

# Middleton-In-Teesdale Nursery and Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114109
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	363814
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Potter

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Frank Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steve Vallack
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Town End Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle County Durham DL12 0TG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01833 640382
<b>Fax number</b>	01833 640152
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:middleton@durhamlearning.net">middleton@durhamlearning.net</a>

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	363814

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, saw six different teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 71 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as 64 questionnaires from pupils and 17 questionnaires returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether teaching is at least good across the school so that all groups of pupils, make at least good progress.
- Whether the curriculum offers sufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended activities which help them to make good or outstanding progress.
- Whether pupils' contribution to the school and the wider community, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their economic well-being are outstanding.

## Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has achieved Healthy School status and Activemark Gold. Pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual times more frequently than is expected nationally.

A children's centre and an on-site private childcare provider offer pre-school provision, which will be inspected separately.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. There are outstanding outcomes for pupils because, for example, they demonstrate good achievement, outstanding behaviour, an exceptional awareness of how to stay fit and healthy and make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. They have high levels of attendance and an outstanding understanding of workplace skills. All staff provide exceptionally sensitive care and support which ensure that pupils' well-being and personal development are promoted extremely well and pupils are happy and feel extremely safe. Pupils have an exceptionally strong sense of how to help others, a highly-developed understanding of other faiths and a strong awareness of life in different cultures. This understanding, together with the school's development of pupils' interest in the environmental, geographical and historical richness of the local area, ensures pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding.

Pupils make good progress because good teaching makes learning fun and teachers skilfully check pupils' understanding during lessons. The extremely stimulating curriculum offers many memorable experiences, including practical investigations indoors and outdoors, which enable pupils to investigate together, to see the links between subjects and to develop their enterprise, music, sporting and writing skills. In some lessons, teachers offer too much information, do not ask sufficiently challenging questions and there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended, investigative activities, independently or together. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the extremely clearly-focused support and challenge they receive in lessons. There is outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children make a flying start to their learning and to their personal development. However, on occasions, opportunities are missed for children to develop their writing skills in activities in all areas of learning.

The highly-respected, skilful and influential headteacher offers outstanding leadership. He employs a collegiate approach to planning and monitoring which includes all staff and governors and ensures that self-evaluation is extremely accurate and that the promotion of equal opportunities and community cohesion are outstanding. Accordingly, the school has initiated appropriate and successful strategies which have raised attainment in writing and brought about improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Given its track record, the outstanding quality of provision and outstanding outcomes for pupils, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding, and it provides outstanding value for money.

**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

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2012, further accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, by:
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to explore for themselves in investigative and open-ended activities, independently or together
  - ensuring that teachers use questions more effectively so that pupils are encouraged to extend their thinking.
- Offer even more opportunities for children to develop their writing skills in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

The extent to which pupils achieve is good and they show great enjoyment in their learning. Pupils have excellent attitudes, form highly positive relationships, are extremely courteous and show great keenness to do well in their work. They especially enjoy the many challenging and lively activities in lessons, such as projects linked to residential visits, writing and recording their own music using information and communication technology (ICT) or using scientific methods to investigate about insects. They also enjoy planning and writing stories and working together, for example to solve clues in a treasure hunt which develops their skills in geography.

Children have a wide range of ability when they start school but overall their skills on entry to school are in line with those expected for their age, although more children than has been the case in the past now have lower skills, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. Pupils make good progress and their attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. In 2010, attainment for Year 6 was high in English as a result of well-targeted and successful initiatives to improve pupils' writing and those pupils made outstanding progress.

Pupils are exceptionally aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their very enthusiastic involvement in physical education, sport and after-school clubs and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They care for one another exceptionally well, have huge respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel extremely safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils make an exceptionally positive contribution to the school community through the school council, as playground helpers and play leaders and as house and singing leaders. These groups meet regularly and play a major role in helping pupils to behave exceptionally well, feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy their learning. They support a range of charities and participate in competitions with other local schools, in activities in the town which celebrate local customs, with the local churches and in prestigious music festivals.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teachers make learning fun. They employ interactive whiteboard technology well to engage pupils and plan opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, both indoors and outdoors, including experiments, games and using ICT. They are particularly skilful at using information about pupils' skills and abilities to match work to the learning needs of individual pupils. They make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded, using questions well to check that they have made progress. Teachers use questions less successfully to encourage pupils to develop their ideas. Occasionally, the pace of learning drops because teachers offer too much information and pupils are prevented from getting on with challenging and open-ended tasks, independently or together. Marking is used effectively to tell pupils how well they have achieved in individual tasks and to ensure they are clear about how to improve their work.

