



Daubeney Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109679
Local Authority BEDFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 288472
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Andrew McDowall HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary	School address	Orchard Street
School category	Community		Kempston
Age range of pupils	9–13		Bedfordshire MK42 7PS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01234 400111
Number on roll (school)	501	Fax number	01234 400112
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ken Deveson
		Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Chopping / Mrs. Sue Evans
Date of previous school inspection	30 May 2001		

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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

This is a larger than average sized middle school. The school serves an area where levels of social deprivation are above average. There are well above average numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a small number of these at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There is special provision at the school for pupils with Dyslexia. At the time of the inspection, the school was seeking to appoint a new headteacher; the two deputy headteachers were sharing the responsibility for leading the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The strengths lie in the way the school enables the pupils to make good gains in their personal development and the good quality of care it provides. Many of the dyslexic pupils make outstanding progress and some of the work in art and music is of a very high standard.

Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school and reach standards that are broadly in line with those reached nationally. However, rates of progress fluctuate considerably from year to year and from group to group. The school ensures that pupils make good progress in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make good progress overall. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress in English but do not do as well as they should in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Standards in reading are below what they should be in Years 7 and 8 and girls generally do better than boys.

The school gives a high priority to the pastoral care it provides. This is effective in enabling the pupils to develop good attitudes to learning and the great majority of them behave well and say they enjoy school. Pupils understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe. Good procedures for early intervention are very successful in reducing exclusions and helping pupils to improve the way in which they manage their own behaviour. Attendance is good.

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some of the teaching is outstanding but cannot be judged to be good overall because it is too variable. Not all teachers implement key aspects of the school's assessment and behaviour management policies consistently and expectations are sometimes too low. Often the work set in lessons does not stretch the more able pupils in each group.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff and a common commitment to improve. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Systems for self-evaluation and governance are satisfactory but improvement planning lacks precision regarding both what the school needs to do to improve and how it will measure its success. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. It offers satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set targets that are more challenging for pupils, and use the assessment information the school has more effectively to ensure all pupils are stretched in lessons and make good progress.
- Raise standards in reading and raise the expectations of what minority ethnic pupils can achieve in mathematics.
- Make improvement planning more precise and rigorous so that the school is clear about what it is that it hopes to achieve and how it will measure its own success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 6 have gradually improved in recent years and are now broadly in line with those reached nationally. Standards in Year 8 are also satisfactory and meet expectations. The school has been particularly successful in raising standards in mathematics from a position where they were well below average three years ago. Standards of reading in Years 7 and 8 are below average and, in general, more girls than boys read well and reach the higher levels. Some of the targets the school sets itself are not challenging enough and this depresses expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school, but this generally satisfactory picture hides some highs and lows. Pupils make good progress in science as do those with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, there is considerable variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school is increasingly aware of these differences and is taking action to bring about improvement. During their first two years at the school two thirds of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress in English, but this is not the case in mathematics, where over half of them make inadequate progress. School data indicates that progress in Years 7 and 8 varies considerably from year to year. This fluctuation in performance, along with the varying rates of progress of different groups of pupils, explains why achievement and standards are satisfactory and not good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one parent said, 'We are pleased with the ethos of personal responsibility and respect which pupils show for others.' Pupils enjoy the opportunities the school provides and this is reflected in their regular attendance. Most pupils behave well most of the time. Through the school council and other voluntary activities, the pupils contribute well to school life. They are sensitive to the needs of others, both locally and in the wider world, and regularly raise considerable sums of money for good causes. For example, over fifty Christmas shoeboxes were sent to deprived children in other countries, highlighting pupils' understanding of responsible global citizenship. Pupils also make a significant contribution to the local community, through high quality musical events. The school does much to promote healthy lifestyles. This is supported by the provision of two hours of physical education a week. Pupils understand the need for a healthy diet but a number of pupils choose to eat unhealthy food in their packed lunches, despite improvements to school meals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning in the school ranges from outstanding to inadequate, but is satisfactory overall. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are pleasant and relaxed. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is good and they prepare lessons carefully. In the outstanding lessons pupils are inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject, they are very clear about what they need to do and are confident of succeeding. Planning in these lessons includes appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities, ensuring all pupils learn well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively and make good progress but, frequently, the more able pupils in each group are not given sufficiently challenging work. Sometimes teachers spend too long explaining without checking pupils' understanding. Very occasionally, behaviour management is poor and this results in disrupted lessons where the pupils make little progress.

