

Middleton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112654
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378529
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Edwards

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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Coveney
Headteacher	Sarah I'Anson
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2007
School address	Main Street Middleton-by-Wirksworth Matlock DE4 4LQ
Telephone number	01629 822236
Fax number	01629 822236
Email address	info@middleton.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Introduction

Inspection team

David Edwards

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited five lessons and observed four teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also heard children reading, observed intervention groups being taught, scrutinised pupils' work, visited an assembly and undertook other activities in order to observe the pupils' learning. He held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, a number of staff and members of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school self-evaluation and planning documents, policies and procedures, as well as the school's own analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. Questionnaires completed by 45 parents and carers were received and analysed, as well as others from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Middleton Community Primary is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average but has risen in each of the last three years. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is significantly above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. An above-average proportion of pupils join the school partway through their primary education. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6. All pupils from Reception to Year 6 are taught in mixed-age classes. There is currently extensive building work underway in the school. The school runs a breakfast club on site which is attended by up to 30 pupils. The school has been awarded Healthy School status, Activemark and Quality Mark.

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

- Middleton Community Primary is a good school that has been rigorous in following up the areas identified for improvement in its last inspection. Despite strengths in most aspects of the school’s work, it is not outstanding because the more-able pupils are not challenged to reach their full potential in key areas such as writing and mathematics.
- Achievement is good. Children’s skills on entry to Reception are generally at the levels expected for their age. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, including in reading, and attainment by the time they leave is consistently above national averages. Well-focused support and careful planning ensure that groups such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make equally good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. In the majority of lessons work is well matched to pupils’ abilities, but in some the more-able pupils are not always fully challenged. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their problem-solving skills in mathematics. Marking in books is frequent and sometimes detailed but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Not all teachers’ comments inform pupils how they can improve their work, and pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to assess the quality of their own work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. This contributes to their good progress. Staff have high expectations and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are polite and friendly towards one another and to adults.
- Leadership and management at all levels are good, including the leadership of teaching and management of performance. This fosters a friendly but industrious atmosphere, which allows pupils to flourish. There are particular strengths in the commitment and ambition for pupils displayed by staff at all levels.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that teaching in all lessons is consistently good or better
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - teaching pupils how to evaluate the quality of their work and that of others by regularly using success criteria in lessons to help accelerate progress
 - achieving greater consistency in teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics, so it effectively guides pupils to know their next steps to improvement
 - ensuring consistent challenge in lessons for the more-able pupils to accelerate their progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress across all key stages, and this trend has been maintained for several years. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 is consistently above national averages. Pupils who show signs that they might be falling behind get speedy access to additional support, which helps them to improve. Teaching is undertaken in small steps for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so they make good progress. Pupils who join the school partway through the year have their needs quickly assessed. Appropriate support ensures that they too make good progress. In some lessons the more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, but their overall progress is also good. The work seen in lessons, pupils' books and school assessment data shows that Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are once again on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them.

Pupils' attainment in reading in Years 2 and 6 is above average. This reflects the high priority the school places on developing good literacy skills. Younger children, pupils with a disability and those with special educational needs are encouraged to keep a home reading log so that staff and parents and carers are able to monitor how well they are doing. Attainment in writing is above average and pupils use their writing skills effectively in other areas of learning, but not enough more-able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable. In mathematics, pupils show confidence in calculation skills, but a scrutiny of their work showed they do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills to solve problems.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children quickly develop confidence and progress well. Children confidently name letters and have a secure understanding of

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positional language. Children get a firm foundation to their learning because of the stimulating indoor learning environment and good teaching. Currently, opportunities for outside learning are limited by the building work taking place.

Pupils' learning in lessons is good because they are keen and enthusiastic to be involved. Boys and girls performed equally well. Most apply themselves very well and generate good quality work. They extend their communication skills by readily involving themselves in question and answer sessions.

Nearly all parents and carers who returned questionnaires rightly felt that the school met their children's needs and they were making good progress, and that the school helps them to support their children's learning.

Quality of teaching

In most lessons teachers show enthusiasm and pupils respond by producing work of a high standard. Most pupils and their parents and carers share this view. Teachers explain very clearly the objectives and tasks so pupils understand what is expected of them. While pupils understand their targets and use them to enhance their learning, they are not given opportunities in each lesson to assess the quality of their own work and that of others. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff encourage children to investigate for themselves successfully and to develop their independence by, for example, programming the 'B-Bot' toy to perform certain actions. Throughout the school, assessment is generally used successfully to target work accurately at the different abilities of most pupils, although not always successfully for the more-able pupils. Marking praises achievement without giving enough advice on how to improve, particularly in mathematics.