The highly-stimulating curriculum contributes to pupils' good progress by offering a range of memorable activities which help them to see the links between subjects and develop and apply important skills. For example, work completed in Science Week successfully develops pupils' imaginations, their ability to carry out experiments and their creativity and writing skills. There are excellent procedures to encourage reading and to develop pupils' writing. There are highly effective links with the local secondary school and with local farms and businesses, which enhance pupils' sporting skills, environmental awareness and

**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

understanding of the world of work. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to places of worship, residential visits, and opportunities to work with musicians help to develop pupils' skills in writing, music and geography and their understanding of other faiths and cultures. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sport, the arts and environmental activities, including a choir, rugby and cricket, recycling and the development of the school garden.

Staff's extremely detailed knowledge of the personal and emotional needs of individual pupils is put to excellent use. Pupils are cared for exceptionally well so that they develop their self-esteem, respect for others and a sense of responsibility. There are extremely successful strategies to help pupils who may be falling behind in their learning, pupils who are looked after and those with specific learning needs. Well-established and highly effective practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school, move from class to class and transfer to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The highly respected and inspirational headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has relentlessly pursued and achieved excellence in the education the school offers to its pupils. He has achieved a balance between his own drive for improvement and the necessity to delegate responsibility for planning, implementing and monitoring initiatives to senior leaders and subject co-ordinators who are very clear about their roles and respond extremely well to the accountability required of them. There is an exceptionally well-organised programme of continuing professional development which uses the skills of staff in school to share expertise, as well as working closely with local and national providers to advance school improvement. The school knows itself extraordinarily well. Plans for improvement, to which all staff and governors contribute, are very clearly delineated and are monitored regularly. Accordingly, the school has brought about improvements in writing and the Early Years Foundation Stage, maintained a stimulating curriculum and there are detailed and appropriate priorities to effect even further improvements in teaching.

The school is proud of its inclusive nature and its place at the heart of the community. It informs parents and carers regularly about pupils' progress and uses homework extremely well so that learning can be well supported at home. It has exceptionally close links with outside agencies to support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds and those with medical, physical and learning needs, showing the school's remarkable

**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

commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times.

The governing body has skilfully offered strong support and challenge to the school and closely monitors its work. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and meet government requirements. There are good procedures to ensure the safety of all pupils. The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion and helps pupils gain an advanced understanding not only of the social and historical context of their own town, but of their place as global citizens and as members of a culturally diverse society.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Highly effective teaching, by all adults, is skilfully directed to develop skills in counting, speaking and listening, and linking sounds and letters; this helps children to make excellent progress from their starting points. The outstanding leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has ensured that there are excellent and productive links with the on-site children's centre and childcare provider which are increasingly overcoming barriers to learning. She provides a clear model for planning and assessment and shares her imaginative vision with the staff team and this supports continued improvements. All staff offer children many challenging activities both indoors and outdoors, including in the local woodland, in a lively and caring environment. Accordingly, children respond by becoming extremely caring and confident individuals and they flourish when engaged in creative activities such as construction and imaginative play. They particularly enjoy investigating minibeasts through magnifying glasses or exploring the life-cycles of frogs, butterflies and their own hens. While there is a clear focus on developing children's writing, there are some missed opportunities for children to write in activities across all areas of learning.



**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

A range of healthy snacks and drinking water, opportunities for exercise and clear guidelines for hand washing, help children to develop an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are rigorously met. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and carers that enable children to settle quickly into the Nursery class and allow parents and carers to understand how well their children are progressing, especially through diaries and children's learning journals.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers support the school and its leaders extremely strongly with a very large majority being happy with their children's experience at school and all aspects of its work. The inspection findings reflect these very positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Middleton-In-Teesdale Nursery and 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	59	26	37	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	70	20	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	54	29	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	48	31	44	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	59	25	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	51	32	45	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	54	30	42	2	3	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)	35	49	28	39	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	51	31	44	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	48	32	45	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	45	33	46	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	52	30	42	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	65	21	30	1	1	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Middleton-In-Teesdale Nursery and Primary School, Barnard Castle, DL12 0TG**

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us so politely and enthusiastically when we inspected your school.

You go to an outstanding school and your teachers know how to make it even better. The team was impressed by the work of the school council and the singing leaders and the effort you put into your work. Your behaviour, politeness and the exceptional care and respect you have for one another are admirable. Your teachers take excellent care of you, make your lessons fun and help you to know how to improve your work. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. Your parents and carers like the school very much. Your teachers have agreed with us that they should help your school to improve even more by:

- helping you reach higher standards at the end of Year 6, by providing more opportunities for you to investigate together and solve problems
- asking questions that challenge you to develop and extend your ideas
- offering even more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their writing skills.

You can help by continuing to do your best and keeping up your excellent attendance. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Potter

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).