

The Spalding Monkshouse Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120425
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327279
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Greatrex

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	372
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Lilley
Headteacher	Mrs Vicky O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pennygate Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 1LG

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2008
Inspection number	327279

Telephone number
Fax number

01775 722006
01775 766300

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Monkshouse is a large community primary school situated on the outskirts of Spalding in Lincolnshire. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage receiving free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is high. A speech and language unit is an integral part of the school. Although most pupils are from White British families, there is a growing number of pupils from different minority ethnic groups. A small number of these pupils is at an early stage of acquiring English. Most children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills and aptitudes that match those expected for their age. The school has had an interim headteacher since January 2008.

The school has received the 'Healthy Schools Plus' Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school and the vast majority of their parents are pleased with the education it provides. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, but a number of important changes have been introduced so that the school is now rapidly moving in the right direction.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. They are enthusiastic about learning, particularly when lessons are interesting and relevant. Their attendance is above average and they are punctual. Most pupils behave well in lessons and assemblies, and behaviour overall is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and they think carefully about safety when using equipment and moving around the school. Monkshouse is a caring school. One parent, typical of many, stated, 'The school ethos is great, my children love going to school and can't wait for each day.' Pupils' basic skills are satisfactory. Good use of information and communication technology (ICT) means that pupils are developing good computer skills that are beneficial to their future learning.

Community cohesion is good. Monkshouse is an inclusive school and the good and growing partnerships with others have many benefits. All parents are welcome, the school is sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups and does much to explain its work so that all can have access to what it offers. The provision for pupils from the speech and language unit continues to be of high quality; these pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. Visits and events, such as multicultural days with other schools, enliven lessons and lead to pupils' greater understanding of the richness and diversity of global communities. The school has begun to work closely with other schools to share expertise and widen and enrich the curriculum. It works with local businesses equally effectively to extend pupils' understanding, for example, of ecology.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children generally make good progress in the EYFS and Years 1 and 2. In recent years, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 has been insufficient especially in writing. This year, however, the school has put in place a number of important changes to rectify this situation. Tracking of pupils' progress is now rigorous and a sharp focus is placed on how well pupils are doing in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some lessons are well taught, but variation and inconsistency remains. A number of new approaches have been introduced to improve the quality of lessons and, where these are fully understood and working effectively, pupils' learning is more purposeful and their progress in those lessons is good. As a result of these improvements, most pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. In-class support is sound for those who find learning difficult, and those who speak English as an additional language. However, more still needs to be done to raise standards in Years 3 to 6, especially in writing, and throughout the school to improve the level and pace of learning of the more able so that they achieve well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has good capacity to make the necessary changes to move forward because the interim headteacher is a catalyst for improvement. Staff and governors have jelled around her purposeful leadership to form a cohesive team. Accurate self-evaluation means that the school knows where its strengths are and what it needs to do to improve. A further reason for the school's good capacity to improve is that senior staff are fully involved in decision-making and are driving the school forward.

Actions taken have been well chosen, carefully planned, rigorously monitored and improvement is evident.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and happily into Nursery because links between home, school and pre-school are good. Their welfare is paramount. One parent stated, 'The settling-in period was very well managed.' Children become more confident because class routines are clear so they quickly learn what is expected. Transition to Reception is smooth so the good start continues. All staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They use this effectively to plan a wide range of interesting activities across all areas of learning to ensure tasks are matched to children's ability levels. The stimulating outdoor environment has a good range of relevant activities that promote learning and motivate children. Staff are well led so that they work together effectively. Their high aspirations are evident in their consistently good practice and constant striving to be better, demonstrated in their plans to improve further the good curriculum provision for children's personal and emotional development and well-being. When they enter Year 1, children have made good progress and reach or exceed the level expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing.
- Provide sufficient challenge in lessons to enable the more able pupils to achieve as well as they can by matching tasks more closely to their prior attainment
- Ensure that all initiatives introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning are fully understood and adopted in all classes.

A small proportion of the school's 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

In 2006 and 2007, standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 were broadly average, though better in reading. In 2008, standards rose significantly in writing and mathematics and above average standards were maintained in reading. At the end of Year 6, pupils in recent years reached below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, they made satisfactory progress from their lower than average starting points in Year 3.

