

Magdalen Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120892
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358871
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ted Gray
Headteacher	Alison Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2008
School address	Park Crescent Magdalen, King's Lynn PE34 3BU
Telephone number	01553 810326
Fax number	01553 811964
Email address	office@wighenhall-st-marymagdalen.norfolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2011
Inspection number	358871

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed seven lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with members of the leadership team, curriculum leaders, members of the governing body and the school council. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's action plan, documents and policies detailing how pupils are kept safe, the school's tracking data to see how well pupils are doing and analyses of pupils' standards. Inspectors scrutinised 23 completed questionnaires from parents and carers together with 12 from staff and 22 from pupils.

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

- How fast is the progress made by girls across the school?
- What are the reasons for any variation in the rate of pupils' learning across different cohorts and in the standards reached, especially in mathematics?
- What impact have the actions taken by school leaders, including governors, had on improving provision and raising standards?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. The numbers in each cohort vary significantly from year to year and are sometimes very low. Many pupils join the school at different times during the academic year. Almost all pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language. There are higher than average proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools status and the Artsmark and Activemark awards.

The school is in a federation with the nearby school, St Germans Primary. Pupils from St Germans are currently being taught at Magdalen Primary School because of building work.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Magdalen Primary provides a good education for its pupils. Lesson observations conducted by inspectors, as well as reviews of their work, confirm that pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities make good progress in this highly inclusive school. Pupils throughout the school particularly value the way teachers help them with their work and the useful additional support they receive when they need it. Many children start school with well-below average attainment in literacy and numeracy and a high proportion begin their time in the Reception year other than at the usual starting time. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a flying start because adults very quickly find out the needs of the children and subsequently provide excellent opportunities to develop their skills across all areas of learning. They make very quick progress because they relish being challenged to find out new things for themselves and to learn new words by breaking them up into letters and sounds. Throughout the school standards in mathematics, despite being broadly average, are lower than in English because there are too few opportunities for pupils to practice problem-solving skills. By the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment reaches the national average, representing good achievement in English and mathematics. Girls' achievement is slightly lower than boys.

Pupils say they usually feel safe and like coming to school because everyone is caring and friendly, and because they are confident that adults will help them if they have any concerns. This is the result of the early identification of pupils' needs, and the provision of high-quality support through an excellent range of school-based programmes and external specialist help. Transition arrangements to the high school are carefully planned through outstanding partnerships and networking with local schools. Teachers from the high school take mathematics lessons in Years 5 and 6 in the lead-up to transfer.

Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school addresses shortcomings in pupils' understanding effectively, using the well-organised assessment system to identify dips in performance of any group or individual. Teachers ask questions that probe understanding but responses are not always developed to sustain thinking at a high enough level. Teachers provide praise regularly but do not always inform pupils, when they mark their work, of the next steps needed to improve their work or how to reach their literacy and numeracy targets.

The good quality curriculum provides a strong focus on extending pupils' moral, cultural and social experiences and good opportunities for them to develop basic, as well as artistic, skills well. This results in good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The firmly established partnerships with other schools and providers develop the curriculum further. For example, pupils' understanding of other cultures is enhanced by 'Holi' day when pupils meet other local schools to share in a festival celebrating Hinduism.

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

Specialist coaches provide clubs, such as street dance and Taekwondo, that are enthusiastically attended.

Leaders and managers are clear about the school's effectiveness through perceptive self-evaluation and as a result of rigorous checks on pupils' outcomes. The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement because senior leaders and the governing body, with an unstinting focus on challenging pupil performance, have ensured good improvement since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise standards, particularly of girls, by:
 - providing more opportunities for problem solving in mathematics
 - ensuring all pupils know their literacy and numeracy targets.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring pupils know how to improve their work
 - providing greater challenge for more-able pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The gap between girls' and boys' attainment is narrowing although girls are still slightly behind. This improvement is due to the concerted efforts of staff to engage all pupils consistently and select resources to interest different groups. Pupils overcome lapses in their knowledge quickly, through the use of focused teaching methods that engage and involve pupils actively in lessons. This leads to consistently good levels of concentration and pupils are keen to do well. They enjoy learning, particularly when activities are investigative and involve them in discussing what they are learning. For instance, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils developed their mathematical vocabulary when they enthusiastically talked about different amounts of water. During the measuring activity they explored with their partners what they already knew to help them measure accurately. However, this level of pupil involvement was not evident in all lessons observed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants develops their self-esteem very effectively and has a positive impact on their learning. For example, the highly skilled delivery of a literacy programme has improved pupils' reading skills, through quickly learning and using new letter sounds and blends.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they show a good understanding of the benefits of leading a healthy and safe lifestyle. For instance, they talk knowledgeably about the importance of vitamins and minerals in, 'keeping us fit and strong,' as one pupil commented. Pupils contribute effectively to the school community and are proud and conscientious ambassadors of their school when carrying out their many positions of responsibility. School council members talk sensibly about their plans to raise money for charities, such as supporting a child in Vietnam with schooling and medical care, or activities to generate funds to purchase more resources, such as skipping ropes.

Meaningful discussions accelerate pupils' social and moral development although their ability to reflect on their own experiences is more limited. Pupils have a well-balanced

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

sense of right and wrong and have a clear sense of responsibility, developing a good understanding of ecological issues, such as recycling through their work as members of the 'Green Team'. They respect others and as a consequence relationships are very well developed. Pupils' obvious enjoyment of school has improved attendance but it remains broadly average. The average standards reached by pupils in English and mathematics, combined with their attendance, prepare them satisfactorily for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching is good and pupils are mostly motivated and engaged. Good assessment and class-management systems ensure pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In the best lessons, practical and challenging activities are well planned, in which pupils have good opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other. Highly trained teaching assistants provide highly effective support and, if needed, use specialist resources to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can take a full part in activities and make good progress. In the satisfactory lessons, students are still engaged, but teachers do not provide enough challenge, especially for more-able pupils.

