

Magdalen Gates Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120932
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380135
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Karen Heath

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Niki Park
Headteacher	Cara Jermy
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: teachers' planning; pupils' books; the school's assessment data on pupils' progress; monitoring and evaluation reports on teaching and learning; school policies; safeguarding documentation; and minutes of the governing body's meetings. Nine teachers were observed in 19 teaching sessions. The inspectors met with members of the governing body and staff, and spoke to pupils, parents and carers. Inspectors looked at 90 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as returns from the staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What impact is the school having on tackling persistent absenteeism?
- How well are pupils, particularly girls, achieving in mathematics?
- How quickly are younger pupils progressing in their literacy skills in order to close the gap between girls' and boys' achievement?

Information about the school

Magdalen Gates is smaller than the average-size primary school. The majority of children are White British and the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups and who speak English as an additional language is similar to that found in other schools nationally. Pupils have a range of special educational needs including moderate and specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than other schools nationally. The school offers an extended service providing a breakfast club and after school care for children; these were inspected at the same time. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools status and a bronze Eco-Schools award.

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

2

Main findings

Magdalen Gates is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher, appointed two years ago, quickly gained the respect of the school community. Parents and carers enjoy their involvement with the school, which they say is a welcoming and friendly environment for their children. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have a clear sense of direction. They have identified areas that need addressing and have put in place strategies, which are moving the school forward and improving the outcomes for pupils.

Last year at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics improved and was in line with the national averages, including more-able pupils attaining Level 5. In mathematics girls achieved less well than boys; however, lesson observations and analysis of the school's data show that achievement in mathematics across the school is similar for both boys and girls.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. When children enter the school, boys' language and literacy skills are significantly lower than those of girls. As pupils move up the school their progress improves and girls attain well, particularly in reading and writing. However the gap between girls' and boys' reading and writing continues to evident in some year groups. This is because the good quality of teaching seen in some lessons is not consistently accelerating the progress of all pupils across the school.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory although there are pockets of good teaching across the school. Here, marking identifies well the areas where pupils need to improve and they have a strong understanding of their targets. Occasionally, though, the pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not always have high enough expectations to challenge the pupils' abilities and provide tasks, which focus on improving their skills.

The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school; they say they feel safe and that there is no bullying. Their behaviour is good. The school has been effective in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent and improving the overall attendance rates.

The headteacher is helping staff at all levels of leadership and management to gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in the school's plan for future development that comprehensively outlines areas for

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improvement and the impact the changes have had. For example, since its previous inspection the school has reorganised its day to maximise pupils' learning and introduced a whole school behaviour management policy which is adhered to consistently by all staff. Since the appointment of the present headteacher the school has introduced a rigorous tracking system for pupil achievement. This has resulted in all staff understanding their accountability for pupils' standards, and sharing the school's aspiration to achieve its challenging targets. The impact of the school's tracking has also enabled leaders to identify underachievement and to implement intervention strategies. In addition, an increasing amount of good quality teaching has resulted in improvements at the end of Key Stage 2.

The governing body has developed a clear view of the school, understands its performance data and is actively involved in monitoring the school's work. The appointment of new senior staff who model good teaching has improved the provision for all pupils. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their key areas of responsibility. They have devised plans for improvement and have implemented strategies, which have been effective, such as the mathematics intervention groups and have helped to close the gap between girls' and boys' attainment in this subject. Although in some year groups, a small gap between girls' and boys' achievement in English remains, there is evidence of good improvement, particularly in Key Stage 2 where the gap is closing rapidly. The improved attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, the closing of the gap between girls' and boys' skills in mathematics and the school's drive to address underachievement, places the school in a good position to continue to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching so that all pupils make consistently good progress and attain in line with or better than the national average and that boys achieve as well as girls in English by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - maintaining a good pace in lessons so that pupils are active for the majority of the time
 - ensuring pupils understand the skills they need to learn in a lesson
 - using questioning more effectively to challenge thinking and engage pupils in their learning
 - using assessment more consistently to identify the needs of pupils and to plan effective lessons to meet those needs, particularly those of boys.

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Pupils work well individually and cooperate well in groups. They apply themselves in lessons and listen well to the teacher. Lesson observations, work in pupils’ books and the school’s own tracking system show that, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, but girls do better in reading and writing than boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with the rest of their peers. The school works hard to ensure their needs are catered for and they have every opportunity to be fully integrated into the life of the school.

Behaviour in and out of lesson time is good and pupils show respect and courtesy to each other as well as to adults. Pupils feel safe in school and confident that their concerns will be dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and this is helped by the school’s provision of extra-curricular activities including the gardening club, the ‘Food for Life’ promotion and the good take up of school meals.

Magdalen Gates is a cohesive school community. Pupils from different social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds mix well and respect each other’s differences. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of artistic and cultural events and show a good understanding of moral and social issues through such things as their Eco work and fundraising activities. Pupils’ spiritual awareness is evident in their ability to reflect, particularly during assemblies, and participation with local religious communities. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to influence the life of the school, such as improving the playground provision. Pupils participate in many activities within their immediate and local community. They have worked with local businesses, painting murals and tidying up the local area. The choir has also performed to the local community.

The school has worked hard to encourage pupils’ attendance, which is average. The supportive work with some families and the school’s good use of external agencies has resulted in improved attendance for a number of pupils. However, there is a small minority of pupils, who do not attend school as regularly as they should and this is hindering their progress.

