



# Middlefield Community Primary School

Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110716  
**Local Authority** CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288751  
**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Gillian Smith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Andrew Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Eynesbury, St Neots
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Cambridgeshire PE19 2QE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 375270
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	197	<b>Fax number</b>	01480 375274
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Duley
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susannah Connell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2002		

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<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5–6 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288751
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools. The socio-economic circumstances of most pupils are average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups, those eligible for free school meals and those for whom English is an additional language are below the national average. This is also the case for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need.

The headteacher and the assistant headteacher joined the school ten months and two months before the inspection respectively.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education and this judgement matches the school's view of its own effectiveness. The recently appointed headteacher is working hard to make this school a better place for the pupils and staff. She has instigated a thorough review of provision and this accurate self-evaluation has enabled her to pinpoint the school's strengths, along with several areas for development. The headteacher is ably supported by the newly appointed assistant headteacher and good use is made of support from the local authority. The headteacher's outstanding leadership is now enabling the school to improve rapidly.

The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Reception Class with average skills and particularly good teaching helps them to make rapid progress. The overall achievement of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 is satisfactory. These pupils make at least satisfactory progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2006, the standard of pupils' work at the end of Year 6 was above average and predictions for 2007 indicate that this will continue. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although there are examples of good, and some outstanding, practice throughout the school, not all teachers are confident about being able to identify the level at which individual pupils are working. This inhibits their ability to match work to pupils' needs during lessons and thus depresses their progress and achievement. In addition, teachers vary in the extent to which they provide pupils with specific targets for improvement and in the quality of their feedback when marking pupils' work. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a wide range of trips and visits.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and her assistant share a determination to improve and are focusing ever more sharply on the promotion of pupils' learning and achievement. The headteacher has introduced rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' progress and these are leading to improvements in the academic guidance provided. It is also supporting the early identification of underachieving pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' work is now regularly assessed but analysis of the information gained is restricted to the senior leadership team. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in evaluating pupils' performance and this is hampering their ability to raise standards. Governors provide satisfactory support and the headteacher is encouraging them to challenge, as well as support, the work of the school. The school's successful record in bringing about change and in strengthening teamwork reflects the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their behaviour. They enjoy coming to school and good pastoral care helps them to feel safe and happy. They make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school and to the wider community but there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and become more self-reliant. Pupils speak enthusiastically about educational trips and visitors and their good basic skills prepare them well for the next step in their education.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that new initiatives to support academic guidance are implemented by all staff, including a consistent approach to marking.
- Raise standards further by ensuring that teachers are able to determine accurately the level of pupils' work and provide appropriate challenge for all pupils during lessons.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring standards and progress within their area of responsibility.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and play a more active role in the life of the school and the community.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children enter the school with standards that are typical for their age. Very good provision helps them to make strong progress and pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are above average in every area of learning. Progress in Years 1 and 2, however, slows and standards at the end of Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. In order to improve pupils' progress, the time spent on these basic skills was recently increased and effective steps taken to strengthen teaching in Years 1 and 2.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen steadily over the last five years. In 2006, overall standards were above average, with particular strengths in English and science. The school met all its targets. Current assessments for 2007 indicate that this situation will continue. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory and there are no significant variations in the progress made by pupils of differing abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave very well. They are willing workers and collaborate well. Some of the older pupils, however, are too passive during lessons and are reluctant to participate in class discussions. Younger pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 are more confident and animated. Pupils of all ages are keen to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle and many participate in the wide range of additional sporting activities. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' co-operative attitudes, coupled with their good basic skills in literacy and numeracy equip them well for the next stage of education.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their contribution to the school and local community is satisfactory. Pupils raise funds for charities and voice their views through the newly energised school council. There are, however, relatively few opportunities for pupils to assume responsibility and influence everyday life within the school and the wider community.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Across the school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and working relationships are warm and supportive. Good teaching is characterised by work that is closely matched to pupils' needs, and learning is brought to life. There are particular strengths in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, learning is increasingly centred around play activities which is leading to improvement in learning. Recent improvements to resources have improved the quality of education provided and boosted pupils' enjoyment. Improved assessment procedures are enabling the timely identification and support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Skilled teaching assistants provide good support and pupils of all abilities make similar progress.

