



Middleton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107953
LEA Leeds
Inspection number 277873
Inspection dates 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Lesley Clark CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Middleton Park Avenue
School category	Community		Leeds
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Yorkshire LS10 4HU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 271 7969
Number on roll	464	Fax number	0113 272 0076
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms L Lawton
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr S Forster

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school situated in an area of high social and economic deprivation in south Leeds. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (55 per cent) is well above average. Almost half the pupils have significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a large number of others give cause for concern. Although the majority of pupils are of white British heritage, the number from minority ethnic heritages and refugee and asylum seeking families is increasing, with more at an early stage of speaking English than in the past. There are also a very small number of traveller learners on the school's roll. The proportion of looked after children is high.

Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is very low with many children having considerable language, communication, personal, social and emotional difficulties. The school has a designated Language Resourced Provision for eight pupils with severe communication and language disorders, a nurture group for children aged 5 to 7 and a learning resource base to help those with behavioural problems. The school is involved with a national initiative to improve attendance and behaviour and provides a first day cover for three local schools for exclusion purposes. Two learning mentors work in school.

In the last five years, the number of pupils has decreased by 40 per cent. A large part of the nearby local authority housing estates were demolished and the new owner occupied housing serves different schools. In the last two years, there has been a considerable reduction in staffing and recruitment problems. This term, the school is operating without a deputy, pending a new appointment in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a caring school where many pupils achieve what is expected of them. It gives satisfactory value for money. Most children start school with very low levels of basic skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage in all their areas of learning because of good teaching. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress. Most pupils do better in numeracy than in literacy because they find the lessons more enjoyable and relevant. Overall, the teaching they receive is usually satisfactory and often good. A particular strength of the school is the way pupils are helped to develop their confidence and their personal and social skills. This helps pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The headteacher and staff work hard to meet the needs of all pupils. The school caters very well for a wide range of learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural problems. The school recognises that more could be done to improve standards in literacy and to check that different groups of pupils are learning as well as they should. The school should also continue to work on improving the unsatisfactory attendance. The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of what needs improving and have taken sensible steps to raise basic literacy skills. The school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in literacy by ensuring that pupils do far more speaking, reading and writing in a wide range of enjoyable contexts throughout the school day, and by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Monitor effectively to get a clear overview of how well different groups of pupils are doing across the school.
- Continue to work on improving attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory from very low starting points. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, learning through play and making their own choices. By the end of the reception year, overall standards are still well below average although about a quarter of pupils come close to the expected level for their age. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress although overall standards at the end of Year 6 are well below nationally expected levels. However, pupils do well in mathematics as a result of their greater interest and good teaching, and a small proportion exceeds the expected level. Standards in English, identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection, rose between 2000 and 2003, and then fell with the reduction in staffing and drop in pupil numbers. Recent results have not reached the school's own targets and few pupils exceed national expectations of literacy for their age. The school knows standards should be higher and for the past year has run an intensive support programme to teach basic literacy skills. The impact has yet to be seen. Pupils' achievement is not higher because there are too few planned opportunities

for pupils to speak, read, or write independently at length with enjoyment. Setting for English enables pupils of broadly similar abilities to learn together, but not enough is expected of more able pupils.

The large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the very good support they receive from teachers, assistants and many visiting professionals. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls, vulnerable pupils or those from different backgrounds.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being is nurtured well. The school has a happy feel to it and pupils are friendly and interested. The school's self-evaluation rates this aspect as satisfactory because its assessment focuses too much on those who have personal, social, emotional and behavioural problems. Behaviour is mostly good and the school very successfully meets the needs of the small number who show signs of disaffection. Attendance is inadequate for a number of pupils and, though the school works hard to raise attendance levels, non-attendance slows their progress and development.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and chances to reflect. Most pupils enjoy school and value the opportunities open to them. Achievements are celebrated and pupils grow in confidence as a result. Relationships are good, including those between different ethnic groups. Pupils are proud of their school and have a say in what goes on through the school council. The school benefits from strong leadership on healthy eating. Most pupils make good progress in developing the personal attributes that will enable them to contribute to society through an effective citizenship programme. Pupils are involved in a wide range of fundraising activities. Participation in clubs, productions and residential experiences has a positive impact. For instance, pupils ran the school fair, taking responsibility for all aspects of its organisation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage and as a result children are busy, happy learners. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is at its best when pupils have specific short tasks to do, as in numeracy lessons, for example, where activities change quickly to match pupils' attention span. These lessons move at a good pace. Behaviour management is particularly good. Pupils respond well to role play or planning their work with their talking partner. Vulnerable pupils, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, are successfully encouraged to work with one another and to develop their communication skills. Teachers are well informed about the needs of learners and adjust the level of work, and their

expectations, to take account of these. However, in literacy lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6, this leads to 'safe' teaching with unambitious targets, a slow pace and too little challenge for more able pupils. In several lessons, pupils sit and listen for too long and therefore have limited opportunities to speak, read and write as much as they should.

