



# Downsbrook Middle School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 125894  
**LEA** West Sussex  
**Inspection number** 282017  
**Inspection dates** 20 September 2005 to 21 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Janet Gill RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Dominion Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Worthing
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 12		West Sussex BN14 8GD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01903 230 467
<b>Number on roll</b>	469	<b>Fax number</b>	01903 215 049
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Byford

<b>Age group</b> 8 to 12	<b>Inspection dates</b> 20 September 2005 - 21 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 282017
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Downsbrook Middle School is in Worthing, West Sussex. The school has 425 boys and girls, aged from 8 to 12 years. Most pupils are from White British families but several minority ethnic groups are also represented in small numbers. Nearly a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs, but in some year groups this number is higher. Of these pupils, most have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural and emotional difficulties. Attainment on entry is broadly 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 standard of education provided by the school has improved substantially over the past two years and it is now satisfactory. This is also the view of both the school and the parents. The improvement is demonstrated by the test results in 2005, which were in most respects similar to the national picture. This was a major improvement from previous years and meant that these pupils, now in Year 7, caught up after being a long way behind. The pupils in Years 5 and 6, especially those capable of the higher levels, still lag behind, especially in mathematics and science. But it is clear from talking to them and looking at their work that they are also on course to catch up.

The quality of teaching and of the curriculum is satisfactory. The teaching has improved significantly since the appointment of the headteacher and this is having a favourable impact on the achievement of the pupils. The provision for pupils' personal development, the care, support and guidance that they receive and the education of pupils with special educational needs are all strong features of the school. The school is a happy community in which to work and play and a place where there are positive relationships. The headteacher has led the school out of several years of poor performance and it is now run effectively at all levels. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and plan well for the future. The school is well placed to continue improving and it now provides satisfactory value for money.

Grade: 3

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the strategies being used to raise standards in Years 5 and 6, especially with more able pupils in mathematics and science.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The standards reached by the oldest pupils in the school, those in Year 7 who took the National Curriculum tests in May 2005, are average overall. This represents a substantial improvement in the standards achieved compared to the school's performance in previous years. All of the challenging targets set for the school were met, and most were exceeded, although the results in mathematics were weaker than those in English and science. Overall, the progress of the Year 7 pupils has been satisfactory, but their results in the recent tests were largely down to catching up quickly while they were in Year 6 after a period when they had fallen behind other pupils of their age.

Standards of achievement are not yet as high in Years 5 and 6, especially for those pupils capable of reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science. This is because there are gaps in their knowledge resulting from progress in the past that was too slow. The school recognises this and is tackling the problem well, so that the pupils should reach the standards they are capable of by the time of next year's tests.

The large proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also well supported by the school and making good progress. This is because teachers understand and meet their individual needs well. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Grade: 3

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

**Grade: 2**

The school is a happy and harmonious community that enables pupils to make good gains in all aspects of their personal development. Pupils have a good sense of what is right and wrong, and are becoming self-confident young people. They have a good appreciation of their own and others' cultures. Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes and are keen to learn. As one Year 7 pupil stated, "It is fun to learn". Behaviour in class and around the school during the inspection was good and pupils clearly enjoy school life. The level of exclusions, however, remains high, and the school knows that it needs to improve the behaviour of some pupils to bring this down. Pupils feel safe and free from any problems, such as bullying. The school has successfully improved the rate of attendance, which is now broadly average.

Learners contribute well to the school community. The school council is very effective in influencing the day-to-day life in the school. One such example is the part members of the council played in the designing of a new school uniform. In their many fundraising activities for local and national charities, pupils gain a clear understanding of those who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. They have a secure awareness of safety, regular exercise and healthy eating. To reflect the importance the school places on this aspect of provision, it has now set out to gain the Healthy Schools Award. Now that the pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy has been improved, they are prepared adequately for the next stages of their lives. The school evaluated the personal development and well-being of the pupils as satisfactory, but the inspectors believe that it is better than this.

Grade: 2

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly over the past two years and is now satisfactory. This has had a major impact in terms of raising standards and explains why the pupils' overall rates of progress are now satisfactory.

Teachers know their pupils well. Detailed lesson plans are underpinned by teachers' secure command of subjects. They make sure that pupils fully understand what lessons are about and what they will be learning. The use of interactive whiteboards makes many lessons more interesting and helps to motivate pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy

learning. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils showed much interest as they identified acids and alkalis. Individual pupils' needs are identified and work is, in the main, matched to their stages of learning. In the past, the pupils capable of reaching the highest standards were not challenged enough, but this has changed and they are now set demanding work that is helping them to catch up. Teaching assistants work in close cooperation with teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Marking and assessment are sharply focused on giving pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their work. Increased emphasis has been given to keeping a close eye on the progress of pupils, with a view to setting them realistic targets for learning. Those pupils with learning difficulties, together with those who have behavioural and emotional needs, are given good support when in class or withdrawn for small-group work. This enables them to make good progress in terms of their prior attainment and the targets in their individual education plans.

Grade: 3

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory range of activities and experiences and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is adequate provision for the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

The school recognises the need to make the curriculum more relevant for some pupils. This is particularly the case for the higher attaining pupils, who need more work that stretches them, but this is now being successfully dealt with. The curriculum meets the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties well. The extra support they receive enables them to progress and develop their basic skills. The linking of personal, social and health education into the curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' personal development. The school holds the Activemark award for sport and is working towards achieving Healthy Schools status. The curriculum is enriched through trips and visits and a wide range of after-school clubs, which pupils say are "interesting and fun". Curriculum days and events such as science week are very popular. Effective partnerships with local secondary schools improve learning in sports and in French for older pupils.

Grade: 3

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

The school provides good care for pupils, which contributes well to their enjoyment of school. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for when in school. Child protection procedures are effective and staff are alert to signs that any pupils might be distressed or anxious.

Pupils' views are listened to, respected and acted on. Adults in the school provide positive role models and foster good relationships that help pupils feel secure and

settled. The school effectively supports the pupils in understanding how to be healthy through their diet and taking part in sport and physical activities. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and give clear guidance how they can improve. In class, pupils receive much encouragement and ongoing support. Effective personal support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and those with emotional and behavioural needs.

Pupils work in a safe environment, with teachers ensuring their well-being is met. Health and safety checks are undertaken regularly and rigorous risk assessments are made before pupils go on visits. The school judged the quality of the care it provides for pupils as satisfactory but, as shown by the good personal development of the pupils and the level of their enjoyment of school, it is better than this.

Grade: 2

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school have improved significantly and are now strong at all levels. This has been chiefly due to the very clear direction set by the headteacher and her determination to improve all aspects of school life. The school has made significant strides since her appointment two years ago. She has established a new and enthusiastic management team who are working effectively to eliminate underachievement and raise standards. The school's self-evaluation and development planning are good and everyone has a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement, which is leading to effective action. This resulted in the substantial improvement in standards as shown by the 2005 test results. Managers at all levels know that underachievement in Years 5 and 6 still needs to be addressed, but they have put in place effective arrangements for doing so. Strategies to improve the pupils' personal development have also been effective and make a significant contribution to pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and their ability to take on responsibilities.

Parents are positive about the leadership of the head and very pleased about the improvements already made. The governors are supportive. They understand what needs to be done and are fast developing effective approaches to governing the school. All these factors demonstrate that the headteacher, her staff and governors have a strong capacity for improving the school further. The school evaluated the quality of its leadership and management as satisfactory, but in view of the rate at which the school is improving, inspectors believe that it is better than this.

Grade: 2

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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	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>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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	3	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	3	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>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	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>	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	3	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

<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**

3rd October 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for all your help and friendliness shown to myself and the inspection team. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. We are pleased that you are proud of your school and enjoy attending.

These are the things that we are most pleased about:

you work hard in lessons and show great interest in your work

you are well behaved and are polite and helpful to each other and visitors

you like the interesting work your teachers give you and the help they provide in lessons to help you to do well

adults look after you and make sure that you are safe

you really enjoy and appreciate all the extra opportunities that the school gives you, including clubs and visits

you all get on well together and older children are very good at helping younger ones.

There are also some things that we think your school could do to be even better:

we have asked the school to make sure that all pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given work that is hard enough to make sure they do as well as they can.

Thank you again for your help throughout this inspection.

Janet Gill (Lead Inspector)

On behalf of the OFSTED inspection team