Teachers use the stimulating curriculum effectively to add interest to lessons. For example, in a good Year 5 and 6 writing lesson links were made to the current topic on the Greeks to stimulate good quality writing and make it more meaningful to pupils, so that pupils of all abilities felt challenged and made good progress. Teaching assistants are well trained and used effectively to support pupils as individuals or in group work. In Reception, they helped children to work together to extend their language and communication skills in the cafe role-play area.

All staff encourage the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils by acting as good role models and celebrating success, so pupils feel valued and behave well. Imaginative tasks are devised to stimulate pupils' interest and develop a desire to learn more.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good and pupils are polite, friendly and considerate towards other pupils and adults. The vast majority behave well in lessons, and when moving around the school or at play. Parents and carers and pupils are confident that bullying of any kind is rare in the school, and that if it occurred the school would swiftly and

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effectively deal with it. The vast majority also believe that behaviour is good. There were some isolated instances of low-level disruption during the inspection, but good management by the staff ensured that it did not have any significant impact on the learning of other pupils. School records indicate that behaviour has been good over time, with very few incidents of bullying, no racist incidents at all and no exclusions for many years.

The vast majority of pupils feel safe in school, as confirmed by parents and carers, and know what constitutes a safe or an unsafe situation. Pupils know of different forms of bullying that might happen and are aware of the dangers of communicating with others on the internet or by mobile telephone. They show a keen understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and their lunch boxes reflect the healthy choices they make. They have plenty of opportunity for exercise in physical education lessons and in the variety of after-school clubs on offer. Attendance has consistently been well above national averages for many years. This is a testimony to their enjoyment of school, and several parents and carers expressed this sentiment when talking to the inspector. The school is rigorous in pursuing the interests of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The breakfast club is very well attended. It strengthens the links between parents and carers and the school. It gives pupils an excellent start to the day, enhances their personal and social development and ensures good punctuality.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a very good leader who makes sure that the talents of all staff are recognised and developed for the benefit of pupils. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning by staff at all levels ensures that professional development is targeted well to make further improvements. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and priorities receive prompt attention to ensure all make good progress. Ongoing developments since the last inspection reflect a good capacity to make further improvements. Writing has improved so it is now consistently above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2; the thematic curriculum is engaging pupils and helping them to use their skills in other areas of learning, and better provision in the Early Years Foundation is ensuring that children make good progress.

The school works well with parents and carers and almost all who completed questionnaires felt that they were well informed, making the school a very popular choice for children in the local area. The care of the school chickens not only fosters excellent opportunities for parents and carers to meet school staff, but also helps the pupils' personal development. Pupils proudly take roles of responsibility as 'play buddies' to look after younger children at playtimes and are keen to help them when they arrive for the breakfast club.

The good curriculum is planned effectively to ensure that all key skills are developed well, with a strong focus on improving literacy. Pupils enjoy many imaginative experiences that improve both their personal and academic achievement. Links with

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the local authority music service have extended pupils' skills in music, which could not have been done by the school alone. This variety of experience combines effectively with good academic progress to ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. It has robust systems for identifying and helping groups and individuals, making Middleton an inclusive school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum. There are opportunities for pupils to work together and learn about their responsibilities through the personal, social and health education programme and they have a good understanding of the lives and culture of other people in the United Kingdom and in other parts of the world.

The effective governing body is rightly proud of the school and has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Safeguarding is threaded through the curriculum, so that pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe situations. Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements.

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 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 pupils 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 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.
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.



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Middleton Community Primary School, Matlock, DE4 4LQ

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave me when I inspected your school. I found the time I spent talking to you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding, and those of you who completed questionnaires helped me in making my judgements. You go to a good school. Here are the things I particularly liked.

- You make good progress and reach high standards because you work hard and receive good teaching.
- Your school is led and managed well and all staff, including the governing body, are keen to do all they can to help your learning.
- Most of you feel very safe and secure and think the teachers and other adults care about you.

In order to help you to do even better, especially in writing and mathematics, I have asked the school's leaders, teachers and governing body to:

- help you to assess the quality of your own work to accelerate your learning, by using success criteria
- ensure that the more-able pupils among you are always encouraged to do harder work, so you all achieve as well as possible
- make sure that teachers' marking consistently tells you how well you are doing and sets your next steps in learning
- give you more opportunities to develop your problem-solving skills in mathematics.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school even better by continuing to work hard and not being afraid to ask for harder work if you feel you need it.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Lead inspector

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