The extent to which teachers are using the newly generated analyses of pupils' performance varies. The ensuing lack of challenge in some lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6, is hindering pupils' achievement. In addition, not all teachers are able to identify the level of pupils' work and there is too much variability regarding the provision of clear targets for improvement and the marking of pupils' work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all learners well, including those from minority ethnic groups. The recently extended range of additional clubs and activities, coupled with interesting trips and visitors, promotes pupils' enjoyment and personal development well. The school also works effectively with others and boosts provision through the involvement of external specialists in, for example, drama and football.

The school has recently improved the curriculum for children who have moved from Reception to Year 1..It now involves more play-based activities and additional time is dedicated to the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Afternoon playtime in Key Stage 2 has been abolished and the amount of teaching time increased to meet national recommendations. Early indications are that these changes are contributing to improvements in the standard of pupils' work in English and mathematics.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Parents' confidence in the quality of care provided for their children is well-founded. Pupils feel safe and this makes a strong contribution to their personal development and achievement. Close links with specialist agencies ensure that pupils receive appropriate guidance and support whenever the need arises. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are secure and familiar to all adults.

The standard of educational guidance provided is satisfactory. Group targets for improvement were introduced at the start of the current school year and pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with their use. These are, however, still early days and the extent to which these targets are used to raise standards varies between classes. In addition, teachers do not always tell pupils how they can improve their work. The headteacher's meticulous analysis of pupils' progress is leading to the timely identification and support of any pupils who are at risk of underachievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and they underpin pupils' sound progress and achievement.

The recently appointed headteacher is an outstanding leader and she enjoys the overwhelming support of parents and pupils. She has rapidly set about analysing the work of the school and her evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is clear and accurate. Improved information about standards and achievement is helping most of the teachers to raise the quality of education and provide additional support for nominated pupils. The headteacher is inspiring a shared sense of common purpose among her staff. She is encouraging governors to challenge, as well as support, the school and is providing the information they need to do so. In fact, a policy outlining the purpose and frequency of governor visits is to be discussed at their next meeting.

The headteacher and her newly appointed assistant head form a good team and there is a clear and successful focus on raising standards, especially in English. Other subject leaders, however, do not analyse pupils' performance within their subject first hand and this is limiting their understanding of how to raise standards. The school day runs smoothly. Staff and resources are deployed efficiently to meet the school's aims. The school currently gives satisfactory value for money. The school has demonstrated that it is keen to learn from external professionals and from schools that demonstrate outstanding practice. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion by, for example, working well with external agencies and fostering pupils' involvement in sporting events.

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## 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>	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
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	3
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>	3
<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>	3

<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>	3
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	3
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

7 March 2007

Dear Children

Middlefield Community Primary School, Andrew Road, Eynesbury, PE19 2QE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school earlier this week. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say about the school and your work. We are pleased you enjoy school and were impressed by your very good behaviour and willingness to complete the work set during your lessons. We agree that your teachers take good care of you and that the school provides you with plenty of opportunities to take part in sport and other activities.

What is good about your school.

- Your headteacher leads the school very well and is working hard to make it even better.
- You develop into polite and friendly young people.
- The standard of your work in Year 6 is better than in many other schools, especially in English and science.
- Your school works well with outside organisations and provides interesting trips and visits.

There are a few things your teachers could do to improve your school further.

- Help you to make more progress by telling you exactly how you can improve your work and by always providing good feedback when they mark it.
- Make sure they can pinpoint the level at which you are working and provide tasks that suit the ability of everyone in your class.
- Involve the teachers who are responsible for subjects such as mathematics and science, in monitoring the standard of your work and the progress you are making.
- Provide more opportunities for you to come up with ideas of your own and encourage you to play a more active role within your school and the local community.

Once again, thank you for your friendly welcome. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Smith (Lead inspector)