



Hardwick Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124839
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281818
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Williams LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Mayfield Road
School category	Community		IP33 2PD
Age range of pupils	9 to 13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01284764994
Number on roll	382	Fax number	01284704492
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Richard Carter
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Kathryn Bennett

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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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

Hardwick Middle School is a popular and over subscribed school. It takes pupils from the town and surrounding villages and attainment on entry is average. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties or disabilities are average. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. At the time of the inspection around half of all pupils and staff were on residential visits to France, Wales and Norfolk, with the remaining pupils taken 'off timetable' for a week on interesting and challenging projects linked to the National Curriculum.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hardwick Middle School is a good school. Inspectors agree with the school's own judgement that it is effective and provides good value for money. Since the last inspection standards have risen, particularly in English and information and communication technology (ICT), and by the end of Year 8 pupils' progress has been good in all subjects. Many pupils leave having attained standards above national expectations. Different groups of pupils all make good progress with their learning. The less able as well as those with special gifts and talents do well. Pupils are offered an outstanding standard of care, support and guidance. Good attention is paid to their personal development. The implementation of the school's inclusion policy means there is a real sense of putting the individual child at the centre of learning. Teaching is good. During the inspection teachers planned challenging work and taught unfamiliar groups and topics well. Pupils are interested in their learning and their behaviour is good. Relationships between pupils are outstanding and they work and play together very well, showing enjoyment in learning new ideas. Attendance is outstanding. Parents and carers are positive about what the school does for their child. The focus on adopting a healthy lifestyle is well established and pupils have access to good physical education, games programmes and extra-curricular activities. Pupils' awareness of multicultural Britain outside religious education (RE) lessons is underdeveloped; though overall their cultural, spiritual, social and moral development is good. Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being through topics in their personal, social and health education lessons. The formal influence pupils say they have in the running of the school is only just satisfactory, however, and the school council has had little impact to date. Leadership and management is good. The school is very well aware of its strengths and areas of development, though formal procedures for monitoring of teaching are inconsistent. The focus on setting pupil targets and involving pupils in this process is very good and promotes higher achievement. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and demonstrates that it has good capacity to keep on improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make the school council more visible and effective.
- Bring more consistency to the monitoring of teaching.
- Develop pupils' multicultural awareness and understanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 8 when pupils leave the school their attainment is above national expectations in English, mathematics and science, and a significant number attain well above national expectations. Pupils do particularly well in ICT and their progress since the last inspection has been excellent. Pupils' progress in other subjects is good. The current Year 8 pupils are making good progress towards meeting challenging targets. In the vast majority of subjects pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding

of the levels to which they are aspiring. They know what they have to do to move to a higher level so as to achieve their targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and across the school those with particular gifts or talents achieve very well. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average but are closer to average in mathematics. Pupils have good learning skills, especially in speaking and listening. They question well and are independent yet cooperative learners. The way boys and girls work and play together is very good and their team skills are excellent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, both in lessons and around school, and have positive attitudes to learning. Exclusions are rare whether temporary or permanent and the school is successful in teaching pupils who may have struggled to respond appropriately elsewhere. Attendance is excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and are appreciative of the opportunities they have to go on school trips and take part in extra-curricular activities. They would, however, welcome a chance to make a greater contribution to decision making through the school council. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though opportunities to learn about multicultural Britain outside RE are more limited. The school places great emphasis on everyone in the school treating one another and the wider community with respect. There are good opportunities, both in RE and in other lessons, for pupils to consider profound spiritual and philosophical issues. For example, some writing by Year 8 pupils was exploring the questions, 'Is there life after death?' and 'What makes everything in the universe work?' The school has developed a number of effective healthy eating initiatives; even so the take up of school meals is very low despite the good quality fare on offer. Extra-curricular sports clubs are well supported by pupils. There is a proper concern to promote pupils' safety and emotional and mental health. Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being. The great majority of parents feel that the school is doing a good job for their children.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The inspectors confirm the school's view that the quality of teaching is good and as a result pupils make good progress. The most effective teachers question skilfully to draw out ideas from pupils and involve them actively in their learning. They know their pupils well and establish a strong rapport with them. This leads to a secure environment where pupils can investigate and try out new ideas with confidence. Pupils enjoy learning because many lessons are interesting and keep their attention. This was seen in Years 7 and 8 where pupils were working on a wide variety of well planned activities based on the science fiction programme, 'Dr. Who'. Teachers in most lessons have high expectations and provide challenges, which are readily accepted by the pupils.

By adopting a wide range of methods and using resources such as electronic whiteboards effectively, teachers enable pupils to develop their different styles of learning. Lessons plans are based on the use of careful and thorough assessments. This ensures that work is pitched at the right level for all pupils. Support staff play a significant role in helping and guiding pupils of all abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is planned carefully to meet all pupils' needs. Work set covers a wide range of activities and experiences. The school fulfils its aim to provide equal opportunities for all. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are well provided for. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' basic skills and making the curriculum more creative and enjoyable through well planned links between subjects. This was observed in the range of opportunities provided for the annual 'Activities Week' during the inspection. The personal, social and health education programme pays good attention to the development of safe and healthy living. There are well established links with the community and citizenship lessons prepare pupils well for adult life. Careers education is sound and is developing well as a school priority. Extra-curricular provision is extensive. Increasing numbers of pupils take advantage of the lunchtime and after school sports and musical activities; for example, netball, football and skipping. Day and residential educational visits are popular and further develop pupils' team building skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school judges that it provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils, and inspectors agree. This is a real strength of the school. There is a high level of commitment to pupils' welfare and safety. Child protection arrangements are good and are regularly reviewed, as are risk assessment procedures. Pupils are trained well to carry out their own risk assessments, for example, in science and technology lessons. There are very good measures to deal with bullying, when it occurs. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and monitored, and this results in them having a very good idea of how well they are doing in different subjects and what they need to do to improve. There is a real sense of every individual child being important. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and monitored. Those who need additional help with literacy or numeracy are taught in small groups and teaching assistants are well deployed to support them across a range of subjects. There are very good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to engage in additional projects and to shine.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that leadership and management are good. There is effective leadership provided by the governors, headteacher and the leadership team. They know and understand the areas for development and improvement has been good. There is a good focus on setting pupils targets, monitoring them and putting actions in place to improve standards. Equality of opportunity and inclusion is high on the agenda. All staff in the school have a good understanding of the targets their pupils are working towards and subject leaders have a good knowledge of current standards in their subjects. Teachers have been successful in raising standards. Communication between sections of the school community and the wider community is good. Performance management of staff is well established with lesson observations and other checks, though there are a number of different systems in use and some inconsistency in how they are applied. The allocation of financial resources is based upon sound principles and financial management is good with the headteacher actively seeking to assess value for money in all decisions. For example, extra teaching groups have been created in mathematics to raise standards and there is a clear rationale for allocating learning support. The school's self-evaluation is very good and provides an accurate and honest assessment of the school's successes and areas for development. Progress has been good against challenging targets, and there is commitment from everyone to ongoing development. Hardwick Middle is a good and improving school that demonstrates the capacity to improve even further.

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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	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

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	1	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	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	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

Mrs Arora, Mrs Hobson and I enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for welcoming us. It is clear that many of you are working hard and are doing well. You obviously enjoyed the activities week and did splendidly in some very challenging tasks. We hope that those of you we did not meet because you were away in France, Wales or Norfolk, enjoyed yourselves. You make very good progress with your English all through the school and eventually in mathematics and science. Your attendance is excellent and your behaviour is good. We were impressed with the way boys and girls work and play together. When you are in lessons we like the way you work with each other, the teachers and teaching assistants. We particularly like the way that some of you take a real interest in what you are doing and ask questions so as to make sure you are doing the right thing. Mrs Bennett and all the teachers, teaching assistants and other adults who work in school take very good care of you. You enjoy coming to school though it is a shame not more of you stay for school lunches as they look very tasty! It is good to see so many of you keeping fit in PE and games. We have asked the school to monitor teaching more systematically and to look at ways to help you become more involved in making decisions about the school, particularly through the school council, so that your say is listened to and acted upon. We also feel that you could be more aware of other cultures in this country. We hope you will continue to work hard and do well at Hardwick Middle School.