



# Fulbrook Middle School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109658  
**Local Authority** BEDFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288466  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Alder HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary	<b>School address</b>	Weathercock Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13		Bedfordshire MK17 8NP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 582022
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	316	<b>Fax number</b>	01908 281732
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Rebecca Diamond
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Cardwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
9–13	22–23 November 2006	288466

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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

The school is in the village of Woburn Sands, about nine miles east of Milton Keynes. A significant proportion of pupils live in Milton Keynes, which is outside the local authority, and transfer to secondary schools there at the age of 11. The great majority of pupils are White British. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion eligible for free school meals is low at around 3%. Just over 20% have learning difficulties or disabilities, slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is about average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is an improving school which is providing a good education. The school's leaders ensure that actions are taken to improve pupils' learning. As a result, the standards pupils reach are above average and their achievement is good. This is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6 where progress and standards are good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In Years 7 and 8 standards continue to be above average, though progress is less marked. Progress is good in mathematics and satisfactory in English and in science, where good improvement is evident in Year 7.

The progress made by pupils is the result of good quality teaching and of pupils' very positive attitudes to school and to their work. Pupils are very willing learners and they enjoy school greatly. This is partly because the teaching they receive is stimulating, and also because there is a good curriculum with plenty of opportunities to take part in clubs and other activities. Pupils adopt very healthy practices, such as taking regular exercise and eating healthy food. Relationships are excellent between teachers and pupils and among the pupils themselves. Pupils are well cared for and are safe at school. Those who are vulnerable prosper well. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, but lessons do not often extend the more able pupils sufficiently. There is an impressive range of people pupils can turn to if they need help. Pupils say, for example, if bullying occurs it is quickly dealt with. The combined effect of good teaching, good opportunities to learn and develop interests through the curriculum, and the many opportunities that pupils have to talk through any problems they have, makes their personal development outstanding. It also prepares pupils well for their future economic well-being. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Improvement is being brought about because the school has an accurate view of how well it is doing and a clear commitment to raising standards. The commitment and work of subject leaders is very significant in bringing about improvement. Regular monitoring and evaluation of their work by the headteacher plays an important part in sustaining and supporting this work. However, in the few areas where work is not of a high enough quality or is not effective enough, weaknesses are not tackled with sufficient rigour. As a result improvement, though good overall, is patchy.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the rate of progress which pupils make in Years 5 and 6 is maintained in Years 7 and 8 in English and in Year 8 in science.
- Take rigorous and robust action to remedy the situation where monitoring and evaluation reveal insufficient improvement.
- Ensure that more able pupils receive more work which challenges and extends them, particularly in English.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The standards which pupils reach and their achievement are good. This is principally because of their good learning in Years 5 and 6. The provisional results of the 2006 national tests at Year 6 show that standards have improved markedly compared to 2005. Standards remained above average in mathematics and science but have improved from average to above average in English. Progress is particularly good in mathematics. More able pupils make good progress in mathematics and science but in English their progress is satisfactory. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties is good.

Data from the school shows that in Years 7 and 8 pupils make good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in both English and science. Standards for all three subjects remain above average. Inspectors' observations of pupils' work confirm this picture, and also show that pupils' progress in science at Year 7 is improving and is now good.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Since the last inspection the school has significantly improved the spiritual and cultural experience of the pupils so that these are now good. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding.

Pupils have excellent relationships with adults and each other. Their behaviour is outstanding: they take great interest in their work and involve themselves fully in lessons. Pupils enjoy their education greatly and as a result attendance is good.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community of the school and the local area. They have a wide variety of opportunities to take responsibility, as in their roles as peer counsellors, paired reading workers, sports leaders and escorting new pupils around the school on visitors' days. They participate in many charitable activities and prepare well for their future economic well-being. They take advantage of the opportunities to lead a healthy life style. The impact of this was seen in the writing of a pupil who, when considering life as a slave, commented that they 'did not get any healthy food'. The pupils are developing into mature well-rounded individuals.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with examples of outstanding practice seen. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. Decisions about where each pupil should sit in class and with whom they should work are well-judged. They help to create an environment in which the pupils learn well. A variety of very good resources is used

combined with a wide range of lively teaching approaches. These motivate and engage the pupils by adding interest to the work. Lessons proceed at a good pace.

