

Ermine Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135109
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	341618
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Dubut
Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Redbourne Drive Lincoln Lincolnshire
Telephone number	01522 781030
Fax number	01522 781036
Email address	admin@ermine-primary.lincs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons or part lessons and 16 teachers or teaching assistants leading lessons were seen. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including minutes of meetings, schemes of work, policies and procedures, the results of pupil and staff surveys and 70 parental questionnaires.

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

- the impact of the school's action to improve the use of assessment
- the impact of the work to improve attainment in writing and mathematics
- leaders and managers' impact, since the amalgamation of the two schools, on driving forward improvement.

Information about the school

This is the first inspection of a larger than average school that was established in September 2008 as a result of the amalgamation of the local infant and junior schools. The headteacher, appointed in January 2008 prior to the merger, was previously acting headteacher of the infants' school. A permanent governing body was established in January 2009. The school started in temporary accommodation and moved to refurbished premises in the converted former junior school in September 2009. A higher proportion of pupils than is usual have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and these difficulties are mainly for speech, language and communication or moderate learning difficulties. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The school has several awards for its provision, among them Healthy Schools status and the Silver Artsmark. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a 78 place Nursery, which admits children part time or full time from the age of three, and two 30 place Reception classes. A breakfast club is operated by the governing body.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Ermine Primary is a satisfactory school in which an ethos of busy learning permeates. It is an improving school because leaders are focused on raising attainment in a strong partnership with the local authority. In the short space of time since the school opened, the staff team has been successfully united by the headteacher. Staff share her vision and determination to provide pupils with the best possible environment in which to develop their learning and well-being, but teaching varies considerably. Monitoring is too reliant on the work of senior leaders and external support so that middle leaders are only just beginning to influence the quality of teaching and learning. However, self evaluation is accurate and shows that the school is aware of what it does well and what needs to be developed. The use of more detailed checks on progress are helping to drive improvement and demonstrate satisfactory capacity to improve further.

From starting points that are usually below those expected for their age, children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children clearly enjoy their experiences there. However, sometimes the activities available for Reception children to choose are not linked well enough to the main learning focus of the teacher-led session. Progress, when this happens, is slower. In the rest of the school, considerable inroads have been made to redress the low attainment recorded in 2009 in writing and mathematics. A corner has been turned. Inspection evidence shows that attainment overall in writing and mathematics has improved and for the majority of pupils it is now in line with age-related expectations by the time pupils reach Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. Throughout the school there is good evidence that progress is increasing quickly and securely, especially in writing and mathematics.

Teachers manage their classes well and the pupils respond positively; they are keen to learn and work well with each other. However, teaching assistants in some lessons are not well-directed. The pace of learning in some lessons is too slow because pupils waste valuable time passively listening rather than actively doing. On some occasions, work provided for groups of pupils in lessons is not matched accurately to their needs. A number of outstanding lessons were observed where pupils' engagement was whole-hearted because activities were exciting and challenging. In these lessons, pupils' made rapid progress.

The school is a friendly community where pupils behave well towards each other and respect each other and their teachers. Pupils enjoy school and develop in confidence as a result of the supportive environment. Care, support and guidance are good. A breakfast club provides a good start to the day. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are looked after particularly well. In supporting these pupils, the school works very closely and successfully with families and through this it is developing a good

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partnership with parents and carers. One parent commented, reflecting the views of most, 'I am pleased with all aspects of this school.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that by May 2011 at least 80% is consistently good and none inadequate by:
 - improving the direction given to teaching assistants so that they provide active and relevant support for learning
 - ensuring that the pace of all lessons is suitably brisk and pupils are more actively involved in their own learning
 - ensuring that work is matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for the more able.
 - Increase the effectiveness of managers to drive and monitor improvement so that pupils' progress is accelerated and consistent.
 - Accelerate progress in learning and development in the Reception classes by ensuring that the free choice activities are purposeful and more clearly linked to learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Enjoyment in learning and the development of logical thinking is evident in some classes where pupils are enabled to use their thinking skills to the full. For instance, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were completely engaged in solving a challenging number puzzle. In an inspirational Year 3 poetry lesson, pupils used their creative imaginations to describe sounds, such as 'flutter and flitter' referring to a butterfly. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that rates of progress vary depending on the quality of teaching. Effectively tailored small-group and one-to-one support for pupils at risk of underachieving has had a positive impact. As a result, those with moderate learning difficulties and those with speech, language and communication difficulties make sound progress from their starting points. The very few whose first language is not English also make satisfactory progress.

Pupils feel safe and secure and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy, as evidenced by the award of Healthy Schools status. They take responsibility in many ways, for example, through the school council, in the playground and in classrooms. The high quality work of the behaviour mentor is particularly valued by pupils and their parents and the work with families to improve behaviour has been successful. As a result, behaviour around the school and in class is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and this is reflected in the respectful and courteous way they treat each other. Pupils are thoughtful about the needs of others, for example, through charitable giving. They contribute well to the school community

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and the local area through links with nearby schools and the church. Attendance is average. The school prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Records in school show that the quality of teaching continues to improve although it is inconsistent. While there is evidence of good and outstanding lessons, their positive features are not widespread and established throughout the school. The strongest teaching is accelerating progress rapidly. Teachers often make good use of open-ended questions to challenge pupils' thinking and trigger good, well-reasoned responses. The pace of learning is brisk in the most effective lessons. Sometimes, pupils do not make the rates of progress they are capable of because the work provided for them is too easy. Occasionally the support provided by teaching assistants is limited. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Teacher assessments are more accurate than they were. Increasingly, information about pupils' progress is being used to plan suitably challenging lessons. Also, data is being increasingly employed to set challenging targets for all pupils. Marking is particularly good in English because it provides clear guidance

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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on what pupils need to do to make their work better. Encouraging comments also help to build pupils' self-esteem. Good guidance is provided to pupils on how they can improve their work and aspire to a higher level.

Inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum is adequately matched to pupils' needs and is sufficiently broad and balanced. It is being reviewed to develop cross-curricular links. Work resulting from the recent Arts Week, which adorned the corridors during the inspection, was excellent. The school's success in art has been recognised by the award of the Silver Artsmark. Trips and visits support learning, for instance the Year 6 trip to a themed centre, which underpinned their work on the Second World War. Extra-curricular activities provide suitable support for the curriculum and the development of pupils' talents. Most parents and carers appreciate the generally good level of care and support that their children receive from staff. The school uses the expertise of external agencies for the benefit of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by senior staff and outside consultants, has worked skillfully to drive improvements and build a strong staff team, although some inconsistencies in provision remain. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and systematically each term. Information emerging from this activity is used promptly to set challenging targets in order to accelerate progress and raise standards. Where differences in performance between groups of pupils have been identified, the school has put in place suitable strategies to address this inconsistency. The school has accurately identified its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body shows a desire to support and challenge the school appropriately and it is becoming more informed and involved in monitoring the work of the school and holding the school to account. Leaders demonstrate a full commitment to supporting families and to the pupils' achievement and welfare. The school has developed a good partnership with parents. This is an inclusive school, committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. It is successful in this aim regarding pupils' personal development and is fully engaged in the work to tackle inconsistencies in teaching, so that all pupils achieve their potential. A number of projects promote community cohesion, but these are mainly localised rather than reaching to other communities in the United Kingdom or cultivating international contacts. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were

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met There are good arrangements in place to ensure that only suitable adults come into contact with pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below those seen nationally. They make satisfactory progress and leave the Reception classes with levels of personal skills and attributes just below those expected for their age. Children have good relationships with adults. They enjoy their learning and are motivated by the good range of activities that are provided in both Nursery and Reception. Behaviour is good. Children are developing an awareness of safety, for instance in using scissors, and they know that fruit is a healthy snack. They are becoming independent learners and usually co-operate well together, sharing and taking turns. They learn about counting, shapes and capacity in both planned and child-initiated activities. Staff rightly give priority to developing the children's communication skills, and this gives them a sound foundation for their future learning. Writing skills are fostered imaginatively in well-resourced, interesting activities. The children showed great excitement explaining what kind of houses the Three Little Pigs lived in, as part of their themed work on 'Houses'. Teaching is variable, but in the best examples teachers found imaginative and exciting ways to stimulate learning, for instance through 'Teddy Talk' in the Nursery as a means of teaching sounds of letters, and in using a fishing game to develop calculation skills in Reception. The impact of good, and sometimes excellent, teacher-led activities is sometimes reduced because they are not followed up quickly enough when children

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choose random activities that have not been planned to underpin their learning. The new outside area is developed well to support learning. Parents and carers appreciate the care with which the school manages the transition between school and home. Leadership is satisfactory, including suitable provision for children's welfare and good assessment arrangements that underpin learning and development.

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

Most parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are content with the quality of education and care provided at Ermine. Few made additional written comments but comments made by parents collecting their children include 'The school provides good support to both my children', and, 'The teachers could not be more helpful'. The inspectors found no reason to disagree with these views. A few parents expressed a view that behaviour was not always handled well but inspectors noted that pupils' behaviour during the inspection was good and records showed a clear improvement in behaviour over the past year. A concern was expressed about some exposed paving slabs on the school site. The school has taken prompt steps to deal with this hazard.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ermine 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 432 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	43	39	56	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	41	38	54	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	33	39	56	8	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	29	46	66	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	39	40	57	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	33	41	59	4	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	40	40	57	1	1	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)	17	24	46	66	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	26	46	66	4	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	23	42	60	6	9	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	21	43	61	4	6	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	17	24	41	59	7	10	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	34	42	60	4	6	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ermine Primary School, Lincolnshire, LN2 2HG

Thank you very much for your kind welcome and the help you gave the inspectors in finding out more about your school. Your school offers a satisfactory standard of education. This means some things are fine and others could be better.

There are a number of good things in your school. You told us you feel safe in school, you behave well and have a good awareness of healthy living. You take on responsibilities in school and you are active in the life of the local area.

The standards in your work are rising and you are all now making better progress. Some of you are moving on more quickly in your learning. You enjoy the curriculum and the activities on offer during and after school. Your art work, that you did during the recent Arts Week, is excellent! It makes the school look very inviting.

Your headteacher and staff are helping the school to improve. In order to ensure that the school continues to improve, We have asked staff and the governing body to help the school to do the following things:

- increase the amount of good teaching so that you all make good progress
- make sure that what you are asked to do in lessons is challenging enough, and goes at a fast enough pace to keep you busy
- make sure you are not sitting listening to the teacher for too long but get on quickly with activities and independent learning.

For the youngest children, we have asked that staff make sure that more of the activities that are available for the children to choose are linked with the learning that the teacher has started them off with.

It was a pleasure to meet you all. I hope you continue to enjoy coming to school and trying your very best in all that you do

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane

Lead inspector

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