



Metheringham Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120382
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280800
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Neil Sortwell LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Princes Street
School category	Community		LN4 3BX
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01526 320039
Number on roll	263	Fax number	01526323329
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Neil Kandall
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr. John Lowrey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Metheringham is a larger than average primary school. There are 263 pupils most of whom come from the village and surrounding area. There are very few pupils whose first language is not English and the number eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average although there are more pupils with statements of special educational needs than is the case nationally. The school works closely with its community, readily sharing some of its facilities.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Metheringham School is not providing an acceptable standard of education because a large proportion of its pupils do not make adequate progress. The school acknowledges this and knows where its weaknesses lie. Some of these have been long standing. The school has not addressed weaknesses in subject leadership and does not routinely monitor the quality of its lessons. While the school accurately identifies areas for improvement, it judges its own performance too generously. The quality of teaching and learning is too variable and there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress. This is because the school does not use well enough what it knows about them. There are good systems in place for it to do so. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with strengths in their moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well and are keen to attend school. They feel happy and safe and know that, generally, they are well looked after. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable or who have special educational needs are well provided for. Strong relationships with pre-school groups help to ensure that children get off to a good start in the school. Adults support pupils well, but the quality of the school's care is satisfactory rather than good. This is because the guidance provided to improve pupils' learning is inconsistent across the school and is not linked strongly enough to specific areas for them to improve. Almost all parents have a very positive view of the school and they support it well. The school runs smoothly on a daily basis. Staff are strongly behind the need to improve pupils' learning and are very supportive of each other. The senior leadership of the school has not enabled subject leaders to lead their subjects effectively and has not yet provided sufficient support for teaching which it judges to be unsatisfactory. Because of this the school has not fully demonstrated its capacity to improve. Improvement plans are in place but these lack clarity and are not strongly enough linked to the identified groups of pupils whose progress is inadequate. Consequently, the school is not as well placed as it might be to secure further improvement. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress throughout the school; - Improve unsatisfactory teaching; - Develop the role and skills of the core subject leaders in order to enable them to support teachers to improve pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics; - Ensure that all teachers clearly understand what pupils need to do to improve and that they communicate this clearly to them; - Establish and implement a rigorous and systematic programme of planning, monitoring and evaluation which focuses on pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school judges standards and achievement as inadequate and inspectors agree. Children start school with skills and knowledge which are broadly average for their age. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are similar to the national average and this trend continues to the end of Year 6. 2005 test results indicate that results are lower than previous years. Pupils' progress continues to decline particularly in mathematics which is poor compared to other subjects. This is shown in the nationally available 'value-added' information and within the school's own records of pupils' progress. A large number of pupils who achieve average results in Year 2 tests do not make expected progress. The progress which more able pupils make in writing is also below national expectations. Boys make less progress than girls up to the age of seven, although this difference is less significant by the time children leave the school. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The school sets challenging targets for pupils in English and mathematics for the end of Year 6. The school's records show that it is unlikely to reach its targets. The school's plans clearly show that it knows pupils could make better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory overall; for the youngest children it is good. Behaviour is good and generally pupils have positive attitudes. They know what is right and wrong, behaving well within and outside of lessons. Pupils play well together and they relate well to adults. They listen carefully, but are not always attentive during the lengthier parts of lessons. Pupils do not always talk enthusiastically about what they do, although they are keen on the more practical activities within subjects. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. The school council encourages pupils to take responsibility for the smooth running of the school. Members have clear views about what they want to achieve and have real influence, for example in improving provision for play and organising a healthy tuck shop. Pupils help to ensure that playtimes are safe and they generally make a positive contribution to the life of the school. They are regularly involved in the wider community and charity work which helps them to learn important life skills. They are developing numeracy and computer skills to ensure that they do well in later life. Pupils have a good knowledge of other cultures, but are less confident in discussing their beliefs or those of others. Pupils know how to remain healthy and safe. They are encouraged to make healthy food choices rather than be told what to eat.