

The Middle Rasen Primary School

North Street, Middle Rasen, Market Rasen, LN8 3TS

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress pupils make in mathematics is inconsistent; while it is extremely good sometimes, at other times it is not good enough.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with enough practical opportunities to learn about number before they write down calculations.
- There is insufficient emphasis on the importance of spelling and presentation of written work in some classes.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects are too limited.
- Leadership, including the governing body, has not yet ensured that pupils make consistently good progress. Leaders monitor teaching and learning in designated mathematics and English lessons, but miss opportunities to check pupils' progress in these and other aspects of learning during lessons in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of reading skills and the relationship between letters and the sounds that they make is good and, as a consequence, pupils make good progress in learning to read.
- Pupils' creative development is fostered effectively through plentiful opportunities to sing, play music and take part in performing arts and drama.
- Attendance is excellent.
- Behaviour is good and staff and pupils work together to create a positive atmosphere in the school in which learning can take place.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school, there is little arguing and that teachers care about them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as a result of the good opportunities provided for these aspects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes in seven lessons, of which two were shared observations with the headteacher. In addition, pupils were heard reading and pupils' work in books was scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the senior leadership team, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspection took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as talking to parents and receiving some letters. In addition, note was taken of ten responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including documents relating to safeguarding, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance and the school's own data on pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, with fewer pupils than nationally coming from minority ethnic groups or speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average overall, although a higher proportion are at school action plus or have a statement of their needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- There is a playgroup, breakfast club and after-school clubs on site. These are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by government, which determine the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics is consistently at least good by:
 - providing more practical opportunities for pupils to learn about number before they write down computations
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching of writing by ensuring that teachers place greater emphasis on the importance of spelling and presentation in pupils' work.
- Ensure that all pupils are making the best possible progress by involving leaders and managers at all levels in systematically monitoring the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in all subjects and not just in designated mathematics and English lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not yet consistently good in all subjects, although improvements have been made in reading and writing due to the focus school has placed upon this. Progress in reading is now good throughout the school and it is improving rapidly in writing.
- Regular phonics teaching (the links between letters and sounds) and guided reading activities help pupils make good progress in their reading from their various starting points when they enter the school. As a result, pupils tackle new words with confidence and enjoy reading. Results in recent assessments to see how well pupils at the end of Year 1 understand about letters and the sounds that they represent were above the national average.
- Most children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. In recent years the school's results in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests have steadily improved, but have been broadly average overall. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 attained levels significantly above those expected for their age in writing in the 2012 tests.
- Progress in mathematics is still too inconsistent. Averaged scores belie the fact that while some pupils make very good progress, others make slow progress. There is no discernible pattern to the variable progress that pupils make. Boys and girls and potentially higher attaining pupils all make similar progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. The gap between pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium and other pupils is closing steadily.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school requires improvement, particularly in mathematics. While teaching enables some pupils to make very good progress in developing mathematical skills and confidence, this is not always the case.
- Teachers frequently provide equipment for pupils to use to develop their understanding of processes such as sharing. However, in some lessons there is too much emphasis on quickly writing down the answers rather than developing a confident understanding of the process.
- Opportunities are missed in other subjects for pupils to apply their developing mathematical skills, such as measuring and interpreting data.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and thoroughly, particularly their literacy books. The whole-school marking system is fully understood by pupils and gives them good guidance on how well they have achieved and what they can do to make their work better. However, marking in books in other subjects does not always link to developing pupils' mathematical and writing skills strongly enough.
- Across the school, there are examples of consistently good and recently improved teaching, for example, in reading. This is because staff have received good training and support, and there has been a whole-school focus on improving pupils' progress in this area.

- The quality of teaching in writing still requires some improvement, although for the oldest pupils, their teaching facilitates good progress and attainment of high standards.
- Teachers give pupils suitable opportunities to write in a range of subjects and also to write at length each week. This is showing signs of success in the high standards attained by some pupils. However, pupils' spelling and presentation skills require further improvement. The examples teachers provide pupils with in their own writing are not always good enough.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide suitable support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils consequently take a full part in lessons, enjoy their learning and make similar progress to their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is borne out by their excellent attendance.
- Behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly. They talk knowledgeably about different types of bullying. Pupils say: 'We do have little arguments on occasions, but they don't last long and then we are friends again the next day.'
- The school has an effective system of rewards and sanctions. Older pupils confided that they do need these to guide them. They also say that sometimes they need an adult to remind them of how they should behave as they do not always remember on their own.
- A significant proportion of parents who expressed an opinion felt that behaviour is not always good. However, this was not borne out by observations in class and around the school, scrutiny of incident logs or speaking with pupils.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and the part that they have in it, such as acting as peer mediators and producing the school newspaper. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and exercise. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are confident that any issue they raise with the school will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils relate well to each other, are courteous and polite to visitors and each other, and show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. They display good levels of concentration and, when working in pairs or in groups, organise themselves with the minimum of fuss. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School self-evaluation has accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is an appropriate agenda for further improvement, centred on improving teaching, learning and progress.
- Performance management processes and salary progression are closely linked to discussions around pupil progress. Staff have suitable opportunities for professional development. This is producing measurable benefits in the effectiveness of teaching, particularly in the teaching of

reading, and also in developing management skills.

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is regular and accurate. However, it is focused almost exclusively on mathematics and English lessons. Very little monitoring has been undertaken of lessons and work in other subjects. Opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical and literacy skills in other subjects are not systematically monitored.
- There have been many unavoidable changes to personnel who have provided support for the school on behalf of the local authority over recent years. However, suitable training opportunities and support for the school has been provided. This has helped it to improve practices in raising attainment, for example in the teaching of reading.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through activities such as assembly and the wide range of clubs, as well as in lessons.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a level of support and challenge for leaders and managers to ensure that the school improves and moves forward. It checks that safeguarding is secure and has effectively overseen the arrangements for relating teachers' performance to pay. Governors monitor the school's effective use of money derived from the pupil premium. This helps eligible pupils to take part in the full range of activities, including trips and visits and so have equality of opportunity with others. The gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils is being eroded. Governors play an active role in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes. The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of the comparative performance of the school in relation to similar schools, although it relies on the headteacher for interpretation of statistical data. Governors have an adequate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120463
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	405928

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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Charles Patrick
Headteacher	Mrs Melonie Brunton
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2010
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