



# Harrold Priory Middle School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109649  
**LEA** BEDFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278229  
**Inspection dates** 24 May 2006 to 25 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Margaret Jones LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary	<b>School address</b>	The Green
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		MK43 7DE
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01234720346
<b>Number on roll</b>	411	<b>Fax number</b>	01234721036
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Kevin Kierman
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Keith Atkins

<b>Age group</b> 9 to 13	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 May 2006 - 25 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278229
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Harrold Priory Middle school accepts pupils from the villages of North Bedfordshire as well as some pupils from Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire. The school has been oversubscribed for a number of years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The school has achieved Healthy School status, and plays an active role in the local learning community.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school with several outstanding features. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides effective leadership to raise standards. There is a good team spirit among the staff and governors who are well motivated and want to do their best by the school and its pupils. The school has a creative, innovative approach to the curriculum which is responsive to the needs of pupils. There are excellent working arrangements with local schools. Teaching is good and pupils enjoy learning, and as a result they make good progress to reach above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the good support they receive. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They have many opportunities to take on responsibilities and participate in an outstanding range of enrichment activities. Pupils understand the need for healthy lifestyles but their learning about the world of work is more limited. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for a planned programme of careers education and guidance in Years 7 and 8. Provision for personal, religious and social education (PRASE) and citizenship is satisfactory but is not planned well enough, and is not thoroughly assessed. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and confirmed by inspectors. It enables both staff and governors to identify what needs to be done to improve provision further. Heads of department manage their subjects well. The school has developed effective systems for assessing progress and intervening when pupils need extra help. Most parents are happy with the school. Many are involved in parents' groups which look at different aspects of school life. Their views are taken into account regularly and they are kept informed of developments. The school's capacity to improve and raise standards further is good. It provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the provision for personal, religious and social education and citizenship by planning lessons more carefully and assessing the progress pupils are making.
- Implement the requirement for a planned programme of careers education in Years 7 and 8.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils achieve well from their standards on entry which are above average. The school builds effectively on the work of the lower schools so that standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 are above average. The progress that pupils make accelerates in Years 7 and 8. Pupils are well prepared for their upper school education and go on to do very well in their tests in Year 9. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the early identification of their needs, careful tracking of their progress and the way that teachers support them in lessons. In 2005 the school set challenging targets, which they met in English but just missed in mathematics.

Pupils are appropriately challenged and achieve well in almost all subjects. They do particularly well in science. When asked what work they are proud of they draw from a rich range of subjects such as work on the rainforest, writing modern fairy tales, art projects, drama and media performances. Pupils are confident, articulate and have good presentational and leadership skills. They are able to work effectively, both independently and in teams. Pupils are numerate and have good reading, writing, information and communication technology (ICT) and research skills. The English department has a focus on the further development of writing skills in order to ensure that more pupils attain the higher levels in their writing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; they are enthusiastic, want to learn and are proud of their school and their achievements. This is reflected in their good attendance. Behaviour in school is good and often excellent. Pupils report that there is very little bullying. They have complete confidence that, if it occurred, the school would deal with it effectively and promptly. The school's organisation of year groups and houses means that there are many formal and informal opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and become involved in the community, and to work with staff. Overall, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Aspects of this are strong. The school fosters pupils' independence, self-esteem and confidence effectively. A very caring attitude towards each other and to others is cultivated through their inclusive relationships, fund-raising for charity and wide-ranging opportunities for teamwork. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. However, while they develop skills useful in their future lives, an appropriate careers programme, to raise their awareness of the diverse nature of the business world and challenge possible stereotypical views, is lacking. Similarly, lack of enterprise education limits the school's contribution to pupils' future economic wellbeing.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons, the brisk pace and strong intellectual challenge engage pupils' interest and enable them to participate fully and make rapid progress. Planning is good and a variety of resources is used. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, drawing well on their previous learning. They pitch lessons at the right level to capture pupils' imagination. Lessons are lively and enjoyable and there are very good relationships between the pupils themselves and with the teacher. For example, in part of a Year 8 lesson judged to be outstanding, groups of pupils worked together well, planning their own PowerPoint presentations on the causes and consequences of global warming. In lessons that are only satisfactory, planning is weaker and there is lack of clarity about learning objectives