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The school has not maintained the good teaching reported at the last inspection. Although there are examples of good teaching, significant weaknesses result in many pupils making insufficient progress, notably in Key Stage 2 and particularly in mathematics. The school has identified that some teaching has insufficient impact on pupils' learning but has not rigorously tackled the weaknesses. Since the last inspection the school has improved the way it teaches and supports pupils with special educational needs, which are now good. Pupils are encouraged to judge their own learning, and record personal targets for improving their work. Teachers' comments in pupils' books help them to understand what they need to learn next, although marking is not consistently well used. The most significant factor in preventing pupils from doing better is that teachers do not always make best use of what they know about individual pupils' learning. Consequently pupils sometimes do work that is too hard for them or too easy, so that progress slows. In the best lessons seen, activities were well planned, matched to pupils' needs, requiring them to be active learners. In these lessons, expectations were high, teachers clearly demonstrated what they wanted pupils to learn and were effective in their questioning. In the better lessons, teaching assistants provided effective support. Overall there were too few lessons judged to be good and too many which were inadequate. There is insufficient good teaching to enable all pupils to make better progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is effectively planned to meet national requirements. Activities offered to the school's youngest children are good. The school has made a good start at making learning more exciting by combining subjects and by involving pupils in considering their own learning. This enhances their enjoyment. The review of the curriculum has been largely successful although it has yet to fully ensure that pupils build their skills in logical steps year on year in all subjects and particularly in mathematics. The school recognises this and has taken some steps to address this. There is suitable emphasis on pupils' learning of basic skills in order to boost their chances in life. The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on healthy living, requiring pupils to make choices for themselves. Teachers work hard to present pupils' work well and displays around the school celebrate a wide range of learning in and beyond lesson time. Pupils' learning is enriched by a good number of extra-curricular activities which they enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff work hard to support pupils and to create a safe place for learning. The school's arrangements for protecting children are good. The support for those who are

vulnerable or who have special educational needs is good. The school works effectively with a range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils are well supported. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable are well integrated in the school. Individual plans for pupils with special educational needs have been redesigned to be more 'child- friendly' encouraging pupils to be more involved in measuring their own improvement. Teachers know pupils well, but do not always use what they know to enable them to make good progress. Generally pupils are given targets to help them to understand where they need to improve. These are not always precisely linked to the curriculum and the approach is not implemented consistently across the school. Teachers' marking is too variable. As a result not all pupils can clearly say what they need to do to make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school is well organised and runs smoothly. Staff care for pupils and in many areas of their personal development they do well. However, the leadership of the school is inadequate. It has not sufficiently focused on the progress which pupils make, despite having good information which shows that a large proportion of pupils do not make the progress which is typically expected for pupils of their age. In particular, the school knows that it does not expect enough from pupils of average ability. The school has recognised this short-coming and has linked it to the quality of some teaching. Inspectors agree that this is the case, with weaknesses in teaching particularly in mathematics but also in writing. The school judges that about a quarter of its teaching is less than satisfactory. Inspectors confirm that teaching is too variable. Surprisingly, the leadership has not routinely monitored lessons in the last year. Judgements which the leadership makes about the school's work are overgenerous. Teachers are fully committed to improving pupils' learning. The school's planning shows that it does know where it has to improve. However, the plans lack precision in targeting specific weaknesses in teaching and linking these to pupils who make insufficient progress. It is now investing in further support for subject leaders to secure improvements. The leadership is beginning to consult more widely about improvements, although it doesn't fully analyse what pupils and parents are saying. Governors provide the school with satisfactory support, meetings are well attended and policies are fully in place. There is some good practice. Governors meet with subject leaders, regularly visit the school and ensure that it is well resourced. These visits have had insufficient impact on the school's plan for improvement. Governors remain too dependent on the headteacher for information. The school has addressed some issues from the previous inspection. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and in the Foundation stage is now good. The school has not fully addressed concerns about subject leadership and monitoring of teaching and learning, with the result that pupils' progress has been allowed to decline. The school has not demonstrated at this stage, sufficient capacity to improve and does not provide value for money.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children, We have enjoyed visiting your school and watching you learn and play together. We particularly enjoyed talking with you about your work. We were pleased to see how involved you are in helping the school to run smoothly. We were very impressed with the way that you help ensure that everyone feels safe and happy at playtimes. We think that your school council makes a real difference in improving what you have in your school and hope that it will help your teachers even more when the new buildings open. What inspectors most liked about your school - We found that we were made very welcome by everyone and that you were very polite and helpful. - We were pleased that you enjoy school and congratulate you for attending regularly. - We know that you work hard and mostly concentrate on your lessons - We liked the way that you set yourselves targets to improve in your learning. - We noted that you behave well and know what is the right and wrong. - Teachers know you well and take care of you, which you appreciate. - We are pleased that some of you, who find learning very difficult, are working hard and making progress. What inspectors asked your school to do next We have said that although you work hard, many of you could make even better progress in your lessons. The school knows you well, but could expect much more from some of you, particularly in your mathematics and writing. Your headteacher and teachers have plans to help you make better progress, but we think that they need some extra help to ensure that their plans work. We believe that some teaching could be improved. We hope that you will help your teachers in making things even better, by continuing to work hard.