



Gilbert Inglefield Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109667
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278239
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Bob Roberts LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Vandyke Road
School category	Community		LU7 3FU
Age range of pupils	9 to 13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01525 372266
Number on roll	548	Fax number	01525 851953
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Barry Mowbray
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr. David Neeves

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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

Gilbert Inglefield Middle School is a mixed school for pupils aged 9 to 13. With 548 pupils, it is about average in size. It is one of four middle schools in Leighton Buzzard and serves the eastern side of the town. Over 90 % of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the number eligible for free school meals, are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school fluctuates slightly from year to year but is in line with national averages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing satisfactory education overall. There have been some improvements since the last inspection, especially with regard to provision. For example, there have been considerable improvements in the information and communication technology (ICT) provision and for spiritual and cultural development. However, the quality of the teaching at the school was judged as good at the last inspection and, as the school itself has recognised, the overall standard is currently only satisfactory. Although the progress of pupils and their standards of achievement are satisfactory, they are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils need to be helped with their progress by more coherent systems of target setting and by having their learning assessed more often. The real strength of the school lies in the personal development and well-being of its pupils. Pupils are very well cared for. They behave very well and their attendance is excellent. They benefit from many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Their views are taken seriously and their actions make a difference to school developments. They are very happy at school and this is reflected in the very positive views of the school expressed by parents. The curriculum is satisfactory. Partnership work with other local schools is very good. Arrangements when pupils enter and leave the school are good. There is a clear commitment to improvement led by the headteacher. The leadership and management across the school is satisfactory but needs to be more consistent and more rigorous. The school is aware of what it needs to do to improve and has the capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus on developing the skills of senior and middle managers further so that teaching and learning can be monitored and evaluated more effectively. - Support pupil's learning more effectively by providing clear guidance on what they do well and where they need to improve. - Track pupil progress more rigorously so that outcomes can inform planning better at all levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils start and leave the school with broadly average attainment indicating satisfactory progress. In the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2005 standards were broadly in line with the national average. Whilst standards at the end of Key stage 2 have improved nationally in recent years, the standards at the school are the same as they were when the school was last inspected. The progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6 could be better, especially in mathematics. Compared to the 2004 National Curriculum test results, standards in mathematics have risen in some respects but given the standards attained in English and science they could be higher still. In addition boys, especially those who enter the school with attainment that is below average, do not progress as well as girls. In Years

7 and 8 pupils make satisfactory progress overall and progress in mathematics is noticeably better than in Years 5 and 6. Standards in ICT in Years 7 and 8 are good. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is of the view that the personal development of pupils is good. However, inspection findings indicate it to be outstanding and a real strength of the school. Striking and distinctive features of the school are pupils' excellent behaviour and attendance and their very positive attitudes to learning. They are focused in lessons and the great majority are keen to do their best. Pupils make a very effective contribution to school life through the school council and the 'tlk 2 uz' support system which is run by trained Year 8 pupils. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given and their ideas have had a real impact on some school developments, such as the healthier range of school dinners. Pupils are regularly involved in fundraising for a wide range of charities including the sponsorship of a Kenyan child through school. They learn important skills in basic economics because this is extremely well covered as part of their citizenship work. Pupils' moral and social development is very good. The strong relationships established throughout the school have a positive impact on the way pupils collaborate and learn together in lessons. Pupils are mature, polite and open and have a firm sense of right and wrong. They are keenly aware of procedures to follow in the rare event of a dispute. There have been improvements in pupils' spiritual and cultural development since the last inspection because teachers now regularly plan to include these areas in lessons. This aspect of the schools work is good. High numbers of pupils take part enthusiastically in a wide range of after-school activities including sports and languages. These, together with an extremely knowledgeable commitment to safe and healthy life styles, are clear evidence of pupils improving their life opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but there is a relatively small amount of good or better teaching. This broadly agrees with the judgement made by the school. Teachers have good working relationships with the pupils. The pupils are well motivated and this creates a pleasant learning environment in which pupils enjoy their work. In the best lessons, teaching is challenging and pupils are actively involved in their own learning. A range of suitable teaching styles and activities, including questioning of the pupils, is used well to promote good learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support the learning of pupils who have special needs. In less successful lessons there is a high proportion of time spent by the teacher talking, resulting in a more limited range of learning activities. These lessons offer less variety and challenge

