

Midfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101634
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	355043
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Jon Carter

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Baines
Headteacher	Wendy Seeley
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed eighteen lessons taught by ten teachers. Meetings were held with school staff and groups of pupils as well as representatives from the governing body and local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at lesson and curriculum planning, progress tracking data, minutes of the governing body's meetings and examples of documentation relevant to keeping pupils safe. They scrutinised the responses of 70 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as 26 from staff and 86 from pupils.

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

- How effectively the school is addressing the difference in rates of progress between mathematics and English, especially for more able pupils.
- How effectively school leaders at all levels are securing continued improvement in attainment through systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, particularly in writing and science.
- How effectively the amalgamated Early Years Foundation Stage provision is accelerating children's progress in language and social skills.

Information about the school

Midfield is a primary school of average size. Most pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. The school has a resource base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, known as the Special Opportunities Unit. This contributes to the school having a proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities that is much higher than average. The school has National Healthy School Status and the Activemark 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

Midfield is a good school. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel exceptionally safe. This is because the staff know them well, take excellent care of them and provide a welcoming and stimulating environment for them. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and one parent, echoing the views of many, wrote, 'Staff always go that bit further to make sure the pupils get the most from their education and above all keep them happy, achieving and safe.'

There has been steady overall improvement since the previous inspection which has ensured that pupils now make good progress from their starting points and reach broadly average levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. This improvement is the result of the good driving of improvement by senior leaders and managers which creates an ethos of continual development shared by staff at all levels. Diligent and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, coupled with thorough and regular analysis of the progress pupils make, gives the headteacher access to high quality information. This is used effectively to target support for both teachers and pupils, with the result that teaching is now of consistently good quality across the school and, consequently, rates of progress are improving. This has led to an increased proportion of pupils achieving expected levels of attainment in mathematics, science and writing. However, the proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in reading is still below average. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use their reading skills in other subjects.

Around the school, pupils demonstrate their good social and moral development through their outstanding behaviour. They are polite to adults and take pride in being ready to learn and participate in lessons. Older pupils are keen to take responsibility and their younger friends benefit from the support they give, for example as lunchtime play leaders. While pupils' attitudes to school are good, this is undermined by attendance which, whilst improving rapidly, remains low.

School leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the quality of education that it provides because communication systems are well established and all staff contribute significantly to development planning. School self-evaluation overall is good. The progress made over recent years, including rapidly improving rates of attendance, demonstrates that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement. Systems for training and developing staff are strongly supporting this as the school plans well for forthcoming changes to staffing and leadership.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in English so that a greater proportion of pupils reach Level 4 or above by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 through accelerating progress in reading by:
 - ensuring reading is routinely promoted in all subjects, with staff identifying and using opportunities for activities that engage children in reading at least as frequently as those used to successfully develop writing
 - developing strategies which actively involve parents and carers in supporting their children's progress in reading.
- Improve attendance to within the broadly average range by July 2012, through:
 - ensuring pupils with low attendance receive appropriate targets and support to improve
 - developing strategies that improve engagement with those parents and carers whose children do not attend school as regularly as they should.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils usually make good progress in lessons and enjoy the activities that teachers plan for them. Good progress in writing, such as that achieved by Year 5 pupils producing a range of diverse and interesting ideas in response to an excerpt from the film *The Piano*, has ensured that more pupils are now reaching the expected levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 compared to previous years. Both boys and girls make progress at similar rates because they are engaged by well-chosen learning activities. In most lessons, pupils of all abilities make good progress because tasks are set which match those abilities well and they are well supported by teaching assistants. However, more able pupils occasionally make slower progress because they are not always sufficiently well challenged. Pupils in classes in the Special Opportunities Unit make progress at similar rates to those who are in classes in the main part of the school so that they achieve in line with their peers nationally.

Pupils demonstrate their good adoption of healthy lifestyles through their enthusiastic participation in both physical education lessons and a range of active sports provided at lunchtime and after school. The school is recognised for this, as well as pupils' positive attitudes to healthy eating, through the National Healthy School Status and Activemark award. An active school council and charitable contributions to others in need around the world instil a strong sense of community, enabling pupils to reflect with increasing maturity on their place in the world around them.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Many lessons are based upon themes chosen by pupils and this is effective in promoting enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Good links between subjects ensure that pupils get to use their basic skills in a range of different circumstances and understand how to apply what they have learned to new situations. However, while pupils have many opportunities to use their writing skills for different purposes in a range of subjects and lessons, opportunities to read in the classroom and at home are not always sufficiently exploited. Use of the creative arts is particularly stimulating and helps to reinforce learning in core subjects. In one outstanding science lesson for example, pupils used a range of musical instruments to investigate the source of sound and were ably guided through describing and comparing their findings. In this lesson, as in many that were observed during the inspection, the teacher was able to develop pupils' knowledge well using good questioning skills, taking full account of individual needs and abilities. Marking of pupils' work is usually thorough, giving teachers a good understanding of the progress being made and pupils a sound indication of how their work can be improved. However, this guidance is not always effective because some responses from pupils merely acknowledge the feedback and do not demonstrate that they have used the points identified to make their subsequent work better.