The proportions of pupils reaching the levels expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6 was much higher in 2008 than in previous years. Standards in English, mathematics and science are currently broadly in line with those expected. Even so, too few reached levels higher than those expected. Action taken by the school is putting this right. Improvements in teaching and learning are beginning to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement. Regular assessment of pupils' progress now gives teachers the information they need and they have a clearer understanding of how much progress pupils should make during each year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance and punctuality are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Since the last inspection, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity has improved and pupils with English as an additional language say they are made to feel very welcome. Pupils are generally friendly, polite and considerate. They mostly behave well, but the behaviour of a minority is occasionally inappropriate. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, but opportunities to do so are few. School councillors express their views confidently and feel the school takes their suggestions seriously. Pupils with additional learning needs are fully included and find other children supportive and helpful. Links with the local community are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy fund-raising and join in with community events, such as the Flower Parade. Although pupils say bullying does happen occasionally, they feel safe because they feel confident staff will listen to them. Pupils know and understand how to stay healthy. Many take part in sports and thoroughly enjoy the daily 'activate' fitness sessions. Pupil's positive attitudes to learning, coupled with their satisfactory standards, means they are adequately prepared for their next schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Work is adequately matched to the needs of pupils. However, in some classes the teaching does not challenge and extend the more able pupils. Those who find learning difficult are appropriately supported, with teaching assistants being particularly effective. Whether working with individuals, groups or the whole class, these assistants are always usefully and purposefully engaged. In the most effective lessons, teachers link learning across subjects and involve pupils in practical tasks to support their understanding. The teaching of reading has improved, which is helping to raise standards and target learning more precisely for groups of pupils. Some learning time is lost in those lessons where good classroom routines are not established, and where expectations of pupils lack clarity. The written presentation of pupils' work is much improved. Pupils now take greater pride in their work and know that it is valued by their teachers. The recently introduced 'bubble and block' marking is appreciated by pupils because it tells them what they have done well and what they need to focus on next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's mixed levels of success in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy have encouraged staff to reassess the effectiveness of the curriculum. As a result, a broader curriculum, more closely tailored to pupils' needs, has been created. This has led to useful links between different subjects. Where teachers are confident with this approach it is working well. However, it is still a 'work in progress' and has not yet been universally adopted by all staff, so the impact of this work is limited. Another area where there are improvements is in the development of pupils' ICT skills, linking across subjects. A good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is being developed. Pupils welcome this and are particularly enthusiastic about the choices on offer. Good use is made of outside expertise, for example through the local partnership scheme, which has added vitality to music lessons and given pupils a new impetus with their writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A caring and supportive atmosphere promotes pupils' attendance and enjoyment of school life. Pupils find adults approachable and helpful if they have problems or worries. Rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure the safety, security and health of all pupils. Vulnerable pupils are soundly supported, as are those who have additional learning needs. Thorough tracking of each pupil's progress means those who are underachieving are quickly identified and given extra help. A wide range of strategies is used to support these pupils, including support from conscientious teaching assistants. Teachers now set individual learning targets, which pupils find very helpful and strive hard to meet. These are directly linked to ongoing work and are changed as soon as they have been met. These new systems are being implemented consistently throughout the school but have not yet been in place long enough to have led to significant improvements in standards. Good transfer procedures ensure a smooth move for pupils to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Through good self-evaluation, the school has a secure understanding of its strengths and areas where improvements are needed. Teachers have a clear sense of purpose, and are now focusing strongly on raising standards. Much has been achieved in a little time, but more remains to be done to ensure more consistency in the teaching and learning. Many of the improvements made need longer to bed-in in order to reach the stage where they are sustainable. Subject leaders have greater involvement in management than previously, but do not take on their monitoring roles fully so that they can judge at first hand what has been achieved and what needs to be done next. The governing body is becoming more effective as a partner in school improvement, particularly in holding the school to account and being a 'critical friend'.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Spalding Monkshouse Primary School, Spalding, PE11 1LG

Thank you for helping us with our inspection when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about their views of your school. It is our opinion that everyone at Monkshouse looks after you really well. We feel your school is satisfactory at the moment and that your interim headteacher, your teachers, other staff and the governors are all working hard to make changes and improve the school and make it better for you.

We enjoyed talking to you about the things you do at Monkshouse. You told us that you like coming to school and that you enjoy your lessons, particularly the enrichment activities. We thought that you all work hard in lessons and most of you behaved well.

Your teachers and the adults that support you want you all to do really well. Before we left, we asked your staff and governors to look at some things that will make your school better. We have asked them to:

- carry on with the improvements they have started to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to reach higher standards, particularly in your writing
- make sure that the work you are given to do is not too easy, especially in subjects you are really good at
- make sure that all the new ideas teachers have introduced are used regularly in your lessons to help you improve.

You can help by concentrating on what your teachers say and always doing your best.

You have a lot to look forward to in the rest of the year; we hope you enjoy it.

Robert Greatrex

Lead inspector