

Lincoln Monks Abbey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120429
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339693
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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 of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Gunn
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including school policies, the school's development plan, monitoring records, analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, and reports of visits by the local authority. Inspectors analysed 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- overall standards and pupils' progress, particularly in writing
- the quality of the teaching and the curriculum to support pupils who join the school part way through their primary education
- the school's capacity to sustain improvement and raise standards
- the effectiveness of the school's support for its diverse pupil population.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. While the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, over 30% come from other countries. Most of these pupils are from Eastern European backgrounds and a few originate from Africa and Asia. A very high proportion is new to speaking English. The school has an above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. An above average proportion of pupils of all backgrounds have free school meals. A high number of pupils join the school at different stages of their primary education and a few of those who join in Key Stage 2 have had little or no previous schooling.

There are 92 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage distributed across Nursery and Reception years.

The school has an International Schools Award, Bronze Eco Schools Award, Silver Artsmark and Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Monks Abbey is a good school that serves its community well. The school's positive ethos offers a warm and welcoming environment so pupils feel safe and valued. It promotes harmonious relations between its diverse social and cultural groups; pupils respect and support each other sensitively and kindly. Those who join from other schools speak favorably about how the school cares for them and helps them to learn. As one pupil said, 'Everyone is different but special, that's why I like it here'. Pupils' good behaviour and good achievement show that they enjoy school and value learning. While the standards pupils attain at the end of Year 6 are below average, their positive attributes ensure that they are prepared for the next stage of their education satisfactorily. Parents and carers are very happy with the school and the support it offers pupils and their families.

Children make a sound start in Nursery and Reception years where provision is satisfactory. Their attainment is mostly well below that expected for their age but they make satisfactory progress. However, work is not always matched well to children's needs and they have too few opportunities to talk, explore and discover for themselves. In Years 1 to 6, careful assessment and planning enable pupils to progress well in reading, mathematics and science. Progress in writing is satisfactory because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length. Well-considered interventions to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure they achieve well. Pupils who start with little or no English receive effective support and guidance to help them settle quickly and integrate successfully. Pupils who join the school part way through their primary education are equally well supported.

Lessons are generally lively and interesting and pupils try their best. Teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' different attainments and most plan lessons accordingly. Pupils have individual targets and know what they have to do improve. Staff who work with specific groups of pupils, for example, those new to English, support their learning effectively. However, in whole class sessions, teaching assistants are not involved enough in lesson planning to know how they could have a greater impact on teaching and learning.

Pupils feel safe, and procedures to keep them safe are secure. Good care, guidance and support ensure pupils develop well and learn confidently. The curriculum is satisfactory and good enrichment activities make learning come alive. The curriculum promotes community cohesion well by celebrating pupils' cultures. They are encouraged to be proud of their heritage and they establish links with diverse communities around the globe, for example by sending 'a message in a bottle'. Pupils are respectful of people

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whose lives are different to their own and good links with the local community enable pupils to feel secure within the area in which they live.

Governors and leaders monitor the school's performance well and self-evaluation is largely accurate. This provides a good capacity for sustained improvement. While not all of the issues raised in the last inspection report have been fully addressed, the right steps have been taken to raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 1 where the introduction of teaching word building strategies has started to have an impact on improving standards in literacy. The school continues to accommodate well the changing nature of its community and the challenges this presents. Governors have high expectations of the school and are very supportive. They have the expertise to support the headteacher and senior leaders in making the improvements required to take the school forward and raise standards further. Value for money is good because pupils achieve well both personally and academically.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in all subjects but particularly in writing, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to talk so that they write more confidently
 - providing more time for pupils to write independently and at length
 - ensuring pupils improve their literacy skills through all subjects
 - planning activities that enable pupils to explore and discover for themselves.
- Deploy teaching assistants more effectively by:
 - ensuring that they are involved in the planning of lessons in which they help
 - checking that they support teaching and learning in whole class sessions.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - encouraging more talk and greater freedom for children to choose activities for themselves
 - ensuring provision is good in all classes
 - challenging the more able children to achieve more in Reception year giving all children free access to the outside areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well and learn effectively because they want to succeed. They settle quickly and try hard. They particularly enjoy opportunities to talk and share ideas, for example, to explore their feelings about being in a 'spooky old building', or engage in practical investigations in mathematics. They make good progress because such lessons buzz with excitement and everyone is involved. Standards in reading are good because there is a good emphasis on developing pupils' word building skills. Standards in mathematics are good because aspects such as investigation and calculation skills are taught well. Standards in writing are not as good because pupils do not always have

