

Heighington Millfield Primary Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137201
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	385581
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Wilson
Headteacher	Claire Fisher
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons were observed and eight teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' past and current progress, evidence of monitoring, the school development plan, a variety of policies and safeguarding documentation. In addition, the lead inspector analysed the questionnaires returned by 75 parents and carers, 79 Key Stage 2 pupils, and 24 staff.

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

- How well do teachers use assessment in the classroom?
- How well is the curriculum adapted to meet pupils' differing needs?
- How well do leaders check the quality of teaching and learning?
- How well have leaders maintained the quality of education provided during the process of conversion to an academy?

Information about the school

This academy is of average size. It converted to academy status at the start of this term, retaining the same governing body and headteacher, who took up her post in 2009. The academy serves the community of Heighington and the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British origin. The proportions of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion from minority ethnic groups are below average. No pupil is at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average, but an average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one class of Reception-age children. The academy has won several awards for its provision, including the full International School Award and the Sing-Up Gold Award.

After-school care is run by other providers and so is not a part of this inspection.

The academy designates all its leaders and managers as 'leaders'.

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

This is a good academy that has improved on its past performance. Pupils' attendance is high and they achieve well. Parents and carers recognise the academy's success. 'I am very happy with the school and feel that it has a fantastic team of staff, led by a very enthusiastic head,' was a typical comment in response to the questionnaire. There are a number of reasons why pupils do well.

- All members of the school community have taken up the headteacher's vision to strive for success. Staff teamwork, in close partnership with the knowledgeable and competent governing body, assures that the drive for improvement is strong and well shared. The checks leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom are rigorous and regular. These have ensured that the quality has improved, reaping benefits in pupils' improved outcomes.
- The academy's core values of 'endeavour, excel and enjoy' underpin pupils' good achievement and their well-developed personal skills, reflecting the good levels of care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils behave well, feel safe and well cared for, enjoy taking on responsibility and get on well together.
- The process of conversion to an academy has been a well-led, positive catalyst, strengthening partnerships to provide pupils with enriched learning, for instance, in technology and sports. Links promoting business enterprise are a strength, such as those with a major bank and other businesses in the locality, making a strong contribution to pupils' preparation for their futures.
- The curriculum and teaching contribute well to pupils' good levels of learning. Music and art are strengths. The academy's 'Sing-Up Gold' Award and take-up of musical-instrument learning are testament to the impact of music. High-quality sculptured masks, made by pupils and displayed, reflect the quality of the art provision. In literacy and numeracy, most lessons offer lively and responsive presentation, promoting pupils' good progress. Input from other professionals, such as a 'Young Journalist' project for Years 5 and 6, enhance provision. Mostly, teachers help pupils make further gains in their learning because they make good use of the wide range of information they have about what pupils already know. In consequence, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education, and pupils make good progress through the academy, whatever their ability or differing needs, so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average.

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

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Teaching ranged from satisfactory to outstanding during the inspection. In weaker lessons, teachers' questioning sometimes provides answers too readily, restricting opportunities for pupils to extend their own thinking, reasoning and imagination and develop their own questioning. In Year 5 and 6, planning deals very well with meeting the needs of different groups through ensuring the greater part of each lesson is spent on individual or small group work. Leaders provide coaching to improve this aspect in the other classes, where the excellent balance is not evident.

The governing body provides a good range of expertise, challenge and advice, and monitors the academy's work thoroughly. The determination of academy leaders and staff, to continue the upward trend of achievement, underpins the academy's accurate self-evaluation and identification of priorities. The successful drive for improvement, combined with high expectations and the record of recent performance, demonstrates that the academy has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of all lessons to that of the best by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their own thinking and imagination to their work
 - ensure that teachers' questioning is designed to extend pupils' thinking and learning and enables pupils to fully explore their reasoning in response
 - improve the consistency and balance of planning to ensure that pupils work on tasks is pitched precisely to their ability for the majority of time in each lesson.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Most children join the academy with attainment in line with expectations for their age. They go on to leave Year 6 with above-average levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from care tailored to their needs both within and outside the classroom, which develops their confidence to help them make good progress. Gaps evident in past performance of boys and girls significantly narrowed in 2011, as a result of the academy's focus on improving boys' motivation and writing skills, for instance through a project linking with car dealerships in the area.

Pupils' smiling faces as they enter school at the start of the day, and their high attendance, demonstrate their enjoyment of school. Their best response is in those lessons when the main activity is on different tasks, matched precisely to their ability. In a Years 5 and 6 numeracy lesson observed, pupils accessed their individual tasks by email that the teacher had sent them. This captivated their sustained interest and enjoyment. Pupils make the best progress in those lessons when they explore their

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thinking. In a Years 5 and 6 diary-writing session, they answered questions and posed their own about their imagined feelings on discovering Tutankhamen’s tomb. They discussed their views maturely and explained their reasoning clearly.

Pupils’ well-developed personal skills contribute to the good learning evident in most lessons. Pupils clearly enjoy working together. They commented on how safe they feel in school. Pupils can explain how to keep safe in respect to the internet, and on the roads. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the benefits of exercise and a healthy diet. There is an active school council, and pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, for example in fund-raising. There is a good take-up of enrichment activities such as dance, film club, kick-boxing and gardening. These activities, and the opportunity for residential visits offered to all Year 1 to Year 6 pupils, enable pupils to demonstrate good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

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

How effective is the provision?

