

Middleton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112654
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	289365
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2007
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Coveney
Headteacher	Mrs S l'Anson
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Main Street Middleton-by-Wirksworth Matlock Derbyshire DE4 4LQ
Telephone number	01629 822236
Fax number	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving the local area. The number of pupils on roll has been steadily increasing since 1999 but is now stable. All pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils receiving a free school meal is below the national average. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is above average but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is typical for children at this age but a significant number show limited speech and language development. Pupils are taught in one of three mixed-age classes. The school was awarded the Activemark in 2007 in acknowledgement of the standard and range of sports available. The school's Basic Skills Award was renewed in 2006.

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 a good school that has worked hard over recent years to ensure that pupils achieve well. Having recognised that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were not as good as they should be and pupils were not achieving as well as they could, staff took decisive action and implemented a number of initiatives for improvement. Following this period of underachievement, standards this year are well above average and, based on attainment when they were in Year 2, the current Year 6 pupils have achieved way beyond the level that is expected nationally. Overall, achievement is good.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well developed. Even the youngest pupils show a depth of understanding beyond their years in their conversation and creative writing. Excellent moral and social development is reflected in the exceptional behaviour in class and around school and in the way that pupils care for each other, creating a strong sense of a big family. Parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children and comment very favourably. The excellent level of enjoyment that pupils find in coming to school is evident in class, at break times and in their conversation. They say they feel safe and enjoy everything that the school does for them. Attendance is satisfactory with the majority of absence being due to parents taking children on holiday during term time, even though staff strongly discourage this. Pupils are academically, personally and socially well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Provision in the Foundation Stage was criticised at the time of the previous inspection. There has been a significant improvement since then and provision and standards are now good. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The curriculum is good. It is well organised and effective in meeting the learning needs of the majority of pupils in mixed-age classes. The level of curriculum enrichment, through visits, visitors and extra activities is excellent. The school shows outstanding levels of personal care for pupils. Assessment procedures introduced to raise pupils' achievement have been effective, but targets set are mainly for the whole class. With the wide age and ability range in classes, the time is now right to develop these further, so that pupils have individual or small group targets to help them with their own learning.

Leadership and management are good. Being a small school, the staff have found that the most effective way to improve provision and raise standards is for all to work in close collaboration with a common goal. The staff and governors have successfully supported the headteacher in the drive for improvement. Effective links with other schools and the local authority have been established. Issues raised at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed fully. School self-evaluation is good. The headteacher, staff and governors work effectively together to identify accurately any weaker areas and have achieved significant improvement. The school therefore has a good capacity to improve even more in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that initiatives that have led to the recent significant improvement in standards and pupils' achievement become embedded into practice to sustain better achievement in the future.
- Further develop the target-setting procedures to make targets more directed to individuals or small groups of pupils to inform them better of their own next steps for learning and to involve them more in assessing their own achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and by the time they move into Year 1, the majority have attained the goals nationally expected of them. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development and overcome their weaknesses in language skills. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, continue to achieve well at Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading and writing and this year it is well above average in mathematics. Achievement at Key Stage 2 was disappointing between 2004 and 2006 and standards were below average. Positive and effective action following the school's initial concern has resulted in significant improvement. Indications are that test results this year will show that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average and that these pupils have achieved exceptionally well since the end of Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and feel safe there. They feel cared for and valued by the adults working with them. This is reflected in the way that they care for each other. They make a good contribution to life in school through the school council, listening to others read and looking after each other during break times. They find school interesting and appreciate the very wide range of activities that encourage their interest and enjoyment. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle, making wise choices in terms of their diet and taking full advantage of activities that help them stay physically fit. Through involvement in activities outside school and charity fund raising, pupils contribute well to the local and wider communities. They have a very good understanding of why they are raising money for those less fortunate. Good core skills in literacy, numeracy and the use of computers, together with excellent personal and social development, means they are well prepared for their next steps in learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is based on excellent relationships and mutual respect between pupils and adults. Behaviour is extremely well managed so teachers are able to focus on pupils' learning. Teachers are careful to include all pupils during class teaching time and, when asking questions, effectively make sure all are fully involved. Teachers give just praise when deserved. Pupils develop extremely positive attitudes to learning in response to these encouraging aspects of teaching. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the wide range of age and ability in their classes. In some lessons though, there is further scope to ensure that older and more able pupils are challenged more so that they achieve as well as they can. Otherwise, teachers use assessment and tracking data well to move pupils on at a good pace. Teaching assistants contribute positively to supporting groups of pupils. They are deployed effectively and know the pupils well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well to meet the learning needs of all pupils as they move through the mixed-age classes. Since the previous inspection, careful thought has gone into considering the needs of children in the Foundation Stage and their curriculum fully meets recommendations. Although there has been an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, the school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum, with a good level of attention paid to other subjects. The school is developing the provision for gifted and talented pupils and those capable of doing harder work. Personal, social and health education is an important aspect of the curriculum and effectively supports pupils' personal development. There are good links between literacy and information and communication technology with other subjects so pupils are able to improve their writing and computer skills in other subjects. Curriculum enrichment is excellent through a wide range of opportunities for outdoor education, which the school plans to develop further, and through visits, visitors, themed weeks and interesting links between subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall care, guidance and support are good. The school shows excellent personal care for pupils. All adults are fully committed to pupils' well-being. Health and safety and child protection procedures are fully in place and staff vigilant. All adults coming into contact with pupils are appropriately checked. The school maintains good contacts with external agencies and other schools to ensure pupils are well guided and supported as appropriate. There are effective procedures in place to monitor pupils' academic progress. Pupils understand the class targets to be achieved and have some knowledge of how to reach the next level through the targets and the marking of their work. Targets are not yet individual or for small groups of pupils. Bearing in mind the wide range of age and ability in each class, targets do not sufficiently inform individual or small groups of pupils of the next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management have been central to the significant improvement seen in pupils' achievement and standards this year. The staff work well together to support the headteacher in leading the school and share her drive for improvement. All teachers, including the headteacher, carry a significant level of subject responsibility and have good opportunities to contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement. They lead development in their own subjects effectively and maintain good links with other schools in order to broaden their own horizons. Consequently, there is a clear view for future development. Effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance have helped pupils to reach their challenging targets this year. Governors contribute to the work of the school well. They play an effective supporting role and hold it to account for its performance. They have a good knowledge of the school's work, which enables them to play an important role in the evaluation of its performance and in the strategic planning of priorities for improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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.

Annex A

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

16 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Middleton Community Primary School, Middleton-by-Wirksworth, DE4 4LQ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I was very impressed to see how hard you are all working to achieve the level of improvement seen this year. There are a lot of things that have contributed. You behave extremely well so that you can all enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. I was impressed by how everyone gets on well together and, as some of your parents wrote, the school is like a big family. The headteacher and other adults working at school have tried very hard to improve your progress so that you can achieve higher standards. With your cooperation this has happened this year and the school is looking forward to maintaining this over the next few years and beyond.

However, there are some things still to do to make sure this happens. I have asked the headteacher, other teachers and the governors to make sure that this recent improvement is maintained in the future. This is so that good progress continues to be a part of life at Middleton Primary School. I have also asked them to develop how they set targets with you, so that targets are set for individual pupils or small groups rather than whole classes. This should help you all understand the next steps in your own learning better.

I am sure that with your continued cooperation the school will go from strength to strength. I wish you all well in the future.

With best wishes

David Speakman (Inspector)