



Middleton Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124600
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281761
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Michael Madden LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Middleton
School category	Community		IP17 3NW
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01728648251
Number on roll	51	Fax number	01728648292
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Margaret Painter
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Kath Cook

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 17 May 2006 - 17 May 2006	Inspection number 281761
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school is in the Suffolk village of Middleton, near Leiston. Its pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Few of them are eligible for free school meals. There are wide variations in the pupils' attainment on entry, which is overall a little below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. As the number of pupils has fallen, the school has recently formed a federation, sharing its headteacher and some of the other staff with another local primary school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. This is confirmed by the schools' own self-evaluation. The pupils make good progress in their learning and personal development. High overall standards are achieved by many pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, though for some, important further improvements are needed in aspects of English and of information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils' attendance is above average and their behaviour is good overall. The curriculum is broad, is related well to the school's location and has reasonable balance. Good learning is promoted by well informed and mainly effective teaching, though lessons do not always have enough pace. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. They are based on a strong commitment by the staff to inclusion and close attention to personal development for each pupil. They are supported particularly well by frequent assessment, target setting and tracking of progress that promote good achievement and high attainment. Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good overall, though in their present form the premises do not give these pupils enough space for outdoor learning. The school has strong and effective leadership and operates smoothly from day to day. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan addresses relevant issues, such as proposed enhancements to the premises. Staff have identified much of what is now needed, although current planning is not always precise enough in specifying the intended outcomes. Nevertheless, staff have the will and the capacity to promote further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to raise standards of achievement, particularly in ICT and aspects of English such as spelling, speaking and listening and presentation - ensure sufficient pace in all lessons - improve the premises where possible to ensure a well-planned and stimulating learning environment, especially for the Foundation Stage - state more precise success criteria for the school's improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils make good progress. Many of those who enter with low attainment catch up well and the more able pupils usually achieve high standards by the end of Year 4. By the end of the Foundation Stage many of the pupils have good general knowledge and some are acquiring skills and understanding usually associated with Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, the teachers use frequent assessments to monitor the pupils' attainment and progress closely. The school sets challenging targets that successfully encourage above average progress across the school. The pupils who are currently in Year 3 achieved exceptionally high standards in the assessments in Year 2. Although the overall attainment of the pupils currently in Year 2 is below average, each of them, including those who have learning difficulties, has made good progress and is likely