Cross-curricular elements in the curriculum and curricular links with the local community promote lively teaching and pupils’ good progress. This includes pupils’ with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are well supported through shared individual education plans, regularly checked. Those who are known to be eligible for free school meals are also well provided for and make equivalent progress. Business enterprise links, for example younger pupils’ involvement in a local café, are already having a good impact on pupils’ learning and personal development. The curriculum is being reviewed and developed further to make full

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

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use of these partnerships, and also to raise still further the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects. Resources are good, and recent new computer stations, with brightly illuminated equipment, have ignited pupils’ interest. Curricular planning is variable but is mostly good. It meets individual needs particularly well in Years 5 and 6 but is less responsive elsewhere, where a majority of plans are weighted in favour of whole-class elements. The best lessons deploy teaching assistants well to help particular individuals make good gains in understanding. In most lessons, learning objectives are explained well, and pupils are helped to understand how to succeed. A few teachers do not allow pupils enough time to work on their own or explore their thinking sufficiently. Teachers’ use of marking and targets is good, with clear displays of individual targets in the classrooms and books. Extra-curricular provision is good.

Good levels of care, guidance and support are reflected in pupils’ good personal development and academic progress. Several pupils enjoy a good start to the school day in the well-organised breakfast club. The good programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps to develop pupils’ understanding of key issues such as drug abuse, discrimination and personal safety. There are well-developed procedures to ensure smooth transition when pupils enter the academy or move on to their next school. Staff are developing ways to ensure that these processes are as smooth when transferring between classes to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are met. Good links with outside agencies ensure appropriate support for vulnerable pupils and have helped to ensure the high levels of attendance.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The academy’s leaders are having a good impact on pupils’ achievement and their personal development. All work together and fully share the headteacher’s aspiration to continue building on those successes already achieved in most aspects of the academy’s work. The governing body serves and supports the academy well because governors are pro-active, experienced and knowledgeable. Their monitoring of the academy’s work is good and enhances the academy leaders’ systematic and rigorous checks on teaching and progress. The systems for tracking pupils’ progress, and holding progress meetings to address the needs of individual pupils, have had a positive impact on learning and progress. The decision to become an academy has been taken up enthusiastically and careful consultation, especially with pupils, and their parents and carers, has ensured that the process of change has reaped

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benefits, for instance in enhanced understanding of its aims, in partnership activity and in improved resources. Links with other local schools are good.

The academy has good safeguarding arrangements in place. Procedures are monitored, evaluated and adapted as required. Staff are well trained in safeguarding issues, there are clear lines of responsibility and pupils are taught important basics. The academy is very inclusive in its approach to encouraging a harmonious environment and supporting pupils, whatever their background, ability or difficulty. All pupils have good access to what the academy offers, on an equal basis, so that achievement is similar for all. Issues such as potential discrimination are sensitively addressed through assemblies and the PSHE programme. The academy makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils participate in well-planned community events, for example through fund-raising and helping to care for the local environment. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of a range of beliefs and values in various parts of the world. This has been recognised in the International Schools award. The academy has some links developing with contrasting communities beyond the local area in Britain and is already planning further development.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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 good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach above-average attainment for their age, on entry to Year 1. They settle quickly and learn established routines in a safe, nurturing environment. Although the class was observed very early in the school year, it was obvious that children already felt comfortable in their new surroundings. They play and learn both independently and collaboratively in a constructive way. Children are confident, and talk confidently and

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clearly to adults, for example when describing their attempts to create fruit kebabs, cutting and threading the fruit pieces. Teaching is effective in ensuring that children achieve a good balance between structured and ‘free-flow’ activities, although sometimes, too few of the activities provided for them outside and inside are linked to the teacher-led learning, so opportunities to reinforce what they have just learned are missed. Staff track children’s progress well, and then plan activities in response to this information so that individuals can make good levels of progress. There are good links with feeder nurseries and pupils’ homes to ensure a smooth start. Leaders ensure that resources are used well to enhance children’s learning and play experiences. Children’s progress is carefully logged so that parents and carers can share their children’s progress in comprehensive pictorial and written form.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. All those who responded are happy with their children’s experiences. They feel that the academy keeps their children safe, and that it manages behaviour well. All felt the academy is well led and managed and several commented very positively on this aspect. There was no strong disagreement at all. A few parents and carers feel that the academy does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. From looking at records, talking to parents and carers and from reading their comments, the inspection team judged that the academy usually takes good account of these.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heighington Millfield Primary Academy 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	72	20	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	81	14	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	42	56	32	43	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	53	32	43	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	68	23	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	43	57	30	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	60	29	39	1	1	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)	44	59	25	33	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	49	65	24	32	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	52	33	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	51	27	36	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	67	25	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	54	72	21	28	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heighington Millfield Primary Academy, Lincoln, LN4 1RQ

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited you recently. It was very interesting for us to talk to you and see you both in lessons and around the academy. Thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaire.

The academy gives you a good standard of education. It has improved a lot. Most of you, from the Reception class right up to Year 6, now make good progress in your work. This is because your teachers teach you well, and you help them by your willingness to learn. You told us you like the way your school has become an academy because new exciting equipment is arriving, such as the illuminated computers. You told us you like the way subjects link together, and the work you do with businesses in the community, and this helps you enjoy your learning. Because of all this, you enjoy school and show this by your high levels of attendance. You and your parents and carers told us that you feel safe and well cared-for. You behave well and get on very well with each other. You are good at taking responsibility, for example when being members of the school council.

You enjoy your lessons and they are mostly good. Sometimes, you are not given enough opportunities to work on your own or in groups, so you miss out on enough time to work at tasks that are just right for you, that help you explore questions fully and use your imaginations and thinking skills to good effect. In order to make your good school even better, we have asked the academy to improve on each of those points.

You will help your teachers make the academy even better if you all continue to do your best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane
Lead inspector

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