and the learning, although usually satisfactory, is not as effective. The pupils appreciate the recent introduction of interactive white boards and the positive impact these are having on the style of the lessons. The school rightly recognised the need to improve its performance in relation to assessment and although a new system has been introduced it is still in its early stages and has not yet made an impact on learning. Marking of pupils' work and the use of target setting so that pupils know how to improve their work is inconsistent within and across departments but there are examples of good practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school judged its curriculum to be good but as there is only a small amount of time allocated to music in Year 6 and design and technology in Years 5 and 6 inspectors judge the curriculum to be satisfactory with a number of strengths. Statutory requirements are met in relation to all subjects taught at the school. The school curriculum provides opportunities for all learners to make progress, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Particular strengths within the curriculum are the good personal, social, health and citizenship programme and the range of enrichment opportunities provided. In particular, the choice of physical education activities available, the range of visits and the variety of speakers that come into the school are good. Pupils start to study French at an earlier age than is usually found and this provides a firm base for learning in the next phase of their education career. Preparation for the world of work and other areas of work related learning and enterprise skills are appropriate for the age of the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support with some significant strengths. In particular, pastoral support is strong, helping pupils to settle quickly when they start in Year 5 and become confident and mature. Staff are quick to notice any pupils who are unhappy and help them resolve their problems. This is particularly effective in Years 7 and 8 where the year leaders have flexible timetables, which enable them to deal with issues as they arise. The home-school liaison worker is very effective in supporting individual pupils and families. All the necessary procedures are in place for child protection. Staff give due care and attention to health and safety and first aid procedures are outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants. However, there are weaknesses in the way that the school guides and supports pupils. A significant proportion of pupils are not fully aware of their targets or how the targets are supposed to help them improve. There is also a lack of robustness in the way that the school uses data to track pupils' progress through a year. As a result, strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and the curriculum are not always identified effectively enough and this limits the school in its ability to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There is a clear commitment to improvement from the headteacher. The school's role in leading local school partnership arrangements, and its close liaison with the nearby upper school, have both improved care and transition arrangements for pupils. The school's ability to judge its own performance is satisfactory. For example, the self evaluation document produced for the inspection was clear, used data well and correctly identified some of the key areas for improvement. A clear policy is being pursued to devolve leadership within the school and develop leadership skills in senior and middle managers. Whilst there is some good leadership at these levels, managers work very much in their own ways and greater consistency across the school is needed. A range of mechanisms has been put in place to review and evaluate aspects of the school's work. These include systems by which the views of parents and pupils are gathered. A good calendar of monitoring processes is in place. At present these lack a degree of sharpness and it is not yet clearly established how the outcomes are acted upon. The monitoring of the quality of teaching, for example, needs to be more consistent and more rigorous. The school improvement plan is comprehensive, ambitious, and comprises subject improvement plans, but it is vague with regard to how and when progress will be measured. The school has a strong ethos of inclusion. Pastoral care is good and parents clearly recognise and value these aspects of the school. Action has been taken to develop opportunities equally for all pupils. For example, governors were keen that girls should have more sporting opportunities available for them. Governance is satisfactory. Well developed links are in place between governors and subjects areas. Governors review their practice appropriately to ensure their work meets statutory requirements. They are strongly supportive of the school, and although they are more aware of its strengths than the areas it needs to develop, they do provide the school with a satisfactory degree of scrutiny. Finances are well managed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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	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	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	2	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?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	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

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all, however, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your courtesy and cooperation during our visit. You were a credit to the school. I would also like your parents to know that their views, which contributed to the inspection, were very positive. It is clear that the school is popular and that it deserves to be. What I liked most about your school: - You really enjoy school, work hard and most of you do well. - Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well with each other and your teachers. - You are looked after well and have excellent ideas about how to keep safe and healthy. - Those of you who find work hard are getting the right sort of help and you use it well. What I have asked your school to do now: - Help your teachers to develop their skills further to improve your lessons. - Make sure that you are clear about what you need to do to improve your work and that you are given good information about your progress. You are at a school which is helping you to develop well. It can improve even more and you can make an important contribution by continuing to be positive and constructive in the classroom and around the school. Best wishes to you from the inspection team.