and consolidation of what has been learnt. Pupils have a good understanding of National Curriculum levels. They know what their targets are and what they have to do to improve their work. Assessment data are being used to good effect to track pupils' performance and plan future lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities for learning in lessons and in the many extra-curricular activities. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in numeracy, literacy and science. The school's science laboratories offer very good facilities. Year 8 pupils have the option to take a second modern foreign language and over half of them do so. This gives them a really good start in the upper school. In media studies, pupils make an excellent weekly news and sports television programme for the rest of the school. This brings the excitement of outside activities, like sailing, into the classroom for other pupils to see. Personal, social and health education is taught, together with religious education and citizenship, by form teachers, but only limited time is allowed for these subjects. Lessons are not always planned with clear learning objectives and the pupils' progress is not assessed. There is insufficient emphasis across the school on making pupils aware of the world of work. Pupils regularly take part in an impressive range of activities outside of lessons. For example, they present music and drama productions, and participate in competitive sports and school teams. There are plans to extend these activities even further. These all encourage pupils to lead active and healthy lives and develop varied interests.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The staff know the pupils very well, they value their strengths and listen to their views. This leads to an outstanding level of care, guidance and support which pupils appreciate. When talking about staff care for them, one Year 5 pupil said 'There's always a solution to every problem at this school'. The personal interview time for pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7, and the academic tutor programme for Year 8 pupils, provide high levels of individual support and effective target-setting for each pupil. Liaison with lower and upper schools is very good and there are good links with outside agencies. This collaboration ensures that the needs of each pupil are recognised and met. Health and safety and child protection procedures are fully in place. Detailed records are kept of all pupils' performance. Those needing extra help or additional challenge are identified early and supported effectively. Pupils value their individual planner and tracker file and know the targets which they are aiming to achieve. Most parents agree that their children are well cared for. The grouping of pupils into house teams enables them to support one another very well and allows them to participate in the management of the school. This also helps them to develop the very high levels of confidence that they show.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are effective. The headteacher promotes traditional values alongside a range of exciting learning opportunities. He has created an ethos in which pupils enjoy school and want to learn. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in a number of areas, including the management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and standards in French and physical education. The senior management team is enthusiastic and hardworking. Regular evaluation of the work of departments now takes place and is having a positive impact. Governors are supportive of the school and are becoming more involved in setting priorities and evaluating outcomes. There is good potential to improve further. The school has correctly identified its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan is detailed and sharply focused. Objectives are specific and progress on the plan is regularly monitored. Accurate, though not always formal, evaluation of teaching has taken place, and inspectors agree with the school's judgements about this. The school forges excellent partnerships with its feeder lower schools and the neighbouring upper school. These arrangements have led to many enhanced learning opportunities for pupils at Harrold Priory Middle School. The school has good systems for taking account of the views of parents and pupils. The accommodation is very limited as numbers have grown at the school, but it is well-maintained and provides a stimulating and welcoming learning environment.



## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	No
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 all the help you gave the inspectors when we visited your school on 24 - 25 May. We enjoyed talking with you. We learned about your enthusiasm for your school and how much you enjoy and value all that it has to offer. You told us that you are proud of Harrold Priory and we think you are right to be so. It is a good school with several aspects which are outstanding. We thought you would like to know what was good about your school and how we thought it could get even better:

- You work hard and do very well in your national tests. Years 7 and 8 do very well and achieve very good results when they go up to the upper school.
- You behave very well and take lots of responsibility around the school, including being House Captains.
- Teaching is good and you achieve well in most of your subjects.
- The school is well led and managed and there is a very good team spirit among the staff and governors, who are well motivated and want to do their best by all of you.
- There is an exciting curriculum with some different courses such as Spanish, German and media studies.
- You enjoy the wide range of activities that are provided for you, especially the sport, dance, drama and music.

Things we thought could be improved;

- You could learn more about the world of work.
- The progress you make in the personal, religious, and social education lessons (PRASE) should be tracked more carefully.

We wish all of you success in your studies and thank you once again for your help with this inspection.