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enough opportunities to talk and develop their ideas and write confidently. Consequently few pupils attain the higher levels. Currently, pupils in Year 2 and 6 are working at below average levels in all areas but particularly writing. Pupils who need additional help with their learning or are at an early stage of learning English receive good support and achieve well.

Pupils attend regularly, form good relationships and behave well. Occasional lapses in behaviour are dealt with promptly. Pupils show respect for others by listening sensibly. They feel safe at school and are confident they can raise any concerns with staff. They understand well what they should do to stay healthy. Many enjoy healthy lunches and exercise regularly. A number attend activities such as gymnastics after school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils adopt a mature attitude as they look after younger ones in the playground. They express concerns about recycling and sustaining the earth's resources. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement in local community events but their knowledge of communities in other parts of the country is more limited. They are very aware of the needs of people from different backgrounds and welcome new arrivals to their classes sensitively. As one commented, 'it's really hard when you are new and don't know anybody and have no friends and can't even speak English'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan interesting activities and practical tasks which engage and enthuse pupils. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils worked excitedly but quickly realised the importance of asking precise questions in their research on pupils' 'favourite fireworks'. Teachers accommodate the needs of pupils at various stages of learning English well, and the specialist support in small groups helps new arrivals to access learning quickly. Teachers make effective use of technology to present information visually. Lower attaining pupils and those new to learning English benefit immensely from this. Pupils understand their individual targets and know what they need to do to improve. Staff are effective in guiding specific groups who need help, particularly in small group sessions outside the main class lessons.

The basic curriculum is sound and ensures pupils build on previous work successfully. While there is good emphasis on numeracy and reading skills, there is not enough time devoted to speaking and writing skills. Work and activities in different subjects are often linked through the same topics or events and this helps pupils make good sense of their learning. The introduction of philosophy is imaginative and helps to extend pupils' thinking skills. Modified plans and good resources enable pupils who need help with their learning to achieve well. Visitors and visits broaden and enrich pupils' experiences, as do the links with other organisations, for example, visiting other schools for swimming. A good personal, social, health education programme ensures pupils understand the dangers of drug abuse and how to stay safe.

Good care and support mean staff respond promptly if pupils need help. Any concerns that staff, parents or carers raise are handled sensitively. A number of pupils experience many interruptions in their learning, for example, when they join the school part way through the year either from abroad or from other schools. Arrangements to integrate them are good and they settle quickly. Senior leaders ensure intervention strategies to support them are purposeful and effective so that they catch up quickly. Pupils who have emotional, social and academic difficulties or other needs are guided well and links with other agencies to support them are very good. Parents and carers praise the school for the helpful way it supports their children. Pupils in Year 6 are guided well in their preparations for secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders and governors provide all pupils with a good start to their education. They integrate pupils effectively by promoting a strong sense of community so that pupils of all backgrounds and ability achieve well. Pupils are safeguarded effectively. All leaders are involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and in improvement planning. Development planning incorporates effective checks to keep improvement on track. Pupils attain below average standards but the trend in standards is upwards. Effective assessment procedures ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils who fall behind their targets are identified early and effective interventions help them to catch up quickly. Leaders and managers agree that teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively and that the action taken to improve writing has not yet had sufficient impact on raising standards.