to achieve the targets set by their teachers. The pupils' overall progress is good. Pupils who have learning difficulties make good progress. By the time that they leave the school, most pupils attain high standards in mathematics and science. In English, standards of reading are high, though some pupils' spelling, speaking and listening and presentation are not good enough. Standards in ICT are satisfactory, though not as high as those in other core subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. They arrive punctually for school and most spend their time working responsibly and productively, laying sound foundations for their future well-being. Attendance is higher than the national average. Most of the pupils settle readily and work with interest, taking care and showing some pride in what they do. They are aware of the interests and needs of others and show suitable sympathy when their peers need help, and show suitable tolerance when a few occasionally misbehave. Pupils' behaviour is mostly good, but in lessons some talk across their peers or their teachers. Many of the pupils know how to stay healthy and understand the importance of a healthy diet and physical activity. The pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most older pupils are confident and look forward to doing well in their next school. Many pupils of all ages have good social skills and a sound understanding of right and wrong. They willingly undertake tasks to help their teachers, support the work of a school council and contribute to traditional village entertainments and activities. Some older pupils also fulfil more responsible roles such as junior road safety officers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Knowledgeable and experienced staff provide effective leadership in classrooms and promote good attitudes among the pupils, including some who have been reluctant to settle in school. In the main, the teachers choose topics, resources and activities that catch the pupils' interest. The younger pupils were engaged well, for example, when comparing local towns and villages; older pupils consolidated useful skills when they concentrated on phonics and on making jewellery. There are times, nevertheless, when the pace of lessons becomes too slow for some groups of pupils, or start too slowly for those who have difficulty settling. Good use is made of teaching assistants to guide and assess the work of groups or individual pupils within the school's mixed age classes. Assessment is used particularly well to inform planning and to set specific practical targets that direct learning, for example about writing. The teachers provide helpful individual guidance in their marking of pupils' work. Additional learning needs are identified systematically and good provision encourages pupils who have learning difficulties and helps them to succeed and to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum that meets pupils' needs and prepares all well for their next school. Statutory requirements are met and there is good provision for numeracy and literacy, including innovative development of pupils' thinking skills. Lessons include frequent opportunities for the pupils to exercise initiative and take responsibility. Provision for ICT is satisfactory and improving, though not yet effective enough to promote high standards. Sound long-term and medium-term planning ensures provision for the full range of subjects and promotes the expected learning from year to year. The teachers use display to stimulate and celebrate pupils' work, but limitations in the accommodation restrict the quality of the learning environment. The school makes good use of local events, visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and give it relevance to pupils' everyday lives. Pupils' learning is deepened by, for example, visiting local towns and working with a professional poet. The regular combining of some classes with those in another school adds further interest and stimulus for the pupils. In addition, the pupils can gain further valuable experiences after the end of the school day from a number of clubs and activities including art, craft, sport and French.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The staff provide exceptionally good support for all pupils through their attentiveness, day-to-day care, and well-informed guidance. Through an effective programme of personal, social and health education, teachers pay good attention to building pupils' understanding of a wide range of topics including health, safety and relationships. Misbehaviour by a small minority of pupils, is of concern to some of the parents. It is managed well by the staff, for example, by using incidents to inform all as well as to correct individuals. The school's arrangements for recreation and refreshment make an important contribution to pupils' understanding of factors affecting their health. Strong assessment arrangements promote learning well because they enable staff to give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified quickly and receive good and effective support from the staff. The school's safeguarding arrangements are secure. Staff who have joined the school recently have received instruction on relevant policies, including that for child protection. As many of the pupils' parents believe, the school provides a secure and supportive place for their children to learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school is capably led by an experienced headteacher. She and the five other teachers share clear purposes in fostering the pupils' development. The governing body is active and watchful. The staff are well focused on raising standards by improving the quality of provision. There are secure

systems for assessment, target setting, supporting pupils and monitoring teaching. The school operates smoothly from day to day and the headteacher is systematic in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the work of pupils and staff. School improvement is carefully planned and there has been significant progress since the previous inspection in raising the quality of pupils' writing and provision for ICT. The school's formal self-evaluation has drawn on the views of parents as well as staff. It has accurately identified strengths and relative weaknesses, including some deficiencies in the premises. The current school improvement plan addresses relevant issues, though it is not sufficiently precise in specifying the intended outcomes. The cost of operating the school is higher than average as a result of its small size. However, the recent federation with another small school is reducing costs and bringing further stimulation and experience to the pupils and the staff. Overall, the good quality of provision and use of resources mean that the school is providing good 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?	2	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	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	1	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?	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

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

I visited your school a little while ago. I wanted to find out how well you are taught and looked after. Thank you for making me welcome and for answering my questions. You and many of your parents like the school and I agreed that it does many things well. I liked especially: - your good manners - the way your teachers get all of you thinking - your interest, and the way many of you work hard in lessons - the way your teachers keep a close eye on how well you are doing - how quickly you learn and how clever you become - the interesting things that you write - the way you help each other and your teachers when there is trouble - how the teachers are trying to make your school even better. I have asked the teachers to do a few things so the school can go on getting stronger. These are to: - help you to get you better at listening and speaking, spelling, using computers and doing tidy writing - make sure their lessons always start on time and go as fast as the best ones - look for ways of making classrooms and other areas as interesting as possible - plan even more carefully for making improvements to the school. I wish you success in all your learning. You go to a good school and I trust you will help your teachers to make it even better. Thank you once more for your help when I visited.