

Midgley School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107517
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	377589
Inspection dates	5–6 January 2012
Lead inspector	Keith Bardon

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Lilley
Headteacher	Joanne Mansfield
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Bardon

additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 10 lessons, observed four teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. He took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, improvement plans, pupils' work, and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. Also, the inspector analysed 66 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Midgley is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school has been above government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, for the last three years. Since the last inspection, the school has had a change of headteacher who took up the post in September 2011. The school has Healthy School status and has achieved the Activemark and Dyslexia Friendly awards. A school managed after-school club is available to pupils each day. Building work to extend and refurbish all of the school buildings is well under way and due to be completed by the start of the next academic year.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. With few exceptions parents and carers hold very positive views of the education it provides for their children, describing it as an environment which is 'warm and nurturing and encourages learning'. Pupils learn and achieve well, making consistently good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6 their attainment is above the national average. Although the quality of pupils' written work is good, weaknesses in pupils' handwriting quite often spoil the presentation.
- Teaching is good overall and on occasions outstanding. As a result, pupils build their knowledge, understanding and skills progressively and at a good pace as they move through the school. In the most effective lessons, creatively constructed and extremely well organised activities encourage pupils to make decisions, apply their skills and reason out solutions to problems, which they do willingly and with considerable enthusiasm. While the provision for children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall, it is more effective indoors than outdoors.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school because 'the teachers are nice and you can talk to them if you have anything that is worrying you'. These views are typical of the positive attitudes pupils show to their education and to those who provide it. Pupils' behaviour is good. They concentrate hard in lessons, take a pride in their achievements and readily give help when it is needed.
- Parents, carers and pupils comment positively on the smooth transition in leadership that has taken place since the last inspection. The recently appointed headteacher has brought new ideas and made carefully considered changes which are enhancing the school's existing strengths. Staff and the governing body recognise and appreciate the direction in which the school is moving and share a common ambition for its future. However, the role of the subject leader is not yet fully developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the involvement of subject leaders in school management by:
 - ensuring that their monitoring of provision and of pupils' attainment and progress extends across the school as a whole
 - refining pupil tracking systems to make the data they contain accessible to and usable by all staff with management responsibilities.
- Improve the opportunities for children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by developing and extending the provision out of doors.
- Ensure that pupils develop a neat and fluent style of joined up handwriting which they use consistently in all subjects.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

With very few exceptions, Year 2 pupils read with confidence and above average skill. Having acquired a secure knowledge of the sounds that letters and letter combinations represent, pupils decode new and unfamiliar words quickly and accurately. A small number of pupils find this a difficult skill to acquire but they receive regular help and support throughout their time at the school. Pupils transfer to high school with skills in reading that at least match and often exceed national expectations. They follow a story line perceptively and extract detailed information from non-fiction texts.

The strength of pupils' reading is reflected in their writing, which is often very creative and well constructed. Year 6 pupils have recently written a piece on animal testing which shows considerable sensitivity and a well-defined understanding of how to present both sides of a discussion before expressing a clearly argued opinion. As well as demonstrating how effectively pupils write in different styles, this work provides a clear indication of the strides they make in their spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils' handwriting is not of the same quality and often lacks consistency. Many pupils do not acquire a fluent, joined up style of handwriting and some older pupils, who were writing cursively at a younger age, have returned to printing.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception Year most have achieved or exceeded the targets expected for their age, although boys do not attain as well in early writing as they do in other areas of learning. A significant proportion of Year 6 pupils attain at an above average level in the national tests, particularly in mathematics. They solve mathematical problems confidently and accurately. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, after skilfully calculating an unknown angle, pupils used a protractor with dexterity to check the answer and confirm their understanding of the geometric principles involved.

Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities are identified quickly and well judged measures put in place to support their learning. Additional help,

often provided by well trained teaching assistants, enables these pupils to participate fully in lessons and maintain a similar rate of good progress to their peers. A well constructed programme for small group work provides a boost for any pupils falling a little short of expectations for their age. By the end of Year 6 many pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities attain at the nationally expected level. The positive evaluations of pupils' learning expressed in this section mirror those of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who, through the questionnaire and comments they added, agreed that their children are making good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, which was clearly evident when younger pupils were learning letter sounds. Clear and precise pronunciation and sensitive correction ensured pupils learnt individual sounds accurately. The positive effects of this precise approach to early reading became very evident when Year 2 pupils read the lesson objectives from the interactive whiteboard with confidence and skill. Parents and carers recognise the gains their children are making, and hold very positive views of the quality of teaching they receive.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Pupils are provided with a range of stimulating activities, many of which they help to choose themselves. There is, however, an imbalance in the provision for learning in and out of doors. The outdoor area is small and lacking in facilities and the colourful and lively indoor provision is only partially mirrored outdoors. Consequently, some opportunities to promote children's, particularly boys', learning in an outdoor environment are missed. Improved facilities for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the new building will provide the school with an opportunity to address this issue.

