climate for learning because of the strong care, guidance and support received by pupils to help them develop their personal skills and attitudes. There is a good partnership with parents and carers and the local community, providing support and enrichment for learning.

Leaders have brought about many improvements since the previous inspection. There is an honest and accurate self-evaluation which has supported the school's desire to have better outcomes for the pupils in their care. Teaching and learning are good. Where teaching is relatively weaker, pupils' activities are not matched appropriately to the pupils' different abilities. In most cases, staff are supported by the school's accurate tracking procedures, although inconsistencies remain for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The progress of higher ability pupils has been a focus for the school with improving results in mathematics particularly for high achieving girls. Marking in most cases is effective, giving clear feedback to pupils, which helps them know what to do next. Writing has improved, however, activities to further promote writing development across the key stages do not always support the needs of all pupils because they are not consistently well-planned. The good and improving curriculum puts more emphasis on cross-curricular activities and creativity. This gives the pupils an opportunity to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils indicate they really enjoy the 'Funky Focused Fridays' which happen once a month.

Pupils' attendance is affected by a few parents who do not ensure their children attend school regularly or who take holidays in term time. Despite this, attendance has been rigorously monitored and procedures are in place to support these persistent absentees. Consequently, overall attendance is broadly average.

Governance is good. The governing body provides both challenge and support which allows the school to move forward and make changes for the benefit of all pupils. It has been instrumental in improving the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and has released a senior member of staff from class teaching to mentor and support newly qualified teachers. With the evident improvements in pupils' progress and their attainment, the school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all pupils in writing across the school by:

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- ensuring that the planning of writing tasks makes effective use of assessment information.
- To improve the data tracking of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - keeping accurate records to ensure progress so that attainment can be monitored effectively.

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

Pupils' progress is good although over time it has been variable, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Historically, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been low in reading and mathematics and particularly so in writing. More recently, better teaching in these years has resulted in much improved progress. Nevertheless, this legacy of underachievement has affected the overall progress of pupils to the end of Key Stage 2. Hence, attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. In most cases, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Children who speak English as an additional need make better progress than is the case in most schools. Initiatives implemented to improve the learning of pupils have been effective and, as a result, pupils' progress as well as their attainment is rising. For example, more-able children in Year 6 are able to use similes, metaphors and answer rhetorical questions. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning was evident in a Year 2 English lesson where they could independently identify their next steps for learning. As a result, there is accelerated progress, which is evident in their books, with pupils reaching at least age-related expectations. In an older class, Year 6 pupils had some stimulating opportunities for learning, where the pupils could use their imagination in developing a job description for a spy.

Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming. Behaviour during lessons is good, leading to a positive climate for learning. They are keen to learn, and effective questioning allows pupils to volunteer answers enthusiastically. Pupils feel safe because they believe there is someone that will listen to them, and they have opportunities to give their point of view through systems in each classroom and throughout the school. They say that there is little bullying and parents and pupils agree the school has done much to promote internet safety. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, recognised through the Healthy Schools award. One five year old mentioned that people must take regular physical activity, and eat vegetables. Through the extended school provision, and the local sports partnership, children have opportunities to take part in various clubs both in school and outside school. They are keen to take part in activities such as swimming galas, street dancing, judo and gymnastics. Some children benefit from a residential week of outdoor activities in Wales.

Pupils are keen to support local charities and make a valuable contribution to their local community, by providing Christmas concerts for the elderly. They also participate in a mathematics class for gifted and talented pupils, at a local secondary school alongside other primary schools. The children take part in assemblies which are thought-provoking and supportive of the school's diverse population.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	3
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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Strengths include good subject knowledge, good planning, with high pupil expectations, and effective questioning to check for pupils' understanding of their work. Pupils know how to recognise success, which has a very positive impact on their motivation and enjoyment of learning. Pupils appreciate the use of longer term targets which are clearly displayed in their books and in their classrooms, leading to enhanced literacy skills. In a few lessons however, some pupils are not fully challenged and their progress slows.

Where teachers use assessment proficiently and have good subject knowledge, learning is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. Teaching assistants play a very positive part in promoting pupils' progress by supporting those who have additional needs. Teachers manage their pupils well and good feedback supports them to do well. Assessment is used well to provide pupils with work which is well-matched to their capabilities and interests. However, teachers do not always make the best use of assessment information relating to pupils' reading and spelling skills when planning writing tasks.

