

The Middle Rasen Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120463
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358767
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R Weeks
Headteacher	Melonie Brunton
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed five teachers and saw nine lessons. Inspectors observed a school assembly and held discussions with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. They looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including: school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 40 parents and carers, 44 pupils and 10 members of staff were analysed.

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

- How much progress do pupils make throughout the school and what are the current levels of attainment?
- How well are pupils prepared for life in a culturally diverse society?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to plan learning tasks that challenge and extend pupils of all abilities?
- To what extent does the school leadership have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the capacity to move the school forward?

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average sized primary school. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage that caters for Reception aged children. Virtually all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special needs is below average. The school provides accommodation for, but does not manage, pre-school and after-school clubs. This provision is inspected separately. The school has received national recognition for its work in several areas and holds the Activemark award for physical education and Healthy Schools status.

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

3

Main findings

Middle Rasen Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The school is justly proud of its inclusive nature and its place at the heart of the community. It is a welcoming school and one in which pupils feel safe and valued because staff know the pupils exceptionally well and provide good levels of care. As a result, several aspects of pupils' personal development are good and some outstanding. Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Their enjoyment in coming to school is demonstrated in their consistently high levels of attendance. A further strength is the excellent promotion of healthy lifestyles, evidenced in the school's achievement of Healthy School status and the Activemark award, which result in pupils participating in regular physical exercise and fully understanding the importance of diet to health. Because pupils of all ages get on very well the learning atmosphere is very purposeful and harmonious. This is recognised by parents and carers. Virtually all of those who replied to the inspection questionnaire expressed total satisfaction with the school and their children's experience. One, capturing the views of many, said, 'I feel the school values my child as an individual and fosters a very welcoming and caring family ethos.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall but their cultural understanding is a relative weakness. This is partly because the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for teachers to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in national and international contexts.

Achievement overall is satisfactory. From entry to Reception children make satisfactory progress. Because of the very small cohorts and the range of abilities in each class, attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 fluctuates around average from year to year. A range of strategies are being successfully implemented to raise attainment in English and mathematics, and inspection evidence indicates that attainment in Year 6 is rising. However, while there is much good teaching, inconsistency in the quality teaching and learning is the main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than better. Pupils in all classes are not always provided with activities that consistently challenge them. In some lessons, too few checks are made on pupils' progress during lessons so that learning can be moved on more rapidly. While pupils' work is marked regularly, the marking does not always provide clear guidance on the next steps in their learning.

School self-evaluation, although over-generous in some instances, identifies the correct areas for improvement. More challenging targets are being set and recent developments in the use of assessment information to check pupils' progress are enabling targeted support to be provided where needed. This is having a positive impact on standards and proving particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the effective support provided for any who may be in vulnerable circumstances to ensure that they keep up with classmates. Governance is good. The school benefits enormously from a very

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supportive governing body and the expertise and commitment of the Chair. While governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, this is not sufficiently focused on measuring the impact of improvement initiatives. The determination of the headteacher and staff to move the school forward is seen, for example, in the willingness of all to seek and adopt best practice from other schools and external agencies. This, together with the improvements seen since the last inspection and the enthusiasm of staff and governors to tackle weaknesses, gives the school satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better to raise standards and accelerate progress by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons the pace of learning is brisk and that appropriately challenging tasks are matched to the attainment levels of pupils
 - using more effective questioning techniques to assess pupils' understanding and extend their thinking and reasoning skills
 - ensuring consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that they are given clear guidance on the standard and how to improve, and they respond to the advice given
- Improve the curriculum and the promotion of community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in national and international contexts.
- Improve leadership and management by developing a reliable strategy, involving both staff with leadership responsibilities and governors, for accurately evaluating the impact of improvement initiatives.
- About 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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Although there is some variation between cohorts, taken overall, children's skills on entry to Reception are generally consistent with those usually found in children of their age. Virtually all achieve the age-related expectations by the time they enter Year 1. From Year 1 to Year 6, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The small number of pupils in the school means that aggregated data about their attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 must be treated with caution. The school's results in national tests and assessments, as shown in percentages, are often influenced significantly by the addition or loss of a single pupil at the time of the assessment. On paper, therefore, results can fluctuate widely from year to year. Pupils' work in lessons and in their workbooks indicates that while standards are improving they are generally as expected for their age at this stage of the academic year. It is clear that while progress overall is satisfactory some pupils make good progress. Pupils enjoy and achieve well in their learning when lessons are stimulating and engaging. In these lessons their positive attitudes to learning contribute to the progress made. This was exemplified in a Year 3/4 literacy lesson where pupils worked in groups to research

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The Romans, recorded their findings and then took pleasure in sharing their findings with others.

Pupils are considerate of each other and their good behaviour helps to make the school the calm and welcoming place it is. They are confident that they can turn to an adult to sort out any concerns and demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during their journeys to and from school. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community in many ways. The school council has been responsible for important initiatives, such as the development of the wildlife area, and pupils take their roles as assembly or playground monitors very seriously. They also raise money for worthwhile causes, such as Haiti Earthquake Relief. Improving skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, together with their good personal development, ensure pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
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?

