

Malcolm Sargent Primary School

Empingham Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 2SR

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school. Staff work very well together to improve what is provided for the pupils, with several indicating how proud they are to work here.
- School leaders provide a very focused and determined steer to the work of the school. They accurately identify what needs to improve further.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress as they move through the school.
- In national tests in 2014, standards improved from the previous year and were well above average, especially in mathematics.
- Behaviour is good in and around the school, and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. The school has excellent procedures to safeguard everyone.
- Teaching over time is good, as shown in work in pupils' books. Teachers have clear expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of their behaviour.
- Staff have very effective working relationships with the pupils and offer them lots of praise and encouragement in their work.
- Senior staff monitor the quality of teaching regularly and accurately. There are good links to a detailed programme of additional training activities.
- Staff in subject and phase leader roles lead by example in providing effective teaching that is valuable when coaching others.
- The Early Years provision is well led and provides a good start to the children's education.
- The school promotes British values well through its curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through doing things 'The Malcolm Sargent way'.
- Governors provide a very effective level of support and challenge, and are ambitious for further improvement.
- The large majority of parents and carers are very happy with the quality of education and care provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not do quite as well in reading and writing as in mathematics and not as many reach the higher levels in these areas.
- There is some variation in the quality of teaching. While work is set at different levels for pupils of a range of abilities, this occasionally does not sufficiently stretch the more-able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 28 lessons. Several of these were carried out jointly with the Principal or Vice Principal. Inspectors also looked in detail at the work in pupils’ books and heard several pupils read.
- Planned and informal discussions were held with pupils throughout the inspection.
- There were discussions with the Principal and Vice Principal, the Early Years leader, the Assistant Principal (with special educational needs responsibility) and those with responsibility for leading literacy and numeracy.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were 84 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to several parents and carers and received communications from a small number of other parents. Inspectors took account of 33 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school’s own information about pupils’ learning and progress. They also took account of documents and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Gossage

Additional Inspector

Jenny Daniels

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Early Years provision is in the Reception class; all children are full-time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is about half that in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- During this term four newly qualified teachers started at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which is the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of progress and raise achievement even further by:
 - checking that pupils improve their understanding of the words they read and their skills in reading at the higher levels
 - ensuring that pupils develop the ability to spell and use punctuation accurately and the confidence to write at greater length and in depth.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently effective by:
 - making sure that staff check the progress pupils make in lessons and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more-able
 - checking that teachers involve more pupils in discussions so that they are stimulated to produce their best work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal provides strong and effective leadership. He is well supported by the Vice Principal and Assistant Principal in the drive to improve progress. Leadership is reinforced by a group of skilled staff holding additional responsibilities for subjects and key areas. This ensures that those making strategic decisions are knowledgeable, keen and determined that the school move further forwards.
- Leaders continually strive to improve teaching. They make regular visits to classrooms and check pupils' work and attitudes to learning to identify what is happening in school. This use of monitoring and evaluation is accurate and helps the school assess what it needs to do to improve further. The school development plan rightly recognises the key priorities and largely matches those noted in the inspection.
- Senior leaders make good use of a range of information to manage the performance of staff. They hold teachers to account and set ambitious targets for them. Action has been taken to address teaching where pupils make less progress than expected. Subject leaders work closely with other staff in coaching and mentoring roles, which has a positive impact on improving teaching.
- Senior leaders took decisive action to address the dip in standards and progress noted in 2013 national tests. For example, a full review of the teaching of reading was undertaken and changes made to group reading activities. Book club and other activities were introduced where the whole class study a story in much greater depth. This has led to pupils improving their comprehension skills and understanding of what they are reading.
- Assessment is thorough and provides leaders and class teachers with a clear understanding of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing. The school has begun to develop its preferred approach to assessment and is maintaining its focus on the levels of pupils' work for the time being.
- Improvements have been made in the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly in the last year. This area is well led. The support provided is now more carefully tailored to pupils' needs and has led to significant improvement in the achievement of these pupils.
- The school has worked diligently to review its curriculum. It is broad and balanced and meets requirements; the provision helps pupils to prepare for the next stage of education and for life in modern Britain. Staff are very aware of the need to ensure they continually review provision including, for example, the daily access to outdoor activities for children in the Early Years.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding everyone meet current requirements. There are effective systems to ensure the necessary checks are made before staff begin work at the school. The school is diligent in checking site security during current building work.
- Effective use is made of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for additional funding made very good progress last year because of the interventions that have supported and accelerated their learning. This emphasises the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Primary school physical education and sport funding are used effectively. The school works with external coaches and this is having a positive impact on staff teaching skills. There is now a greater take-up of extra-curricular sporting activities and success in local and regional sports competitions.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school. Advisors have worked successfully with leaders to address the dip in progress and raise the quality of teaching. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of education provided and of the school's good capacity to continue to improve.
- The large majority of parents and carers are very satisfied with the quality of education and care provided

