

The Malcolm Sargent Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120672
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313711
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	John Williams HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	491
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Swanson
Headteacher	Mr Tristan Revell
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2006
School address	Empingham Road Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 2SR
Telephone number	01780 762708
Fax number	01780 765648

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Malcolm Sargent primary school is a large primary school that caters for children aged 4 to 11 from the local community. Few pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds and below average numbers are eligible for free school meals or have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school when last inspected was found to need significant improvement because it was performing less well than could reasonably be expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Malcolm Sargent Primary school now provides satisfactory value for money. It has become a more effective school because satisfactory leadership and management have addressed the areas for improvement and satisfactory progress has been made. The new headteacher, though in post for only a few weeks at the time of the inspection, has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation is accurate. Governors have worked very well with the local authority, school improvement partners and a seconded headteacher to bring about change. Recovery planning has been good and longer term development planning to drive up standards is well articulated by management. The school demonstrates sound capacity to improve further.

Attainment when children begin school is above average. Standards, though above the national average in a number of subjects, had been falling. This drop has been arrested and most pupils in Year 6 are now predicted to reach the expected level. There remains some underachievement by the more able, especially in mathematics and writing. However, teachers are becoming much better at systematically tracking pupils' progress and monitoring challenging individual targets. Progress is satisfactory overall; it is good in lessons when teaching encourages pupils to set their own pace of learning. Overall achievement is satisfactory.

The curriculum is satisfactory, providing pupils with an experience that meets current guidelines and requirements, but it does not address the needs of the gifted and talented. Teaching is sound overall though elements of good and outstanding teaching exist. When it is only satisfactory, teachers control the pace too tightly, which leads to slower progress for the more able. Sometimes the needs of the slower learner are not well met, particularly when there are few teaching assistants to support them in lessons. Pupils' care, guidance, support and personal development are good. Assessment is much improved and pupils have a sound understanding of the level of their work and what it is they need to do to improve. Attendance is good and pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to their work and have very good relationships with adults and other pupils. Their speaking and listening skills are outstanding: pupils are fluent and articulate and contribute willingly to discussions. Their behaviour is very good though some can become restless in lessons that do not challenge them. They know how to stay safe and healthy.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many recognise the difficulties of the past and are pleased to see improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Some very good induction and teaching in the Reception class ensure that children behave well and enjoy coming to school. There is good personal, social, cultural and emotional provision. The school provides children with a motivating and attractive learning environment, including outside areas. The Foundation Stage phase leader is providing good leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress and increase the number of pupils gaining the higher National Curriculum levels, particularly in mathematics and in writing.
- Widen the range of teaching and learning styles so that the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities, the more able and the gifted and talented are met more effectively.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils begin school with standards that are above the national average. Standards are above and at times well above average at the end of the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. A downward trend over three years has been arrested. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level at age 11 is well above average, but a significant number are not on track to reach the higher level, especially in mathematics. The school acknowledges that pupils' writing also has scope for improvement. Pupils' progress is now satisfactory overall and achievement is also satisfactory.

Pupils are independent, articulate and enthusiastic learners who have outstanding listening and speaking skills. Their learning is improving due to a whole school push to develop learning skills. When provided with opportunities to work independently at their own pace, their progress is good in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. As was the case at the last inspection pupils enjoy school and think it is a good place to be. Members of the school council discuss their responsibilities and speak proudly of their impact. They speak of projects such as the adventure playground, a recycling project, leaflets for newcomers and internal post-boxes that have all made the school a better place.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of a programme of school assemblies, class assemblies and achievement celebrations that promote good attitudes, correct behaviour and citizenship. The focus on mathematics, English and information and communication technology (ICT) means that pupils are prepared properly for their future economic well-being. Attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils are courteous and helpful and a 'play-buddy' system helps those who might be experiencing difficulties.

The adoption of healthy lifestyles is good as a result of the school working hard to obtain Healthy Schools status. Pupils know how to stay safe: they are trained to be 'young leaders' and have an Internet safety system, road training and a cycling proficiency scheme. They make a good contribution to the community, for example by working with the local Community Support Officer on a citizenship project.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good induction arrangements and very good teaching enables children to make a confident start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Across the rest of the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory within a relatively limited range of teaching styles.

