

Lincoln Monks Abbey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120429
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291729
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Gunn
Headteacher	Mrs Vicky Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Monks Road Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 5PF
Telephone number	01522 527705
Fax number	01522 510522

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The socio-economic circumstances of most pupils are disadvantaged. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are well below expectations for most children. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Almost a third of the pupils come from minority ethnic cultures, particularly, but not exclusively, from Eastern Europe, and the proportion of those who are at an early stage of speaking English is well above average. There is a much higher than average number of children who join the school at different points in their primary education.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils make good progress both academically and socially. Parents rate the school highly and appreciate its good level of care for their children. They say that their children enjoy going to school. This is particularly important, given the high proportion of pupils who arrive from other countries and who have often had an unsettled education.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage but are not always sufficiently encouraged to develop their language skills. In Years 1 to 6, in the recent past, there have been some inconsistencies in pupils' achievement. These were recognised by the school, and strategies were initiated to bring about improvements. Although the strategic use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across all subjects is not yet fully embedded in the satisfactory curriculum, these strategies have had clear and measurable success. Consequently, current standards show good improvement, though writing remains the weakest of pupils' skills. Current standards in Year 2, though a little below the national average, are much higher than in 2006. Rigorous implementation of appropriate strategies has brought a sustained two year improvement, and current standards in Year 6 are in line with national averages, with some pupils on track to get even higher levels in the next national tests. From a starting point well below average, this represents good achievement.

This progress is the outcome of several interdependent factors.

The school has successfully created an atmosphere conducive to good learning. The provision of equal opportunities for all pupils to succeed is outstanding. This begins with the establishment of a warm, caring and encouraging atmosphere, in which pupils enjoy good relationships with the staff. Pupils, consequently, have positive attitudes to learning and this helps them achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is good and is another key factor in their good achievement. The close attention given to their personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE) results in their showing increasing maturity as they go through the school.

Pupils also make good progress because the vast majority of teaching is good. In a small number of lessons learning is too slow and pupils are not so interested in their work. Most lessons, however, are well organised and conducted at a good pace so that learning is fun. Many teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, this is not yet uniformly the case.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's and her staff's commitment to raising standards by providing pupils with a rich diet of experiences to ensure that they enjoy learning are underpinned by well organised monitoring and evaluating procedures. Consequently, the school has an accurate view of areas needing development. Governors are involved and provide good support. Finances are well managed and the school provides good value for money. This, along with the effective steps taken to promote improvement since the previous inspection, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of writing throughout the school.
- Ensure that marking is used consistently well to inform pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their work, and to set targets to attain.
- Widen the curriculum opportunities for language development in the Foundation Stage.

- Promote the use of writing, number work and information technology throughout the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress, though they enter Year 1 with well below average skills. They are presented with an expanding variety of well organised activities, but opportunities to develop their language skills are missed, and this slows their learning.

At the end of Year 2, pupils' levels of attainment in 2006 were well below average. However, the current Year 2 pupils have gained particular strengths in learning resulting in good achievement and improved standards, which although below average, indicate good progress.

A decline in Year 6 pupils' performance in 2005 was because of staffing problems and the arrival of a significant proportion of pupils for whom English was not their first language. Some pupils also had challenging learning difficulties. Results in 2006 were markedly improved and close to average. The recent whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning is paying dividends and current standards show clearly that pupils are making good progress. Although writing remains the weakest subject, pupils are now performing at least at national averages in all subjects. The school is on course to meet its demanding targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make good progress because of effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school provides a happy environment where pupils feel valued and safe. The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities for reflection are provided through assemblies and in lessons. Moral and social development is well supported by the PSHE programme, circle time and the way pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities such as peer mediators. Cultural development is enhanced through events such as the One World Week and through the wider curriculum. Residential outward bound trips in Years 5 and 6 help to develop pupils' social skills, team building and independence. Pupils have a voice through the school council, whose members display good levels of initiative and responsibility, saying they are 'representatives, not leaders'. Their decisions have had an impact on school life, for example, in the purchase of playground equipment.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. This is supported by curricular developments in PSHE and physical education (PE) as well as extra curricular activities. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, helpful and talk enthusiastically about school and how much they enjoy being there. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils make a contribution to the community by raising money for charities and making links with agencies such as the police. By the end of Year 6, pupils are acquiring the basic skills and qualities that will equip them for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, enabling pupils to make good progress. The leadership team is working hard to raise the standard of teaching and their efforts are already showing clear signs of success. In many lessons, teachers plan effectively to meet the different needs of learners and they make good use of teaching assistants to support individuals or groups of pupils. They place learning firmly at the centre of activities and encourage thinking skills which enable pupils to reflect upon and talk about their learning. Where teaching is only satisfactory, learning is compromised by a lack of pace and a focus upon activities rather than learning outcomes. In Years 1 to 6, teachers create stimulating classrooms which provide a positive environment for learning. In the Foundation Stage teaching is satisfactory but pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills are not sufficiently well developed.