for their children. A small number do not think the school responds well to their concerns. Inspectors noted that the school makes appropriate use of a good number of opportunities to consult with parents including use of its own questionnaire.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors are well led and effective. They are organised and clear about the roles they undertake. There is a very good programme of visits made for specific activities. Because of their presence in school, the governing body is increasingly well informed about the work that the school does and the quality of teaching. Good records are kept of visits and discussions that help share information across the governing body and its committees.
- Governors are successful in holding leaders to account for the school's performance. Because they are well informed, including a good understanding of school data, they are able to stand back and act as a critical friend of the school by challenging a strong and effective leadership team.
- The impact of additional funding that the school receives, such as that for the pupil premium, is carefully evaluated by governors. School finances are closely monitored and planning for the future is part of the cycle of work undertaken. Governors recognise their responsibility to take account of data and performance management information when making decisions about teachers' pay progression.
- There is a clear structure to reviewing key policy documents. There are efficient procedures to check on the way the school safeguards everyone.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Key to promoting good behaviour in the strong set of values the school expresses is the continual reference to doing things 'The Malcolm Sargent way'. This guide for behaviour is widely displayed around the school and often referred to in lessons and other activities. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and the consequences should they not demonstrate the school's values.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. The school has done much work to emphasise the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and to discourage the taking of holidays in term time.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school with many saying they like mathematics the best. Disruptions in lessons are rare and behaviour is well managed. At times, such as observed in a Key Stage 2 assembly, pupils get wrapped up in what they are doing. They really enjoyed their singing and making the actions to a 'Harvest rock' song. This resulted in immaculate behaviour and a spiritual moment clearly much enjoyed by everyone.
- The very large majority of pupils also have positive attitudes to their learning, which has a clear impact on the progress they make. In a few lessons across the school, some pupils do not always push themselves as hard as they could. This was seen in discussions where a small number of pupils did not make enough effort to contribute their ideas. Similarly, work in a few places in pupils' books is not always as neatly presented or completed in as much detail as the rest. Therefore, overall behaviour is good rather than outstanding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They very clearly explain that bullying is a repeated and deliberate action and is very rare. They know that bullying in any form will not be tolerated in school.
- Pupils readily identify the different types of bullying that could occur such as cyber-bullying or racism. They understand the dangers of social media. Pupils also know that calling people names is unacceptable and recognise that the use of words such as 'gay' is sometimes inappropriate. Pupils are fully confident that little bullying occurs in school and that there are plenty of people to talk to if they have any worries. They also recognise that the school takes firm action should incidents ever occur. Many are keen to take on responsibilities such as 'playtime buddies', including helping children in the Early Years.