Staff use their knowledge of individuals and family groups to ensure that pupils receive excellent levels of support to meet their social, emotional and learning needs. This is

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especially true of the staff who teach and support in the Special Opportunities Unit, who are described by one parent or carer as, 'very enthusiastic and sympathetic to my son's many needs and ways.' Other pupils in the main school who are potentially vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support and staff maintain records and documentation thoroughly. While the sterling efforts of senior leaders, the school's family worker and external partners have secured a rapid increase in the rate of attendance since the previous inspection through a concerted and effective focus on persistent absentees, some pupils still have low attendance. This group, who are not considered to be persistent absentees, has not received the same degree of targeted support. The school has found it particularly difficult to successfully impress upon the parents and carers of this small group of pupils the importance of attendance and to secure their cooperation in ensuring pupils attend school regularly.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Established senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection by using information gathered through monitoring to identify and rectify areas for development. Staff use training opportunities conscientiously and seek to apply good practice increasingly to their work in the classroom and as school leaders. This particularly applies to those who are relatively new to their roles as a result of the headteacher's proactive approach to planning for the changes in staffing expected in the future. The shared approach to school self-evaluation and development planning ensures that all staff are fully subscribed to the leadership team's vision of continuous improvement, which is communicated enthusiastically by leaders at all levels.

The governing body maintains a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has sufficient expertise and tenacity to ensure that school leaders are both supported and challenged. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good, with robust systems and constructive links with outside agencies that support effective action in the event of concerns being raised. Vulnerable pupils, including those who are known to be entitled to free school meals, are tracked effectively and the provision made for them ensures that they make at least as good progress as other pupils. There are few racist incidents. Consequently, the effectiveness with which the school promotes equality and seeks to eliminate discrimination is good.

The school has a sound understanding of the social, ethnic and religious diversity of the area which it serves. The school recognises that, while links with the local area are well established, opportunities for pupils to interact with others from more culturally diverse

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areas are limited and appropriate plans are in place to address this issue. Consequently, the school's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. A range of effective partnerships provides good opportunities for pupils, parents, carers and staff, such as those with the on-site children's project run by the local authority as well as secondary and special schools, giving access to family learning and extended sports provision amongst other benefits. The school provides parents and carers with a good range of information and signposts other resources appropriately.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with levels of development which are well below age-related expectations, particularly in language and communication-related skills. Effective monitoring by senior leaders has led to early recognition of the need to provide learning experiences which more closely match the needs of individuals irrespective of their age. Consequently, the Nursery and Reception classes work as one and these arrangements are ensuring that children make good progress overall. Although a smaller proportion of children than average reach age-related expectations by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a trend of improvement since the previous inspection. Children's development in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative skills is better than in their communication skills, particularly in reading.

Staff model the use of language well so that children develop their abilities to describe and compare objects and actions, for example when talking about the hats they have made for their teddy bear's birthday party or describing the texture of sticky liquids. Indoor and outdoor learning environments are well resourced and children participate in learning activities in all areas with enthusiasm. Improvements in their social development are well

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guided by staff so that children interact positively with others in their class and build on these skills through collaborative and independent work. This is also supported by an increase in the time spent in Nursery each day, during which children can experience a social lunchtime with their friends before finishing or starting their session. Recent changes to leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage have been managed effectively by senior leaders to ensure that the impetus of improvement continues as staff develop in their new roles. This has also strengthened links with Year 1 to help ensure smooth transition when children leave the Reception class.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just under a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Parents' and carers' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. Where additional comments were made on questionnaires, the vast majority were positive and mentioned their child's enjoyment of school or praised staff, especially those who support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Midfield 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 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	69	22	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	60	28	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	37	40	57	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	60	26	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	61	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	54	29	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	44	36	51	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)	28	40	34	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	59	29	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	40	38	54	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	39	33	47	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	51	30	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	59	28	40	0	0	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Midfield Primary School, Orpington BR5 3EG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed speaking to you about your school and watching your lessons.

Midfield is a good school because your lessons are taught well and you make good progress in your learning. You play an important part because you are always keen to learn. Your behaviour is outstanding ' well done! The teachers who lead your school are doing a good job in making sure that your lessons are interesting for you and that the work you are asked to do helps you to get better at the things you find hard. You are now doing much better with your writing, but not enough of you get to the level of reading that we would expect you to by the time you leave the school. Children in Nursery and Reception also make good progress, but could improve how well they read too. You tell us that you feel very safe and that staff look after you very well when you are at school. However, too many of you take too much time off school and this stops you from making better progress.

The headteacher and her staff have a good understanding of what they need to do to make your school even better and we have asked them to concentrate on:

- helping you make faster progress in reading so that more of you get to Level 4 or above by the time you leave at the end of Year 6
- improving the attendance of those pupils whose attendance is below average so that more of them come to school regularly.

You can help by reading at home with an adult each day and making sure your parents and carers help you to get to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter

Lead inspector

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