The school has very good links with the local community and pupils feel very secure and happy in this setting. The school involves parents and carers well in supporting their children's learning. Partnerships with others, for example local schools and community groups, are also good in benefiting pupils' learning and well-being. While global links are extensive and strong, pupils have too few opportunities to explore and experience communities in other parts of Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy school, arrive excitedly, eager to play and learn. They behave well, form

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positive relationships and settle quickly because induction arrangements, including home visits, are good. Good relations between home and school benefit children. Most are confident learners and work well with others. They play sensibly, explore all that is provided and particularly enjoy creative activities such as art and physical exercise. Those that are sometimes less confident are supported and guided gently and classmates are quick to befriend them. Those who need specific help with social skills or language development are supported sensitively.

Provision in the Nursery year is good. Here, pupils have free access to an attractive and very popular outside area. Children rush to play everywhere, but particularly in the sand, on wheeled toys and the imaginative play areas, where they explore with real delight. Nursery staff are careful to organise activities that will extend children's confidence and independence, gently steering them to try areas they are less familiar with. For example, one child was mesmerised by watching glue drip from a great height and mixing it with paint with her fingers. Staff talk to children about their work and encourage children to talk to others regularly.

Provision in Reception year is satisfactory. Access to the outside is limited and so children have restricted time to explore and discover independently. Consequently it is hard for staff to monitor that children experience the full range of activities and that these activities challenge them fully. Staff plan a good balance of activities between those children choose and those led by adults. While most children try everything, a few are less responsive during discussions or when asked to attempt more challenging activities such as reading. Occasionally, children have too few opportunities to talk about their learning. For lower attaining children or those who have had little or no pre-school experience, or speak little English, over-long presentations occasionally result in restless, inattentive behaviour. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Practice in the nursery has improved since the last inspection, particularly with regard to outdoor provision and more opportunities for children to select their activities. The same practice is not as evident in the Reception classes. Overall teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress. The school's assessment data shows that children attain well below expected levels at the end of the Reception year, particularly in their literacy skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

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Parents and carers are very positive about the school, commenting that it is a 'friendly' and 'safe' place, that their children enjoy school and that parents and carers are kept fully informed. They say that staff are approachable; that teaching is good; that their children make good progress and that the school is led and managed well. A few expressed concerns that their children were not making enough progress and that their needs were not fully met. Inspectors agree with all the strengths parents and carers identify. Inspectors judge progress to be good overall, but satisfactory in the Reception year. The needs of most children are met well but children could be challenged more in the reception classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monks Abbey Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 373 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	88	19	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	68	24	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	60	28	38	0	0	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	49	32	43	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	65	23	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	57	27	36	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	50	32	43	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	51	29	39	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	49	32	43	5	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	51	31	42	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	47	35	47	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	53	32	43	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	63	25	35	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 November 2009

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for making the team of inspectors welcome and for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you. I am writing to tell you what we found out. You said that you like school, particularly the many friends you make and that everyone is special and important. You said that teachers help you when you need it. It was impressive to see older pupils look after younger ones and to see how much you all do to help around the school. We liked reading the lovely messages to and from people all over the world and were really impressed by the way you all get on with each other so well.

There are many good things about your school. These include your behaviour and good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. You work hard at school and enjoy learning. You make good progress and by the end of Year 6 you are nearly at average standards in reading, mathematics and science. Your lessons are interesting and the school takes good care of you.

While your school is a good school, the inspectors think that a few things could be better. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following to improve the school:

- to give you more opportunities to talk and write so that you have more opportunities to explore your own ideas and do even better in all subjects, especially in writing
- to make sure that all the adults who work with you in your lessons do everything they can to help you achieve more
- to do everything possible to help children in the Reception classes make better progress, particularly by playing outside when they have free choice.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure you join in class discussions so that you can write about what you are learning more confidently.

Thank you once again for helping the inspectors.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead Inspector

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