- Pupils understand that the school works hard to ensure that they learn how to keep safe. Work in assemblies and in class activities helps them to recognise dangers and what action to take. The checks made in school to ensure everyone is kept safe are rigorous and highly effective, including during current building work.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over time is good and promotes pupils' learning well. This is reflected in samples of pupils' work, the data tracking progress and in learning seen in classroom observations. The range of evidence indicates that some teaching is outstanding and there is none that is inadequate. The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics has a positive impact on the progress pupils make.
- Staff have strong working relationships with pupils and widely praise their efforts, which stimulates many to try even harder. This is done through verbal feedback and strategies such as 'a disco cheer' where staff and pupils sing a short phrase, accompanied by actions, that amuses the pupils and raises their self-esteem. The strategy of praising pupils' efforts is also reflected in the marking of pupils' work. Some of this, including for the oldest pupils, is very detailed and clearly identifies what needs to be improved.
- Teachers plan activities carefully; they provide linked but different activities for groups of pupils of a range of abilities. This ensures a good level of challenge for most groups. Pupils often choose from one, two or three star activities that provide different levels of difficulty. Occasionally, the level of challenge for some pupils, including the more-able pupils, is not high enough.
- Teachers use a good range of questions to check pupils' understanding of what they are doing. Some staff are particularly skilled in asking probing questions to deepen pupils' understanding. However, other staff do not check carefully enough that all pupils are offering ideas in discussions. Occasionally, staff do not adapt their teaching when pupils do not understand what they are expected to do. This allows some pupils to remain uninvolved in activities and does not motivate them sufficiently to set to work with enthusiasm and determination.
- Teachers use technology well to support learning. For example, in Year 4 when pupils were identifying how to use prepositions when producing a poem, excellent use was made of a 'visualiser' to show pupils' work to others, which promoted even more effective use of similes.
- Support staff are usually deployed well and often work very effectively in supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is, in part at least, because of additional training for staff that made a clear impact on the results these pupils achieved in recent national tests.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Many children enter the Early Years having attended the adjoining childcare centre. The two sets of staff work closely together to ensure a good start for the children. Many children now enter the school with skills and experiences that are a little above what is expected for their age.
- In Year 1 national checks, pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is well above average. Data show that there has been a three-year-trend of improvement in this area, which has ensured that all the younger pupils are now well placed to achieve more in their reading.
- The progress pupils make as they move through the school is good. While standards dipped overall in 2013, they rose considerably in 2014 to well above average because of the clear action taken by senior leaders to improve progress.
- Pupils across the school do particularly well in mathematics. This is because they have very secure understanding of numbers and calculations. This enables many to solve mathematical problems speedily and accurately. Pupils say they enjoy solving problems particularly where they are based on 'real life' situations.

- Most pupils read well. Many have the technical skills to work out unfamiliar words but they do not always understand what they mean. The school has done much work in the past year to improve pupils' comprehension skills. This led to much improved standards in national tests in 2014 but this has not always eradicated previous gaps in their learning and enabled them to reach the higher levels in reading.
- Many pupils also write well. The school has recently focused on this area, including developing pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. The school has introduced 'Learning Journals' across the school, which pupils use to record their work in a range of subjects. This cross-curricular approach is encouraging the pupils to write at greater length and in depth across the curriculum. Standards in writing improved during 2014 but the school recognises the need to maintain this focus to consolidate the recent improvements made.
- Most groups of pupils make similar progress to their classmates and boys and girls achieve equally well. In 2013, disadvantaged pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium were around two terms behind their classmates in mathematics, reading and writing. Compared with all pupils nationally, the gap in disadvantaged pupils' attainment was about two terms in mathematics and three in reading and writing. However, there was considerable improvement in all areas in 2014 and the gaps in all subjects narrowed, particularly in reading.
- A greater number of more-able pupils made good progress and achieved the higher levels in their work in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. A higher proportion of the most-able pupils also made good progress although more remains to be done to ensure the highest level of challenge across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly good progress to all other groups. Many of these pupils benefited from more tailored support following additional staff training last year.
- Pupils develop healthy lifestyles through a range of physical education activities supported by additional funding for primary school physical education sport. This includes additional swimming lessons for some groups and more extra-curricular activities.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter one of the three Reception class groups having often attended the adjoining childcare provision or other settings. They settle very quickly and happily and most want to do what their older siblings and friends do. On entry, their skills are wide ranging but now often a little above what is expected for their age and several are very confident and chatty young learners. Data on progress indicate that all groups, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs and the more able, achieve well. Children are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years are good. There are careful checks on the quality of teaching that identify strengths and where improvement can be made. A notable feature is the effective work with the adjoining childcare staff to ensure consistency and continuity in teaching phonics. Staff have good subject knowledge in this area as seen in quick-fire 'I say, you say' activities. In these, children repeated what an adult said and found out more about when to join or separate sounds to work out new words.
- Teaching in the Early Years is good. All staff have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. The school's values are as prominent as they are elsewhere in the school. Classrooms are, however, a little bland and do not feature many bright and stimulating areas to promote imagination and develop higher level communication skills. During the inspection little use was made of the outdoor areas at least partly because direct access is limited.

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	137680
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	449218

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	550
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Ken Swanson
Principal	Tristan Revell
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 June 2011
Telephone number	01780 762708
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