Pupils' work is regularly marked but the quality of marking is variable. Although some teachers use diagnostic assessment, this is not consistently used across or within departments. Consequently, pupils are not always given clear guidance on how to improve their work. In some classes, pupils are able to assess their work against national criteria but again this is not a consistent practice. Homework is used appropriately to reinforce pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements and pupils' needs. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils' musical and artistic development. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good, enabling many to reach nationally expected levels of attainment. In addition to traditional subjects, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught French and benefit from good specialist provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and design technology. The school regularly reviews its provision to meet the needs of all pupils. However, it has not yet ensured that all pupils from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress in all subjects, or that provision for more able pupils is appropriate to their needs. Continuity of curriculum planning, with nearby first and upper schools, is effective and this ensures the pupils do not repeat work. The satisfactory progress pupils make in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepares them well for the next school and later life.

The programme for citizenship and personal development is satisfactory and contains all the expected aspects. The pupils enjoy and appreciate the wide and varied programme of extra-curricular and sporting activities provided by the school. Many pupils learn to play instruments and regularly take part in performances both in school

and in the wider community. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visiting speakers and by the programme of trips out of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and teachers are highly committed to the welfare of each individual pupil. Arrangements for child protection are in place and careful attention is paid to health and safety. Teachers know pupils well, and provide effective pastoral support. This encourages pupils to adopt positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, vulnerable pupils and those with behavioural needs receive very good support, as do pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The school's pupil progress tracking systems, however, are not always used consistently or effectively and this explains why some pupils make only satisfactory progress. Pupils understand their targets in subjects such as science but they are less clear in other areas. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise of the school. The school ensures they are well informed about their children's progress and links with other schools and external agencies are strong.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two acting headteachers have undertaken a thorough re-evaluation of the work of the school and self-evaluation is now accurate. The day-to-day management of the school is good.

The school has satisfactory systems to check on how well it is doing. These have been effective in bringing about improvement in some areas. The predictions the school sets for individual pupils should be more challenging and the school is not systematic enough in the way it evaluates whether all pupils are making enough progress. Consequently, action to bring about improvement is sometimes too slow. Subject leaders have a sound understanding of the work in their areas of responsibility. They provide satisfactory support for colleagues and work effectively in staff groups to review planning and assess the pupils' levels of attainment.

The school has identified the right priorities to bring about improvement, but its improvement plans are not sufficiently well defined. The plans do not clearly state what it is the school is aiming to achieve or how it intends to measure how successful it has been. The governors are supportive of the school and have a satisfactory committee structure to oversee the work of the school. They are not, however, sufficiently involved in the long term planning for the school.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

2 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Daubeney Middle School, Orchard Street, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 7PS

Can I first of all offer my thanks to you all for the reception we received at your school and for the way many of you spoke to us about your work and what you feel about school.

We think your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education, with some good features. The good things are to do with the way you develop as people during your time at school and the way the staff provide good care and guidance to keep you safe and help you to manage your lives well. Most of you behave well in school and you have good attitudes to your work. However, we feel some of you could achieve more and make more healthy choices regarding the food you bring to school at lunchtimes. The quality of teaching you receive is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes outstanding and your work in music and art is very good.

There are three things we have asked the school to do improve further. The first is to set more challenging targets for you all and make sure the work you are given is at the right level.

Secondly, we have asked the school to raise the standards of your reading and raise expectations of what those of you from minority ethnic groups can achieve in mathematics. Finally, we have suggested school leaders sharpen up the way plans for improvement are written, so that the school is clear about what it is that it hopes to achieve and how it will measure its own success.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall

Her Majesty's Inspector