Although assessment and tracking systems are in place to monitor progress, marking and feedback to pupils are inconsistent and do not always inform pupils about the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and inclusive curriculum. Important skills, such as mathematics, science and PE are given increasing emphasis. Creative elements such as drama, art and music are developing well. The youngest children get off to a satisfactory start. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are given increasing opportunities to engage in discussion to facilitate learning, although this approach is not yet consistently applied. Writing, numeracy and ICT skills are not yet promoted well enough through other subjects. Personal and social development are given strong emphasis and lie at the heart of the school's work. Visits, residential experiences, visitors and themed events such as the One World Week, help to break down barriers between subjects and bring learning to life. Pupils of all ages enjoy and benefit from a good range of popular clubs and activities, such as tennis, animation, construction and computer clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. A high priority is placed on the quality of pastoral care of pupils and everything is done to ensure their well-being. Incidences of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that they are dealt with effectively by teachers as well as their peers. The school has developed a wide range of strategies to provide support for vulnerable pupils, including those with behavioural problems, learning difficulties and for newly arrived pupils, including those whose first language is not English. Strong links with other agencies support this process. There is good support for parents, carers and families, including learning workshops and this is helping to engage them in the learning process. The breakfast club and after school clubs extend care beyond the school's day.

All the checks required to secure the safeguarding of pupils have been carried out. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are robust and regularly monitored. A comprehensive programme, which makes good use of visitors, assemblies, lessons and circle time, encourages pupils to think about their relationships, health and personal safety.

There have been improvements in the way data are used to track pupils' progress but there is inconsistency in marking and the setting of individual targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by her senior colleagues, sets clear and positive direction for the work of the school. Together, they make a strong team, which enjoys the support and the co-operation of the whole staff. There is a sharp focus on improving pupils' learning, progress and standards. This is set alongside the firm commitment to ensuring the highest levels of care and personal development.

The headteacher has led the school positively through a challenging period, including the arrival of increasing numbers of pupils, many of whom have not had a continuing or formal educational experience, and who often join and leave the school part way through their primary education. She has coped with these issues effectively and efficiently. Her understated assessment of some of the school's features, as set out in the school's self-evaluation documents, reflects her modesty rather than her real knowledge and understanding of her school.

Governance is good. Governors ask the right questions to hold the school to account for its performance and check regularly for themselves how well it is doing. Monitoring and evaluation are increasingly thorough and rigorous. Any dips in performance are quickly identified and action taken to remedy them. Strong links with the local community and other schools successfully enhance the learning opportunities presented to pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 March 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Lincoln Monks Abbey Primary School, Monks Road, Lincoln, LN2 5PF

As you know, we recently visited your school to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to us. We very much enjoyed being in your school and listening to what you had to say. We judge your school to be a good school and we think you are very lucky children to go there.

We particularly liked the warm and friendly atmosphere and the way the staff take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. They work hard to make learning interesting for you so that you do well. This was very clear to us because many of you told us how much you like your teachers and enjoy school. We were very impressed by the mature approach you have to your learning and how hard you work for your teachers. This is the main reason that you make such good progress and achieve well. We were also pleased to see how well you behave in lessons and around the school and how older pupils take care of the younger ones. Your awareness of the importance of a healthy diet was evident when we talked to some of you at lunchtime.

We were impressed by the way your headteacher and the staff work hard to give you a good education. Your English is coming on nicely but to get it up to the level of your other subjects, we have asked the headteacher and the teachers to continue to concentrate on this, especially on your writing. Although you are making good progress we think that in some classes, some of you could do better with your work. Your headteacher also thinks so. She is helping teachers to plan activities, especially for those of you who are in your early years in school, that make you all listen more carefully and speak more clearly to your classmates and your teachers. As you go through the school, we have asked her to make sure that you get many more opportunities to use your skills on computers, and in literacy and number work. This will improve your learning even more. Finally, we have asked your headteacher to make sure that all your teachers are clear about how they can help you with your learning by telling you clearly what you need to do to improve your work, and what your targets are, so each of you knows what to aim for. This will really help you get even better results than you do now!

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that your school becomes even better in the future

Ronald Cohen

Lead Inspector