All lessons are characterised by good relationships between adults and pupils. Classrooms are attractive and well resourced with a wide range of materials and equipment. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because assessment information is used well to guide the planning of learning tasks and pupils have opportunities to work independently, stretching themselves and others as they talk things through. Perceptive questioning is

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used to extend pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. This was seen in a Year 5/6 lesson, for example, where pupils used a range of resources to research the long history of the school and the changing educational experiences of children. However, in lessons that fall below this standard, the work planned is not pitched at the correct level and progress slows because the tasks do not offer enough challenge. Good practice is evident in the marking of pupils' work that refers to targets and clearly identifies what individuals need to do next or to revisit. This feedback leads to improvements in the pupils' work. Practice is less effective when marking, although regular and encouraging, does not show pupils how to improve or provide them with suitable opportunities to address identified weaknesses. Standards of attainment are rising as a result of the more effective use of assessment information to track pupils' progress towards their targets and identify underperformance so that additional support can be provided.

The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning experiences. A topic based curriculum is being introduced to make more meaningful links between subjects, while providing continuity and progression in learning across the key stages. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, together with the application of information and communication technology to enhance learning. It is enriched by a programme of visitors to the school and visits out of school, including residential visits. Pupils also benefit from a well-attended range of extra-curricular activities. Parents and carers say that the school is very caring. This is borne out by inspection findings. Pupils are well looked after and say that the school is a safe and secure place. All adults are particularly sensitive to those pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Staff work hard and with some success to involve parents and carers in their children's learning. This is seen, for example, in pupils' high attendance.

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
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 provides the school with a clear sense of direction. Since the last inspection, leadership and management roles have been revised and responsibilities are more widely shared. All are keen to make a full contribution to the drive to raise standards. This is evidenced in the enthusiasm with which initiatives to improve provision and outcomes are adopted. Staff benefit from well planned professional development that is helping to improve teaching and learning in classrooms.

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Close links with a number of agencies support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds. This is one aspect of the school's firm commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

Members of the governing body have worked well with other leaders and managers to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of good quality and all staff are well trained in these matters. As a result the school has the full confidence of parents and carers. The governing body takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and provides the school with considerable support. Parents and carers are provided with a good range of information. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place that promote pupils' understanding from a local perspective well. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very effectively. The school's work in expanding its links to provide national and global perspectives, and open pupils' minds to the range and diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and beyond, is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

The Early Years Foundation Stage is being transformed because new leadership and management are having a positive impact on teaching, learning and the environment. Children settle quickly on entry to Reception because of the well-organised induction arrangements and good adult care and support. As a result, children feel safe and enjoy their learning. A strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills ensures that they soon begin to share, to learn and to play together.

From starting points which vary, but are overall in line with the levels of knowledge and skills found nationally, children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Virtually all achieve and some exceed the Early Learning Goals by the

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time they enter Year 1. Assessment information is being used more effectively to track children's progress and plan appropriate activities that meet their needs. This ensures a suitable balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Much is being done to improve the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Although still being developed, the outdoor area provides a variety of resources that enable children to engage in imaginative role play. Dressed in all-in-one waterproof suits, for example, a small group were so totally engrossed in transferring water into different containers that they were oblivious to the driving rain. All adults are vigilant in meeting the needs of children, and welfare requirements are fully met. Parents and carers are delighted, typically commenting 'I am extremely happy with everything about this wonderful school.'

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	2

Views of parents and carers

About two thirds of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. This was a good response. Overwhelmingly, parents and carers are very supportive of what one described as, 'A school in which my child is valued as an individual'. There were no significant areas of concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Middle Rasen 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 85 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	78	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	68	13	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	58	16	40	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	58	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	53	19	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	63	15	38	0	0	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)	22	55	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	60	15	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	60	16	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	48	20	50	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	65	14	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	70	12	30	0	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Middle Rasen Primary School, Market Rasen, LN8 3TS

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you to find out your views, and you were really helpful. We also want to say how much we enjoyed listening to your singing in assembly.

You receive a satisfactory education, make satisfactory progress and reach average standards at the end of Year 6. You enjoy school and your attendance is outstanding. You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. Your good behaviour is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. You could reach even higher standards and we have asked your teachers to make sure that, in all of your lessons, you are really stretched, so that you make the best progress you possibly can. We have also asked that teachers make more frequent checks on your learning in lessons. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and we have asked that when they do this, they make clear what you have to do to take the next steps in learning. You can help yourselves to make more progress by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given.

Adults at school look after you well, so that you are very safe. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of being healthy. Most of you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly. You learn to work and play well together and to help each other. Your teachers plan a good range of topics, visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences. To enhance your experiences further, we have asked that you are given more opportunities to learn about people with different faiths and cultures.

Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. To help this, we have asked that staff and governors work closely together to check the work of the school and how well you are doing. We think that everyone at Middle Rasen can work together to do these things and that you will want to play your part by working hard.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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