

The Metheringham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120382
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327266
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Marina Gough

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	221
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat Matthews
Headteacher	Mrs Elspeth McMenemie
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Prince's Street Metheringham Lincolnshire LN4 3BX
Telephone number	01526 320039
Fax number	01526 323329

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2009
Inspection number	327266

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in the village of Metheringham and draws pupils from the immediate area and local villages. Pupils come from mixed backgrounds in terms of their socio-economic circumstances and almost all are of white ethnicity. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, and the proportion that has learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The range of learning difficulties experienced by the pupils concerned include general developmental delay and speech and language difficulties. When children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage they are provided for in a Reception class. Their attainment is generally slightly below the level expected for their age but this picture can vary from year to year. Levels of mobility are very high with pupils moving in and out of the area because many parents work at the local air bases. The school has recently applied for the Healthy School award and the Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and it is much improved since its last inspection. There is a real commitment from staff and governors to raising standards still further, and the capacity for the school to continue to improve is good. The pace of change over the last two years has been necessarily fast, and has been achieved because of the shared commitment of staff and governors, the support of parents and the determined and inspirational leadership of the headteacher.

The attainment of the current Early Years Foundation Stage children was at the level expected when they started school. Because of the excellent provision they receive these children are on course to achieve levels that are above average by the end of their first year in school. The attainment of Year 2 pupils is average in reading, writing and mathematics. This group of pupils started at a level below that expected for their age in the Reception class. Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are in line with the national average by the end of the year. This group of pupils is making good progress but there are gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding because of past weaknesses in teaching and learning. Throughout the school standards in writing and practical mathematics are weaker than other elements of English and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology are above the age expected level in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are excellent. Pupils are sociable, confident and very enthusiastic about their learning. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They make an excellent contribution to the school community. Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Close monitoring by the headteacher has led to significant improvements in the way teachers assess pupils' progress and teachers use assessment information very well when planning the next stage of pupils' learning. Activities are presented in a lively manner and pupils say that they enjoy learning very much. The curriculum is satisfactory for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. However, although it is enriched by a good range of additional experiences, many of the long morning sessions are used just for literacy and numeracy reducing the amount of time available for other subjects. Levels of care, guidance and support are good and pupils know they can approach any adult for help.

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school and in the past two years has done much to turn the school around and to take it forward. She has secured the trust and support of parents and has built a strong team of staff. The leadership team is well established and individual members now have the confidence and skills to take on more responsibility and accountability for the performance of the staff in their teams. Governors have developed their monitoring role well since the last inspection and make a good contribution to the school's strategic management. The range of expertise amongst the governors is used well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, enabling children of all abilities to make exceptional progress from their different starting points. The classroom environment is highly stimulating and children have access to a wide range of exciting activities that capture their imagination and fire their enthusiasm for learning. Excellent links are made

between indoor and outdoor play and there is a very good balance of activities that are led by an adult and those that the children choose themselves. Teaching has excellent features and small and large group focus sessions are highly effective in teaching key skills. For the majority of the time adults are very effectively deployed. However, more intervention when the children are engaged in free play activities would provide further opportunity for extending the children's language and social skills. The family learning project, which involves parents coming into school one morning each week and which is led by the early years teacher, is proving to be highly successful and popular and is doing much to strengthen links with the local community. The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstandingly well led and managed, and very good emphasis is placed on ensuring that the children are safe, healthy and happy. Statutory requirements are met in relation to the welfare of the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to write freely and at length and develop pupils' understanding of aspects of measure by providing more practical, real life activities.
- The school should make better use of the longer morning sessions so that subjects other than literacy and numeracy receive a fair allocation of time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment of current Year 2 pupils was below the level expected for their age when they joined the school. This group of pupils has made good progress and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is close to the national average. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making good progress and are achieving well. However, there are gaps in the learning of older pupils arising from past weaknesses in teaching. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is broadly average in English, mathematics and science.

Throughout the school there are strengths in reading and in speaking and listening. Standards in writing are not as high. Most pupils of all ages craft short pieces of writing well. However, they tend not to write at length, largely because they are too preoccupied with editing work at an early stage of the writing process. In mathematics, pupils calculate well using standard units of measurement, but in a practical context their knowledge of measure is weak making it difficult for them to make sensible and accurate estimates of weight, length and capacity. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to use information and communication technology as a tool for learning. As a result pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in this subject are above average. The school caters well for pupils who have learning difficulties. Good levels of additional support mean that they achieve well and reach their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils develop excellent attitudes towards learning and respond to challenge very well. Behaviour is excellent. Relationships between pupils and adults and among pupils of all ages are exceptionally good, with pupils showing a great deal of care and consideration for others' feelings. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. Not only does the school provide extremely well for pupils' physical safety, it also gives excellent support for their emotional needs. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and thoroughly enjoy being there. Attendance is well above the national average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