Pupils are excited by the creative curriculum. They really enjoy the planned cross-curricular themes, such as with the local bike shop owner, all of which enlivens and excites pupils' interest. Through other additional partnerships with local businesses, religious leaders and local schools, the curriculum provides varied activities which support the

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pupils' needs. These activities include developing a healthy lifestyle which include topics such as healthy eating, and drug and alcohol abuse and misuse. An array of extra-curricular activities supports this area such as basketball, out of school walks, and the Caversham Family Fun Ride. Good relationships, thoughtful care, guidance and support, along with productive links with a range of outside agencies, ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are well catered for. The school works with external agencies particularly well to ensure those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support. There is effective support for individual children who require additional care in transitional arrangements for secondary school, resulting in them settling quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 and senior staff have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development, and have had an impact on raising pupils' attainment. The school is aware, however, that the attainment of pupils in English is not yet above the national average. The shared vision and ambition of all leaders, including members of the governing body, to drive forward school improvement are indicative of good capacity for sustained improvement. All teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils through regular pupil progress meetings. Regular lesson observations take place by senior leaders who make accurate assessments of the quality of teaching and learning. One-to-one support for staff to improve their practice in the classroom has already had an impact. This is evident in most lessons delivered by newly qualified teachers reflecting their good ability to meet the needs of their pupils through their use of exciting resources.

Robust and comprehensive safeguarding procedures are in place ensuring the safety of all children. They are a high priority. Potential discrimination is tackled effectively by tracking pupils' progress and by ensuring that all pupils are able to take part in all activities. Relevant policies are in place and acted upon. The school is inclusive and the governing body promotes equality of opportunity well, ensuring that pupils' performance is evaluated and strategies are deployed to meet their needs. Members of the governing body are aware of the school's strengths and areas of development. Consequently, they provide both support and challenge for the headteacher in holding the school to account.

The school's influence is reaching out into the local community, inviting people from many faiths to celebrate religious festivals such as Hanukkah and Eid. The school has developed international links with pupils in a school in Zimbabwe and a visit took place last year. Pupils write letters to children at the school. The success of the school's international links has been recognised by the International School award. Pupils are starting to understand

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better their place in the wider world. The school is aware that further work is needed to develop stronger links with the wider United Kingdom community.

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	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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at below their age-expected levels. The children settle quickly, gain independence and interact well with each other and staff. They make good progress with some exceeding the expected progress by the end of the Reception Year. Small group interventions take place each day in writing and letters and sounds, with good questioning helping the children move forward.

Activities are varied and exciting with opportunities for the children to move freely between indoor and outdoor learning. During the inspection, some good mathematical opportunities were taking place outside and inside which catered for the varied needs of the children. 'I'm making a tank', commented a little boy, while he was cutting and measuring pieces of masking tape and sticking them to his cardboard box and cardboard roll. There is a calm and nurturing environment which allows children to pursue their own interests. Good planning and assessment are in place and are adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils leading to their good outcomes.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. There is a strong sense of teamwork. Routines in the setting are established and the children follow them. Before children enter Reception there are good transitional arrangements which are to be developed further. All required policies are in place and there are good links with parents.

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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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire was broadly in line with schools of this type. Inspectors' findings agree with the majority of those parents who said they were pleased with the school. Parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children safe. Nearly all agree that their children enjoy school. A few parents commented that they do not feel that homework is appropriate for their child and this was followed up in the inspection. The overwhelming proportion of comments is very positive and supportive of how the school deals with discrimination, makes their child feel valued and supports their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Micklands Primary School 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 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	60	34	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	63	31	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	40	52	58	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	34	54	60	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	43	48	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	49	42	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	40	52	58	1	1	0	0
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)	28	31	49	54	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	33	50	56	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	38	44	49	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	34	49	54	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	39	47	52	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	46	46	51	2	2	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



28 January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Micklands Primary School, Reading, RG4 6LU

Thank you very much for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the interesting things you do.

The inspection team have found that yours is a good school. Here are some of the things you do very well.

- You make good progress and by the time you leave your attainment is broadly average.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start in your education.
- You are polite, behave well and are very helpful, taking on responsibilities around the school.
- You understand the importance of keeping healthy. For example, you know you should eat vegetables and fruit regularly.
- You have many exciting opportunities working with other people in your local community.
- Your headteacher, senior staff and governors lead your school well.
- Staff take good care of you. You get extra help if you need it and this helps you learn new things.

You can help your school with what it needs to do further by:

- working really hard to improve your writing skills in the same way as you do in mathematics

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Jameel Hassan
Lead inspector

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