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	3
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

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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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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils and teachers have good relationships. Teachers' marking is a strength; pupils benefit from the comments made by teachers and the guidance given by identifying the next steps in their learning. Where there is good teaching, pupils understand what they are expected to learn and how they can measure whether they had been successful. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils with a range of abilities and include those with specific and moderate learning difficulties. Boys are effectively engaged in writing and enjoy the competitive element of assessing their partner's work against specific success criteria. These features are more limited where teaching is satisfactory.

Across the school resources are used well to provide appropriate support. Support staff are well deployed to work with pupils who have specific needs, so that these pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and have equal access to the curriculum.

The school is developing a more creative curriculum to make it more exciting and engaging for pupils, particularly boys. The breadth of the curriculum has been strengthened by a range of visitors and visits such as a local author. A high proportion of pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, pupils have opportunities to go on residential visits and access to the local high school's sports facilities enhances the school's provision.

The school works very well with families and a range of agencies to improve the learning experiences for the pupils. Targeted support for all pupils has enabled them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. The arrangements to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable when they transfer to high school are particularly good. The school's breakfast and after school clubs are well attended and provide a good quality welcoming and secure environment for the start and end of the school day.

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

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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 headteacher demonstrates clear vision, shared by all staff. She has accurately evaluated the school’s overall effectiveness and has implemented a range of strategies to bring about necessary changes. Her drive and tenacity are moving the school forwards and the detailed school development plan provides a comprehensive focus on improving outcomes for pupils. There is a rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this has been used to provide a comprehensive training programme for staff to improve further the quality of teaching and learning. The introduction of a school tracking system has helped the school identify pupils who are underachieving. Consequently, intervention strategies, in the form of additional group teaching, have been implemented and this has helped to accelerate the progress of these pupils. Additionally, the higher-attaining pupils are also catered for by some additional group work where they enjoy problem solving activities to challenge their thinking helping this group of pupils to achieve their targets in both English and mathematics.

The headteacher is well supported by the senior leaders, some of whom are relatively new in post. The governing body has a good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and members are responsible for specific areas of the school’s work on which they report.

Pupils from Magdalen Gates transfer to a number of different high schools with which the school has established effective working relationships, particularly to support the transition of pupils. The links with one of the high schools give pupils sporting experiences which they would otherwise not have. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the full range of provision.

The school has carried out an audit of its social, ethnic and religious context and understands that well. It has put in place a series of actions to promote community cohesion but has yet to evaluate the impact.

At the time of the inspection, the school had robust safeguarding procedures which exceed statutory requirements. The school takes swift action to support the needs of vulnerable pupils and ensure that families are well supported. Appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken for activities and the school has good procedures to keep the site safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	2
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driving improvement 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	3
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

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the environment and resources for the Early Years Foundation Stage and this has had an impact on some of the outcomes for children, particularly their personal and social development. Children enter the school at well below the age-related expectations, especially in their language development. The pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in the school’s Reception class. However, their attainment in language and mathematical skills remains below national expectations by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Regular daily routines help the children understand the need to stay healthy. They participate in regular exercise and are able to follow basic hygiene rules and know to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating food. Children feel secure and are well behaved; they play happily together and talk freely to the adults around them and are confident in interacting with visitors. Children participate enthusiastically when learning their letter sounds, have a good grasp of initial phonics and some children are blending sounds to make words as well as learning to write some letters.

Children have free access to the outside area, where they can develop their physical skills as well as explore other areas of the curriculum, for example, playing with water and sand or riding bikes and trikes. Both the inside and outside areas provide a stimulating learning environment with a good range of resources to foster independent play.

Parents and carers are encouraged to understand the importance of regular attendance and are welcomed into the Reception class in the ‘Stay and Play’ sessions. The school has established a good working relationship with the pre-school, which is on the school site, and this helps to make a smooth transition into the Reception class. There are good transition arrangements into Key Stage 1.

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The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Regular assessments are made and recorded with photographic and other evidence, which help with future planning and ensure that the needs of individuals are satisfactorily met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

It is clear from the questionnaires and speaking to parents and carers that nearly all of them are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the recent changes that have been made. They enjoy the 'open door' policy and feel valued by the school. One parent stated, 'My child is happy and enjoys every day.' A very small percentage of parents and carers do not feel the school deals effectively with behaviour. The school's records show that behaviour is consistently dealt with and this is supported by good behaviour observed seen during the inspection and from records over time.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Magdalen Gates 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.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	64	31	34	0	0		
The school keeps my child safe	55	61	33	37	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	39	43	47	52	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	44	44	49	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	54	38	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	39	43	45	50	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	43	49	54	2	2	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)	41	46	33	37	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	37	41	47	52	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	37	43	48	8	9	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	42	47	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	60	30	33	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	55	61	31	34	2	2	2	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils.

Inspection of Magdalen Gates Primary School, Norwich, NR3 1NG

Thank you for making my team so welcome when we visited your school and for spending time talking to us. We were very impressed with your open and friendly manner. Your school is improving and provides you with a satisfactory education. You told us that you feel safe in school and that there is no bullying. We noticed how well you behave, particularly in lessons. Your classrooms are bright and lively places to work.

So that your school continues to improve we have asked your headteacher, the governors and staff to make sure you all have lessons that are as good as the best in your school. This will help you all and improve the boys' reading and writing so they are as good as those of the girls. We would like to see you enjoying lessons that make you really think about what you need to do to achieve. We think your teachers work hard for you but that they should expect you to do more of the work and it should challenge you.

We think your school will continue to improve and would like to wish you all the best for the future. Remember! You can all help your school and yourselves by attending regularly.

Yours sincerely
Karen Heath
Lead inspector

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