Older pupils know their targets in English and mathematics; they are not, however, sure about what they must do to reach these. Talking to pupils about their work is helpful but pupils are not always able to read and understand written comments. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified as early as possible and their requirements are met well. The work they are given is at an appropriate level and they learn well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. Statutory requirements are met and lessons in a range of subjects are planned around carefully chosen themes to give greater impact to learning. Successful 'themed weeks' are held each year in which many strands of learning are brought together in an exciting way, as in an African week, for example. Provision for numeracy and information and communication technology is good. Provision for literacy is carefully planned with a view to putting right the current weaknesses in standards, giving extra time to reading, and Year 1 pupils initially follow a similar curriculum to the Foundation Stage.

Individual needs are well met and those who are identified as having additional learning needs are monitored to ensure that what is provided for them is effective in helping them to make progress. Particularly good provision is made for those with speech and language difficulties for which extra resources are provided, and for those with behavioural difficulties who have access to a learning support base staffed by experienced teachers and mentors. Very young pupils with social and emotional difficulties blossom in the Star class, a nurture group in which their needs are very well met.

The curriculum is strongly enriched by opportunities provided beyond the school day such as the popular and enjoyable breakfast club. After school clubs including a football club and a choir are well attended, as is the 'extra time centre' at the local football club. Pupils take part in enterprise activities with local businesses and all have the chance to take part in a residential visit, which broadens their experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is rightly proud of the good care it takes of its pupils, which ensures their personal development blossoms. Because so many pupils are vulnerable, a strong emphasis is placed on ensuring their well-being and promoting their personal development. Pupils who have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties, for example, show by their improved attitudes that they have benefited from the good

guidance and support that is provided. Exclusions have been much reduced as a consequence.

Child protection procedures are in place and fully understood by the staff, and rigorous assessments are made of the risks involved in the day-to-day activities of the school. Every effort is made to make it a safe place for pupils and staff alike. Pupils recall what they have learnt about healthy eating but, when given the choice, they tend to prefer chocolate to apples.

Pupils' academic development is checked upon and pupils are aware of the targets set for them. There is monitoring of the personal development of pupils with identified and additional needs but there is no systematic check on the personal development of others. Relationships between pupils and those who teach and support them are good. These are best in the small groups of vulnerable children who are very dependent on the approval of adults. Here they provide a strong motivation for hard work and good learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school judges leadership and management as good. There are undoubted strengths in the management of the large numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and in the creation of a happy, working environment in which all children behave well, feel valued and develop confidence and self-esteem. However, the inspection team judges overall leadership and management to be satisfactory because standards in English remain low and disadvantage pupils in later learning. The leadership and management team have coped well during the past two years with the problems caused by the considerable drop in pupil numbers and reductions in staffing. It took sensible steps at an early stage to rectify the consequent decline in pupils' literacy skills but the impact of the intensive support programme has yet to filter through. Subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic but not all play a full enough role in monitoring standards through checking teaching to ensure that learning literacy skills is interesting, enjoyable and effective. More needs to be done to raise the level of expectation and challenge for more able pupils so they do as well in literacy as in numeracy. With the lack of a deputy this term, a disproportionate amount of responsibility has fallen on the shoulders of the headteacher and staff with key responsibilities.

Parents are appreciative of what the school does for their children. Governors have good levels of involvement in what goes on, though they rely on the headteacher for information. The voice of the pupils is heard, especially through the school council, and the school is beginning to take this into account in its decision making. The school's understanding of its strengths and areas for development is good but procedures for monitoring what goes on have been too informal. Satisfactory steps have been taken to address the issues in the last inspection report.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. We enjoyed our visit and want to share with you what we thought about your school.

What we liked most about your school:

- We think that you are looked after well and that your school helps you to grow up into thoughtful people.
- We are pleased with your progress in numeracy.
- We think you have an interesting range of after school clubs and that there is a lot going on at school to interest you.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- We want you to spend more time speaking, reading and writing so you get really good at these.
- We want you to enjoy literacy lessons as much as numeracy lessons.
- We want to help you learn to read and write even better by sorting out how the school records your progress so the information can be used to help you learn.
- Lastly, we want you all to come to school regularly and for attendance to be 100 per cent in every class every week.

We liked meeting you and watching you learn and wish you well for the future.