The curriculum focuses on pupils' creativity in learning and generally matches their needs, but is not always well enough adapted to meet the needs of more-able pupils. Pupils enjoy practical activities and visits outside school, such as to Houghton Hall, which add to the quality of their learning. As well as visits, a good range of visitors add to pupils'

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

understanding of keeping safe and living healthy lives, including the school nurse and other professionals.

Care, guidance and support are high priorities for the school. The needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are met very effectively and support is extended to their families. Exceptionally well-targeted care and support ensure these pupils integrate very well and make good progress. To improve key skills, the school uses many published resources, which are exceptionally well-organised and expertly tailored to the needs of pupils. These, coupled with liaison with organisations such as the health service and local secondary schools, ensure a very smooth transition for pupils into the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school and works closely with a wide range of other agencies and partners to achieve success and enhance provision. Teamwork has developed well and staff share the headteacher's vision for improvement. A priority has been the thorough check on pupils' progress. However, subject leaders have not had the opportunity to identify where individual teachers still need to implement the school's improvement strategies. Links with parents and carers are good. The school grasps every opportunity, through regular information meetings for parents and carers and the use of the effective website, to gauge and respond to their views. The expertly led governing body, while supportive of the school, continually holds it to account for its performance and challenges development. As a result, improvements are sustained. The school has well-developed risk assessment systems and its safeguarding procedures are good. There are highly effective links with a variety of external agencies and providers, which contribute to pupils' learning and well-being. A ten-week programme with King's Lynn Speedway has served to increase pupils' self-esteem and encouraged pupils to use their skills in a variety of interesting contexts. For example, they designed protective clothing for motorcyclists with a view to preventing injury. Racist behaviour or harassment of any form is not tolerated and the ethos established in the school is one of vigorously promoting equality. Its ambitions for all groups have led to consistent performance and a very harmonious school community. The school's community cohesion action plan effectively sets out its aims to develop pupils' involvement in the local community and their engagement with a range of national and global communities; although the evaluation of the impact of events is at an early stage of development. The school uses its resources well and provides good value for money.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make very quick progress during their time in the Reception year, particularly in physical development, knowledge of the world around them and in personal and social skills. Children settle in quickly and soon gain confidence because of the sensitive and well-organised induction process. This is due to the considerable time staff take to get to know the children and their families before they start school, and is particularly important for the large proportion who start after the beginning of the school year. Adults provide many opportunities for speaking and listening. They model language well and plan stimulating activities that progressively develop and extend children's skills. The outdoor areas are used particularly well and children are just as likely to be found learning outside as they are in the classrooms. This is because activities excite children. For example, the 'window to the world', which also acts as a hide to watch wildlife, is greatly enjoyed by the children who adeptly observe wildlife with 'tuff cams' and record their findings with real enthusiasm. This is leading to significant improvements in communication skills, particularly writing. Adults use their observations and assessments of children's work and play to plan tasks which promote their development in all areas of learning very effectively. Children have excellent opportunities to learn through an exceptionally well-balanced set of activities, chosen for themselves and by adults. Welfare is at the heart of this very caring and warm environment, where children know how to be healthy and to stay safe. Leadership is outstanding, with all adults, including the headteacher, working together to use and continually improve assessment systems to focus specifically on children's individual needs.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the questionnaire was above average. Most parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school, the school keeps their children safe, the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good. The inspection findings support these views. Most parents and carers agree that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle and to be well prepared for the future. While inspectors found that pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is good, their attendance is satisfactory and this has an impact on their preparation for the future. While a very large majority of parents and carers are happy with how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, a few disagree. Inspectors found that the school successfully uses a range of strategies to promote good behaviour and to deal with any misbehaviour when it occurs. While a few parents and carers disagree that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns, the school has the normal range of opportunities for parents and carers to express views and suggestions. A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Magdalen Village 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	65	7	30	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	48	11	48	1	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	9	39	13	57	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	43	11	48	1	4	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	11	48	11	48	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	39	12	52	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	43	10	43	1	4	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)	12	52	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	35	13	57	1	4	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	39	10	43	2	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	48	9	39	3	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	39	13	57	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	52	9	39	1	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.



14 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Magdalen Village School, King's Lynn, PE34 3BU

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school recently with another inspector. We enjoyed our time with you and I am writing because I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You go to a good school. You are exceptionally well cared for and provided with very clear guidance. You told me how safe you feel and that you have confidence to approach the adults around you if you are worried about anything. You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy.

Children do exceedingly well in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and as you move through the rest of the school you make good progress. You are not doing quite as well in mathematics as you are in reading and writing. Some of you who find learning a bit easier are not always given work that is challenging enough to really make you think, and some of you are not clear about how to improve your work.

The school is keen to make things better for you. We have asked the staff to do two things. We have asked the headteacher to make sure teachers help you to learn more quickly, particularly in mathematics. We also want your teachers to help you by making sure that questions and activities always challenge you enough to make you think, particularly those of you who find work easy. We have asked teachers to make sure that marking helps you to improve your work. We have also asked the people who lead the school to ensure that the standards you reach are higher.

You can help by making sure that you do your best, keep concentrating in lessons and saying if you find work too easy.

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.