In all lessons, the objectives are clearly displayed to ensure that pupils understand what they are learning. Most teachers use electronic whiteboards confidently, and this adds impact and enjoyment to whole class teaching, though they are not being used interactively by the pupils. During the good and outstanding lessons, pupils are excited and keen to learn because the teaching has pace and is lively and challenging. Progress accelerates because teachers set high expectations for learning through well matched and interesting tasks that allow the pupils to set their own pace.

The majority of teachers use questioning well but sometimes the questions are not sufficiently open ended to challenge and extend more able pupils. Teachers' weaker subject knowledge of mathematics also affects their ability to respond skilfully to pupils' questions. However, a more rigorous and robust approach to assessment is now becoming embedded and used well to set targets and monitor progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good: a thoughtful mix of teacher-directed and child-chosen activities takes place in a well planned and structured indoor and outdoor environment. The system of ongoing assessment and recording is excellent.

The curriculum in the rest of the school is satisfactory and meets requirements. In some classes it is delivered in an exciting manner. It is planned to meet pupils' general needs, though does not address the gifted and talented. The core curriculum is supported appropriately by a range of school assemblies, class assemblies and achievement celebrations. There is a well equipped ICT suite but pupils have very limited access to computers in their classrooms. This means that opportunities to use ICT to improve learning are missed. Pupils profit from a range of extra-curricular activities in areas such as sport and dance and they attend these with enthusiasm. In addition, a programme of day and residential visits extends the curriculum and motivates the pupils further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, academic guidance and support has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school follows good procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and the level of pastoral care and welfare is good. Pupils learn in a safe environment where relationships are happy and supportive. Teachers and support assistants know pupils well and they are alert to their individual pastoral needs. The school encourages the help of parents and works closely with outside agencies. There are good and rigorous procedures for child protection, risk assessments and for medical and emergency aid, which are understood by all staff.

Pupils are well supported and guided academically because the arrangements for assessing and tracking their progress have improved and are now good. Importantly, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the care that the school provides for their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, which is an improvement from the time of the last inspection. Governance has improved immensely and governors now have a well informed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have been effective in bringing about change and improvement. The leadership of an interim headteacher was good at both arresting a decline in standards and in putting in place sound foundations for improvement. At the time of this inspection the new headteacher had been in post only a few weeks but had already established a clear vision for the school as well as starting a restructuring programme in order to target resources where they are most needed.

Performance management and the monitoring of teaching and learning are taking place systematically. The school provides satisfactory value for money at present, as progress has been satisfactory. Development planning is not fully in place because the focus has been very much on recovery planning, but the structures are now there to extend this to longer term improvement planning. The school has created a new senior leadership team but as yet does not have a deputy headteacher. Subject teams are just beginning to take up their role effectively and have some way to go in acquiring a view of teaching and standards in their subject. However, given the progress since the last inspection, the structures in place, and the accurate targets that have been set, the school currently demonstrates sound capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
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?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Thursday, 24 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Malcolm Sargent Primary School, Stamford PE9 2SR

Thank you for making Mr Hare, Mrs Hackney and me so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you. You seem to really enjoy coming to school and behave very well.

The Malcolm Sargent School is a better school than it was when it was last inspected. Mr Revell, the staff and the governors are determined that you will do well. The staff still take good care of you as they did then, but now they know much more about how to help you make better progress in your work. You also know how to look after yourselves, how to stay safe and how to be healthy. Well done!

We like the way you listen and speak to the teachers and each other. You work hard and many of you reach good standards. However, we feel that some of you could do better. We have asked the school to look at ways of helping those who might be able to achieve the highest results do better, particularly in mathematics and in writing. Some of you have special gifts and talents and the school will be finding ways to help you explore these gifts. And finally, some of you may struggle at times with your work and your teachers will be trying to find different ways of helping you learn more.

My best wishes go to all of you for your future success at The Malcolm Sargent Primary school.

Yours faithfully

John Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector