



Middleton St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108002
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 287991
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Lynne Davies

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moor Flatts Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Leeds
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire LS10 3SW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2717206
Number on roll (school)	364	Fax number	0113 2703676
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev R Paterson
		Headteacher	Ms Deborah Wood
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of significant disadvantage. The proportion of pupils' who take free school meals is above average. Almost all the pupils are from a White British background. A larger than average percentage of pupils has identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a Healthy School's award and the Stephen Lawrence award for promoting racial equality.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Middleton St Mary's is a good school. Pupils are well cared for and have good attitudes to learning. They are proud of their school and help to make it a happy and safe place. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are polite and cheerful. Pupils are confident learners who work enthusiastically in lessons and are eager to share their learning. The school is organised in 'families': classes from different key stages which work side by side in different areas of the school. These 'families' eat and play together very harmoniously. This innovative approach has improved behaviour and created a strong sense of community. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere, which is evident from the moment you walk through the door. Parents support the school and praise the 'vision' of the headteacher. They value the changes that have been made although a small number of parents feel that they would like more opportunities to express their views. The determination, drive and innovative strategic thinking of the headteacher and the leadership team have driven forward rapid school improvement. Children start school with skills that are very low in comparison with age related expectations. Nursery and Reception classes provide seamless opportunities for children to learn through play, as a result they make good progress from low starting points. By Key Stage 1 standards are low, although progress is stronger than in the recent past and is now good. Although standards in English, mathematics and science remain below average at Key Stage 2, achievement is good, as a result of careful monitoring, rigorous assessment systems, improvements in the curriculum and improved teaching and learning. Raising standards and achievement is the highest priority for the school. Teaching and learning is good overall, although some lessons have lower expectations, less challenge and too few opportunities for independent learning. The curriculum is of good quality. The school has adopted a system of planning which effectively links subjects together. This has brought a freshness to teachers' planning and pupils' learning. Pupils say their lessons are, 'exciting and interesting'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and the development of spiritual awareness particularly strong as seen in the calm, reverent way pupils gather for assemblies in family groups and join in the joyful singing and prayers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with very low levels of knowledge and skills, particularly in relation to speech and language and personal development. From these low starting points pupils are currently making good progress through the Foundation Stage. This good progress now continues in every year group. In the recent past standards and achievement have been below average in science and mathematics at Key Stage 2, but

prompt, effective action has halted the decline and pupils are now on track to achieve challenging targets at the end of this academic year. Progress in mathematics is accelerating as a result of good teaching and all groups of learners are now making good progress. Attainment in Key Stage 1 was well below average last year but careful internal monitoring and focused support have brought this cohort back on track and they are now making good progress. After a period of declining standards the school is moving forward at a rapid pace. Standards which have been consistently low over a number of years are now moving nearer to national averages, which represents good progress from low starting points. Strong leadership and management, rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring of teaching and achievement have all played a part in this improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strengths of the school. Pupils apply for positions of responsibilities in the school and carry out their duties with pride. The active school council has been involved in staff appointments and represent their fellow pupils well. Pupils say they feel safe and parents echo that view. Attendance is satisfactory but has improved over the last few years as a result of incentives that encourage good attendance. Working towards a Healthy Schools Award has greatly increased pupils' awareness of the need to make healthy lifestyle choices, by eating the right food and exercising. The school provides opportunities for both and partnerships with outside organisations have increased provision for sport. Nursery and Reception classes have good outdoor and indoor provision with opportunity to explore, run, ride, climb and learn through play. Personal development in the early years is good. Pupils behave well, they are friendly, polite and welcoming. Challenging behaviour is well managed. Cultural education is effective with pupils gaining knowledge and understanding of the world through projects like the recent Africa week and assembly themes such as 'Fairtrade'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with examples of outstanding practice. In good and outstanding lessons there is plenty of challenge for pupils; they enjoy this as it keeps them 'on their toes'. Discussing their work with partners helps them clarify their thinking, making them more confident about sharing their ideas. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well planned, building on what pupils already know and using assessment to make sure work meets pupils' varying needs. Subjects are linked to make learning more purposeful, for example pupils may use their scientific knowledge and vocabulary about snails to improve their writing of detailed and interesting sentences. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside

class teachers and contribute significantly to pupils' progress. They also give very sensitive support to those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Strong relationships between staff and pupils result in confident learners who are happy to work hard in order to achieve their best. On the few occasions where teaching is satisfactory there are fewer opportunities for pupils to learn independently and there is less challenge for more able pupils. In some lessons pupils find it hard to sustain concentration because the teacher dominates discussion for too long.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' overall achievement. It meets all statutory requirements. There is sufficient emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and increasing opportunities for pupils to apply and develop these basic skills across a range of subjects. This is because the recently introduced system for planning the curriculum through linking subjects together is encouraging pupils to learn in a more creative way, by using all of their skills to find out and record information. French and Spanish lessons have been introduced, helping pupils to develop language skills and learn effectively about other cultures. Provision for teaching about sex and relationships is being reviewed by governors but other aspects of personal health and social education are firmly established, ensuring pupils are prepared to make sensible choices about their personal safety and well-being. Learning is enriched by a good programme of visits and visitors to school such as musicians, storytellers and theatre groups. Productive links with high schools promote sports and performing arts and after school clubs are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents have confidence in the school to care for their children and this confidence is entirely justified. Pupils feel safe because there is clear guidance about how to behave and bullying and racism are not tolerated. Some aspects of pastoral care are exceptional, for example the way the school raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The support provided for the most vulnerable pupils helps them to attend regularly, manage their personal difficulties and access learning more easily. Academic support and guidance is good. Systems for tracking progress are effective and used well by all teachers. Pupils know their learning targets and what they should do to improve. They are confident that help from teachers is always at hand. All statutory requirements for the care, protection, health and safety of pupils are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is an air of purpose in the school. Leaders and managers at all levels want pupils to succeed and there is a very strong and successful focus on raising standards and achievement. Innovative and creative use of staff teams gives opportunities for all

staff to show initiative and leadership. The headteacher has empowered staff and they have risen to the challenge. The leadership team is energetic and enthusiastic and has implemented a range of new approaches and ideas, which are taking the school forward at a rapid pace. Rigorous self-evaluation, which in some areas is a little cautious, is the basis of all planning. There is detailed monitoring of progress and of teaching and learning which is integral to the school's success. Achievement is now good and standards are rising and are now nearer to the national average than at any time in the recent past. Governors are supportive of the school and developing a more challenging role in holding the school to account. The school has a good capacity to continue the momentum of improvement already started.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent at Middleton St Mary's. We saw how hard you are working in your family groups and how well you all get on together. Your behaviour is good and you have worked very hard to make your school healthy, happy and safe. We enjoyed having lunch with you and joining in your assembly.

We have asked your teachers to improve the standards of your work in English, mathematics and science and ensure that all teaching is good to help you achieve your very best.

We think you can work with your teachers to make sure this happens. When everyone works together great things happen.

Well done for all the improvements you have made to your school and good luck with all your future projects, we wish you well.