



# Margaret Beaufort Middle School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109657  
**LEA** BEDFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278234  
**Inspection dates** 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. David Simpson LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	High Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		MK44 1DR
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 708213
<b>Number on roll</b>	357	<b>Fax number</b>	01234 708904
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Warren Storey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Hew Wright

<b>Age group</b> 9 to 13	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 March 2006 - 22 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278234
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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

Margaret Beaufort is a small oversubscribed middle school. The proportion of the pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The school's population includes an above average proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs but the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below the national average. A relatively high number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times. Almost all pupils are White British. Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with attainment which is above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The Margaret Beaufort Middle School provides a satisfactory education. It has many strengths and some outstanding features. The pupils thoroughly enjoy their education and make excellent use of the enriching curricular and extra-curricular activities available to them. They make an outstanding contribution to the community and display a very good understanding of how to keep healthy. Parents are very positive about the school. One described it as a 'great school' in which pupils 'receive a fantastic, all-round education.' Good links with other schools and organisations promote pupils' well-being. Margaret Beaufort works very effectively to ensure good liaison between lower schools and the Upper School. Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at Margaret Beaufort. Whilst the standards the pupils attain in end of Key Stage 2 tests are above the national average, their progress overall is too variable and the school is not sufficiently robust in setting targets or in monitoring the pupils' achievement systematically. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and often good. In good lessons, teachers take full advantage of the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and encourage them to take the initiative. Planning which has high expectations results in challenging lessons. However, in some lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, teachers spend too much time talking and not enough time is given to pupils learning. The pupils are stretched insufficiently because there is a lack of demanding things for them to learn. The pupils are well cared for and parents appreciate the way that their children are treated as individuals. The headteacher has a very good knowledge of each pupil. He has established a strong, caring ethos and enjoys the confidence of the whole school community. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Well considered steps are being taken to increase the responsibilities of subject and year co-ordinators for the monitoring of pupils' progress. The governing body is dedicated, hard working and makes a strong contribution to school improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report have been addressed satisfactorily. Although the school judges its overall effectiveness too positively, the enthusiasm of the pupils, the hard work of the staff and the developing procedures to increase accountability indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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

- set higher targets for pupil progress and ensure that achievement is more consistent
- increase the challenge in lessons, particularly for the more able in Key Stage 2 -
- monitor more regularly and systematically the performance of pupils, so that underperformance can be addressed swiftly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When the pupils join Margaret Beaufort in Year 5, their knowledge, skills and understanding in English and mathematics are broadly above average. At the end of

the Key Stage 2 tests, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level (Level 4) or better is above the national average. However, the school failed to meet its targets in 2005 and the evidence currently available indicates it is unlikely to do so in 2006, especially for the proportion of pupils expected to attain the higher Level 5. Achievement in Key Stage 2 has fluctuated year on year and the school is aware that it needs to monitor pupil progress more regularly in order to attain greater consistency of outcomes. Pupils make better progress in Years 7 and 8 and make satisfactory progress overall throughout their time at the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of effective, well-focused support. Useful procedures have been introduced in mathematics which provide a model of monitoring for the school as a whole, but the targets overall need to be more exacting if pupils are to achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and are very appreciative of the opportunities they are given to go on school trips and take part in extra-curricular activities. Their attendance is good. They have a good level of concern for the safety and well-being of others. They are very enthusiastic about the excellent opportunities to participate in sports and to contribute to healthy eating and drinking initiatives. As a result, they develop a very high level of understanding of how to stay healthy. Pupils play an excellent part in wider community life, for example, they participate in an annual clear-up of the village and in local planning consultations. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school and have positive attitudes to learning. The school council makes a very effective contribution to school life, such as by improving playground facilities and by conducting a bullying survey. The school is reviewing its anti-bullying policy and procedures in the light of the concerns of some pupils and taking appropriate action. The standards that the pupils attain and their ability to work independently or in groups equip them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A majority learn to play an instrument and there are a variety of cultural visits planned each year. The personal, social and health education programme is very effectively planned and this contributes to their good social and moral development. Pupils develop spiritual understanding and awareness well through assemblies, visits and across a range of lessons.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good and, occasionally, outstanding features. Teaching is at its best when learning tasks are exciting and challenging and lessons bristle with pace. Good teaching is often characterised by the depth of teachers' impressive subject knowledge, which results in purposeful and lively learning. When