There are some areas of inconsistency, however. In a small minority of lessons the learning objectives are vague and pupils are not always clear about what they are supposed to achieve. Questions are rarely used to test or develop pupils' understanding so that changes to approach can be made when necessary. The quality of marking is too inconsistent.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and complies with all statutory requirements. The excellent range of clubs, educational visits and visitors to the school contribute much to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. The curriculum successfully promotes careers education as well as helping pupils to be aware of healthy lifestyles, the dangers of drug abuse, how to be safe and how to be a good citizen. There is good development, across a range of subjects, of pupils' numeracy and computer skills, and of their understanding of the world through studying, for example the different cultures of people in Britain. Literacy is a weaker feature and its development across the curriculum is not given enough emphasis.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's good care and guidance ensure that the pupils thrive and are happy. They say they have confidence in the support available if they feel at risk, for example, from bullying. Procedures are secure for ensuring pupils' health and safety and safeguarding their welfare. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure thorough vetting procedures are carried out when employing new staff. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good but learning targets for them often lack precision. Assessment data are used effectively to track the progress of pupils in English in Years 5 and 6 and in, mathematics and science across the school. There are suitable strategies to identify and help pupils who fall behind. Pupils confirmed that they are becoming more aware of their learning targets and feel they receive generally good guidance on how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The progress made on the issues raised at the last inspection is good. The headteacher has attracted some highly effective teachers to leadership positions where they are having a clear impact on pupils' learning. As a result, the school is improving, though there are areas of inconsistency. This is particularly the case with the leadership of subjects. While good overall, it varies from

the outstanding to the barely adequate. Tackling areas where leadership is less effective is insufficiently robust.

Good systems are in place for reviewing the school's work and the headteacher and the governors are well aware of strengths and weaknesses. The monitoring of teaching quality is frequent and evaluations are generally accurate. Good strategies are in place to develop further the quality of teaching, such as opportunities to observe others teach in other local schools, though opportunities to observe outstanding teaching within the school are not used sufficiently. Resources are well chosen and used to create stimulating lessons. The use of the recently purchased interactive whiteboards is good and leads to some lively and stimulating teaching.

Developments in the use of data for setting targets for each pupil and checking the progress they make are good. These result in any underachievement being followed up. However, the effective use of data is not yet universal and is absent in English in Years 7 and 8. Overall, the analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects is very good and used to ensure weaknesses are improved through further teaching.

The school's planning for improvement is of inconsistent quality. While some areas for development have very clear and detailed plans, a minority have not and it is therefore not easy for leaders to know if the right steps are being taken at a timely enough rate. Nevertheless, clear improvement is being made in English (for Years 5 and 6) and in mathematics and science across the school. The capacity for further improvement is good.

The governing body is well informed about the school and provides some challenge. However, there is not a close enough scrutiny of the progress of the school's improvement plans. The school spends its budget wisely, using it to good effect to improve teaching and learning. Value for money is good.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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	3
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**

24 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Fulbrook Middle School, Weathercock Lane, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 8NP

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful during our inspection. We met and spoke to quite a number of you when we visited. Your comments were very useful.

Your school is good. We saw many good lessons and were very impressed by your behaviour and how enthusiastic you are about your work. Your teachers help you to be enthusiastic because a lot of lessons are lively, and in some you learn a lot in a fun way. Many of you have responsibilities, for example, being on the school council or helping others with their reading. There is a good number of clubs and you have interesting visitors to come and talk to you. All these things help you to enjoy school and encourage you to attend regularly. You make good progress in your work, especially in Years 5 and 6.

We noticed how well you are cared for in school. There are a lot of people you can talk to if you have a problem. Your teachers keep a good check on how well you are doing and will let you know if you are falling behind and give you help.

We have given your school some areas to work on to get better still. These are to make sure that you make as good progress in Years 7 and 8 as you do in Years 5 and 6; that the school makes sure that the improvements it makes are understood and acted on by everyone, and that those of you who can benefit from more challenging work, are given more to do.

Best wishes for your future

Alan Alder HMI