Utilising good questioning techniques, teachers challenge pupils to think carefully about what they are learning and how it fits alongside what they already know and can do. Careful consideration is given to the learning needs of pupils of different abilities, although very occasionally, higher ability pupils are given work that is initially too easy for them. Pupils are encouraged to work together, aiding development of their social skills and providing good opportunities for them to learn from each other. Teachers model good practice by listening carefully to what pupils have to say, respecting their views and praising their contributions to lessons.

In a high quality lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils played a character from the class novel they are reading, with careful consideration for what he might be feeling. The teacher skilfully drew boys and girls of differing abilities into the activity and other pupils concentrated well and listened very attentively to what was being said. A clearly displayed lesson framework enabled pupils to work through the different activities in a logical sequence and to appreciate fully how the objective of constructing a letter home was to be met. The result was letter writing of high quality and a lesson that pupils enjoyed immensely.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

With the exception of a very occasional reminder to pay full attention, pupils behave well in lessons and equally well around school. Attendance is consistently above average and pupils are quickly into lessons at the start of the school day and at the end of break. They show respect for staff and each other, with older pupils willingly helping the younger ones. Parents and carers of Reception class children comment very positively on how their child's Year 6 'buddy' has helped them settle quickly to school life and enjoy the new experience.

Although a small minority of parents and carers express some concerns about bullying, most feel the school deals with any that does occur, effectively. During the recent anti-bullying week this matter was raised constructively with pupils and they show a clear appreciation of the negative effects bullying may have. In discussion, pupils from Years 2 to 6 were in complete agreement that while a small amount of bullying has taken place in the past, they were confident there was none now. The school provides pupils with a variety of well planned opportunities to experience and learn about religions and cultures that are different to their own. As a result, they show respect for other faiths and communities, explaining that, 'they are different, not better or worse'.

Leadership and management

Since the school was last inspected it has made good improvement. Pupils' attainment has risen and is now securely above average. Regular professional development opportunities for teachers have ensured the quality of teaching has continued to improve. Systems for recording and analysing assessment data have been further developed but have become rather complex and intricate, making the information they contain difficult for some staff to access. This adversely affects the ability of subject leaders to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress across the school as a whole. The recently-appointed headteacher has quickly acquired a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and working closely with established staff has set it on a clear path of development. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve in the future is good.

The curriculum is good and pupils feel they gain a great deal from it. When asked which lessons they liked the most, pupils enthused about many subjects but would welcome more opportunities to study history and geography. They identified regular visits to places, such as the local theatres and Eureka Science Park, as highlights and feel that these opportunities have increased of late. Handwriting is taught periodically, but not effectively enough across the curriculum as a whole to ensure the systematic development of this skill. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Close involvement with the village community and opportunities to share experiences with pupils from other schools provide pupils with valuable experience of their own culture to those that are different. Initiatives, such as Enterprise Week, encourage pupils to reflect on important issues and encourage fundraising for charities pupils have chosen for themselves.

Close attention is paid to pupils' safety and well-being. The health and safety governor makes half-termly checks on the school and safeguarding policies and

procedures are reviewed and updated regularly. Staff are vigilant to the needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and work closely with all those concerned with their welfare. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and monitored closely. Outcomes form the basis of regular meetings in which provision for individual pupils is carefully targeted and planned. As a result, all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and none are discriminated against.

The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities well. Many of its members visit lessons, accompany pupils on visits and act as volunteers to support pupils' reading. This frequent contact, plus regular meetings in which reports are discussed and achievement data evaluated, provide the governing body with a detailed understanding of how well the school is performing and enables it to ask challenging questions to promote further improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



9 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Midgley School, Halifax, HX2 6TX

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with me about the school. Midgley is a good school and I understand fully why you enjoy it so much. Staff take good care of you and it was pleasing to hear how much you appreciate the help, support and guidance they provide. It was good to see you behaving well and working hard in lessons. This shows your very positive attitude to learning. It was very encouraging to hear about the ways in which older pupils look after and help the younger ones. You can be proud of the way you grow into thoughtful and responsible young people – very well done!

The progress you make is good because you are taught well and given interesting things to do. You told me you find lessons challenging but fun and I could see this was true when I visited lessons. By the end of Year 6, most of you are producing work that is above the level expected for your age. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the very interesting stories and accounts you have written, but noticed that many of you are not yet writing in a neat and fluent joined-up style. This is a shame because much of the work you do in different subjects is good. I am recommending that you and your teachers work together to improve your handwriting.

Although children in Class 1 make good progress, they learn more indoors than out of doors. I have asked the school to take full advantage of the improvements being made to the building and grounds to improve opportunities for the children in Class 1, especially the boys, to learn out of doors. I have also made suggestions to help staff increase the role they play in making the school even better. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely,

Keith Bardon
Lead inspector

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