planning sets high expectations pupils are more than ready to rise to the challenge. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners with a keen desire to do well. Teaching assistants are used well to support the pace of lessons. There are occasions, however, when tasks do not ask enough of the higher-attaining pupils and opportunities to really stretch pupils' thinking are missed. This is more prevalent in Years 5 and 6. There are also times when teachers dominate discussions, or questioning is not incisive enough to let the true potential of pupils shine through. Assessment is satisfactory. The school has appropriate procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment but the information is not always used rigorously enough to set challenging targets and to regularly track pupils' progress. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. It is at its best when pupils know what they need to do to improve, is clearly stated.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. The school places a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and has rightly flagged up the need to continue to put pupils' writing and computer skills to effective use in other subjects throughout the curriculum. The school makes excellent provision in music and physical education and good opportunities for Year 5 and 6 pupils to study a foreign language. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the very small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. The range and quality of enrichment opportunities are outstanding and add much to the life of the school. A high percentage of pupils take part in the different activities, and pupils and parents are very appreciative of what the school offers. The very good range of sporting activities also does much to promote the importance of keeping fit and healthy. Pupils play an active role in the local community and the school is planning to further develop its careers guidance programme to better meet the diverse aspirations of its pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good. This is a very caring school where the individuality of pupils is recognised and celebrated. Parents are very appreciative of how well the school cares for pupils. Good links are in place with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. Health and safety and child protection procedures are fully in place and assiduously followed by staff. Pupils say that their views are not only listened to but 'things get done!' and cite an array of initiatives led by pupils. Liaison procedures between lower and upper schools are a particular strength and contribute significantly to effective transition. Staff know individual pupils well and respond very well to their social and emotional needs. However, the school recognises that there is a need to monitor pupils' academic progress more closely and to increase pupil and parental involvement in the process to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has established a strong collaborative ethos in which adults are prepared to give of their time generously in order that pupils are provided with rich and varied opportunities. The school is rightly reviewing the responsibilities of year and subject co-ordinators so that their role is more focused on monitoring and raising pupil progress. Several subjects are well led but overall the performance of co-ordinators is too variable. Parents and pupils contribute well to the school's decision making. However, the school's self-evaluation does not sufficiently focus on analysing pupils' progress and quickly addressing any identified underachievement. Governance is good. The governing body is knowledgeable and has effective structures to monitor and challenge the school's work. Governors have played a significant role in developing the school's staffing structure and strengthening links between Margaret Beaufort, its lower schools and the Upper School. However, governors recognise that they need to be informed throughout the year about how much progress pupils are making.

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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>	<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>	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	NA	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	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	3	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	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>	2	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>	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	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	Yes
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. We learned a lot about the school through talking to you, seeing how you were getting on in your lessons and sharing your assemblies. We could see that you enjoy your education, work enthusiastically and help each other. Well done! Yours is a school with many strengths, not least your keenness to learn. The adults who work in your school know you well. They care that you develop into well-rounded individuals who have had a broad and enriching education. We think you have had some excellent ideas to make your school better, such as improving food and drink arrangement and playground facilities. It is also impressive that you get so involved with the local community, for example contributing to the local village plan and helping to keep the village tidy. You have lots of excellent opportunities to go on visits which help your learning. It was interesting to see how you were preparing for a visit to the National Gallery in London. A very high number of you are involved in the wide range of activities before, during and after school. We have asked Mr Wright to do a few things that should help you all get on even better than you are doing now! We've suggested Mr Wright and your teachers check more regularly that you are making as much progress as you should in order that you get the best possible results in the Key Stage 2 tests. Also, whilst a lot of your lessons are good, we'd like to see more of them challenge and stretch you. That's because we know you really like and respond well to work that is demanding! Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.