

Dedworth Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110072
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	288583
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Lauren Ovenden HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruth Norris
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Muir
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Smiths Lane Windsor SL4 5PE
Telephone number	01753 860561
Fax number	01753 831243

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is located in an area of average levels of social deprivation, although a significant number of pupils are from families that are relatively less affluent. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Almost one quarter of pupils are of Black and minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and varies significantly across different year groups. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average. One in ten pupils have a parent or carer serving in the armed forces. The school provides a number of after school opportunities as an 'extended school'. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2006. The deputy headteacher has been absent from school for a prolonged period, due to ill health.

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. The school was removed from the category of Special Measures two years ago. Subsequently, it has made satisfactory progress and standards have risen. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From slightly below average starting points, they make satisfactory progress although standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in mathematics and English. The progress made in different year groups is inconsistent, however by the end of Year 8 pupils achieve close to expected levels. Teaching and learning is satisfactory but there is significant variation in the quality across the school and much is satisfactory rather than good or better, resulting in pupils making variable progress over time. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to their peers because there is robust monitoring of individual progress and good levels of support.

This is a caring school where every pupil is known and valued. The teachers and support staff provide good levels of care and prioritise the welfare of their pupils. As a consequence, pupils' personal development and well-being is good. They have good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the life of the school, through the school council and as prefects. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, with many taking part in a good range of extra-curricular activities and eating healthily. Pupils enjoy school, and are keen to participate in lessons. The academic guidance given to pupils is variable. Whilst many pupils can describe their targets in English, mathematics and science, they are less clear about how they can improve their work because marking is not always helpful. The tracking of individual pupils' progress is good and enables the school to provide additional support where needed. However, the school does not currently analyse the performance of different groups of learners and so does not always have a clear picture of the effectiveness of its provision.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has quickly established clear expectations that have led to improvements in pupil behaviour. There is a clear, emerging vision for the school which builds on its extended school status to support the local community. The school works well with a range of partners to support pupils' achievement and well-being. The temporarily enlarged senior leadership team has successfully minimised the impact of the long-term absence of the deputy headteacher. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses as a consequence of its satisfactory monitoring. However, monitoring processes are not always consistent across the school. The evaluation of its work at whole school level is inadequate because it is not sufficiently rigorous and as a consequence, strategies for improvement are not always focused sharply enough to accelerate the pace of progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Improve the proportion of good or better teaching, through the sharing of effective practice in order that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Increase the consistency of monitoring across the school and improve whole school evaluation to assess the impact of the schools' work on pupil achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are average in science and below average in mathematics and English. An increasing proportion of pupils achieve expected levels by the time they leave the school. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given their starting points and capabilities. The rate of progress is faster in Year 6 and Year 8 than in the other two years. The rate of progress of different groups of pupils varies; for example, boys do not progress as quickly as girls in their writing at Key Stage 2 and girls do not progress as quickly as boys in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to their peers as a consequence of good levels of support and appropriate provision.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Behaviour has improved because of regular monitoring and it is now good. Pupils report that they feel safe at school, and recognise that if they have any concerns these will be addressed quickly. They participate well in the life of the school through the school council and most pupils in Year 8 are prefects, who take on responsibility well. Some help to lead sports activities at local first schools. They are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being because of their satisfactory achievement in literacy and numeracy. Attendance is good. Pupils are punctual, polite and considerate. Pupils' spiritual development is good as a result of thoughtful assemblies and good links with local clergy. Pupils' cultural, moral and social development are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but it is inconsistent. There is some good practice within the school which is not shared well enough.

Lessons are well planned with a good variety of activities. Teachers ask well chosen questions to challenge the pupils and make them think. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used to stimulate pupils' interest and to support pupils' learning. Good relationships generate a productive working atmosphere. Teaching assistants work well with pupils and help them to understand the work. However, the work is not always well matched to the needs of all the pupils, with some of them finding the work too difficult and some of them finding it too easy. Teachers usually explain to the pupils what they should be achieving by end of the lessons. Sometimes this is not made clear enough and the pupils have difficulty in understanding exactly what it is they should be able to do. Teachers do not check the progress of individual pupils frequently enough within lessons. Marking does not also give pupils a clear idea of how they can improve their work. In contrast, in an outstanding lesson in science, each pupil knew exactly what they were expected to achieve, ways of checking how well they had progressed, and a clear idea of what they needed to do to achieve the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection and supports pupils' learning effectively in other subjects. Some aspects of literacy are addressed well across the curriculum. For example, stressing key words in topics is having a positive impact on progress in lessons. The use of numeracy across the curriculum is improving, with good progress seen in subjects such as science and physical education.

The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of clubs both before and after the school day, and in the school holidays. Many pupils participate in these and benefit greatly from them. There is evidence that early morning 'booster' classes are having a good impact on progress. This extended curriculum adds significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of school and contributes greatly to their good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils is satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils' individual needs are well provided for through well targeted provision. Those who might be at risk are identified quickly and effective arrangements implemented to keep them engaged in learning, for example, through additional mentoring. There are good links with first and upper schools to ensure smooth transition. Robust tracking arrangements are in place to monitor pupil behaviour and attendance.

There is good tracking of pupils' academic progress to inform them of their levels in English, mathematics and science. This information is used well to identify additional support that is required outside the lessons; however, it does not always inform lesson planning so that the tasks match all pupils' learning needs. Pupils have good knowledge of how to improve their work in some areas, but it is inconsistent across the school. The school does not currently track the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure that they are achieving.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and the school management team have established a good climate for learning and a clear focus on raising achievement. Subject self-evaluations and the monitoring of pupils' work have led to satisfactory development planning. Overall, the school has an adequate understanding of itself and recognises its strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body are well informed and provide good support.

Teaching and learning is being monitored, with a view to improving the standards pupils attain. There is some evidence of teaching being improved, but the monitoring is not focused sharply enough to enable school leaders to bring about fast and consistent improvement. Whole school evaluation of monitoring is underdeveloped, and as a consequence, its impact on pupil progress is inconsistent and actions for improvement not always sharply focused.

Issues identified at the time of the last inspection have generally been addressed, and the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Annex A

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	3

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	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	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?	3

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.

Annex A

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	4
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. You are very polite and, as visitors, we felt welcomed because you took the time to say hello on the corridors.

We think that the school has improved since the last inspection and it is a satisfactory school. The teachers and other staff take good care of you and make it a friendly place to work. It was good to hear that you now feel safe in school, that behaviour has improved and that you enjoy your lessons. There are good relationships between you and with your teachers. Many of you make the most of the good opportunities to take part in extra activities outside normal school hours, and this helps you in both your learning and to develop as individuals. It is pleasing to see that many of you help to make the school a more caring place, for example, as prefects. Your teachers have a good understanding of how well each of you are doing, and keep track of your work.

To improve further, we have asked the school to help you achieve more, particularly in maths and English. We also suggested that the school look at how they can take ideas from the best lessons to improve your learning. School leaders will be looking carefully at what the school does and how it affects your learning. We may be visiting the school again to see how well it is making progress.

You can help too, by maintaining good levels of attendance and behaviour, so that everyone in your lessons can learn.

Best wishes for the future,

Lauren Ovenden HMILead inspector