is good. Pupils have a very good multicultural awareness. Outstanding moral and social development shows in the excellent way that pupils regulate their own behaviour and the high level of social harmony in school. Pupils feel very safe in school and all know who to approach for support when there is a need. They understand the importance of good relationships and older pupils look after younger ones extremely well. The school and class councils play an important role and pupils appreciate that the staff listen to their ideas. Pupils of all ages contribute significantly to local communities and to the world community through charitable work. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education by developing social and academic skills well and an outstanding work ethic.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and some outstanding examples were seen during the inspection. Where teaching is at its best activities are very closely matched to the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils, and staff go out of their way to make learning relevant and exciting. In all classes teachers make very effective use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning and manage pupils very effectively. In some classes introductory sessions are too long and this means that pupils then only have limited time to complete their independent tasks. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent and so pupils are unafraid of asking questions or making mistakes. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially when they are leading small groups or working with individual pupils. Assessment information is used well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and to identify those who need additional support or who need more challenging work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school does much to enhance and enrich pupils' learning by providing a wide range of visits to places of interest and by inviting visitors into the school to work alongside pupils. Pupils access a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities and a good number take advantage of the opportunity provided for them to learn to play a musical instrument. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and pupils enjoy the French lessons in Key Stage 2. However, the long morning teaching session tends to be used mainly for literacy and numeracy activities. This means that the available time for other subjects is limited. In those classes where teachers use the morning sessions more imaginatively, for example by breaking up the morning with a physical education session, pupils enjoy their learning more.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Safeguarding procedures, including those for health and safety, risk assessments and child protection are fully in place. The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding and the school places a high emphasis on personal development. It is active in tackling pupils' emotional and relationship problems and pupils feel confident that they are fully supported. It extends its personal, social and health education programme so that pupils can take on responsibility, thus helping them deal with emotions and feelings. As a result, pupils relate extremely well to, and

care for, each other and the adults around them. 'If you don't like something, you can always change it', remarked one pupil.

Systems for tracking academic progress are reasonably new, but are already having a positive impact on improving achievement. The school goes out of its way to provide well for pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special talents, and those who have learning difficulties. Assessment procedures and academic guidance are thorough and robust. Pupils understand their academic targets very well and know how to improve their work. They have excellent opportunities to think about their own progress. This process helps them to appreciate what they do well and to understand how they can do even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership has taken this school forward at a fast rate since the last inspection. She has paced the necessary change extremely well so that staff, governors and parents are all 'on board' and keen to achieve the next steps of development. The senior leadership team and the assessment coordinator make an effective contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and support the headteacher well in improving academic achievement. The school is clear about where its strengths lie and the areas that need to be improved. Targets for school improvement are suitably challenging and achievable.

Governors play an increasingly powerful role in the leadership and management process. They monitor and evaluate the school's work according to their own individual areas of expertise, which are considerable. Governors have a trusting relationship with staff, which ensures that they are informed, and are challenging, whilst being supportive. Bearing in mind the significant and rapid improvement made since the previous inspection, the school has a good capacity to improve further. Community cohesion is promoted well and the school is aware that the next steps towards improvement are to develop provision to raise pupils' awareness of global issues. The school has many excellent and expanding outside links and a clear understanding of the varied needs of its pupils and their families.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29th April 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Metheringham Primary School, Lincoln, LN4 3BX

I am writing to thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We were delighted to find such friendly and well behaved pupils, and really enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you think about your school. We are pleased with your very positive attitudes to work and the way you contribute in lessons.

You all make good progress and we were very pleased to see how much and how well you use computers to support your learning. We think you could do even better in some aspects of your work. In writing, for example, you do not have enough opportunities to write long pieces and sometimes your work is not imaginative enough. In mathematics, whilst you are good at doing number work, you do not have a good enough knowledge about standard units of measurement such as litres, metres and grams and so are unable to make sensible estimates. We have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to do practical mathematics activities.

You told us that if you have any problems you can go to any member of staff and they will help you. You know how to keep healthy and safe, and we like the way you look out for one another. We know from talking to you that you enjoy lessons, but we think that some of the morning sessions could be more interesting and have asked your teachers to give this some thought.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and we are very pleased with what has been achieved. We think your headteacher is doing an excellent job and we know that she, together with the other staff and governors, knows what to do next to keep on improving the school.

Yours sincerely,

Marina Gough

Lead inspector