



Hamworthy Middle School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 113704
Local Authority Poole
Inspection number 289698
Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary	School address	Ashmore Crescent
School category	Community		Hamworthy
Age range of pupils	8–12		Poole BH15 4DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 677870
Number on roll (school)	325	Fax number	01202 660151
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	George Ollett
		Headteacher	Angie Best
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002		

Age group 8–12	Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006	Inspection number 289698
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Attainment on entry is broadly average, although the school takes in a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The area is one of below average socio-economic circumstances. The school has suffered from several temporary arrangements of staff over the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and has particular strengths in the way that it cares for pupils and ensures their good personal development. This is an improving school although there is still work to do, for example to make learning more stimulating and to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should in all subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has done much to improve the school and also to improve pupils' behaviour despite a long period of staffing difficulties. It now provides an orderly and happy atmosphere in which pupils can prosper. Senior staff also provide strong leadership and there is a particular strength in the way that science is led, leading to good results in the subject. The impact of most subject leaders, however, is weak because monitoring of teaching quality and standards is not consistent enough. A newly formed senior management team is in place, and the governors' contribution to the school's work is gradually becoming more incisive.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. In English, standards in reading and writing are in line with expectations overall, although boys' skills in English are noticeably weaker than the girls, particularly in reading. There are weaknesses in pupils' speaking skills throughout the school. Staff are doing their best to address this but it is still too early to judge the success of the initiatives being tried. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are undeveloped and pupils do not use computers enough in other lessons. Good teaching and practical work in science enables pupils to do really well and standards in this subject are often above national averages. As one pupil explained, science is good because 'you can do it for yourself and you don't have to sit there and watch the teacher do it'.

Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Pupils feel secure in school and they value the mutual support and friendship of one another. They behave sensibly, enjoy responsibilities and undertake them conscientiously. They respect their teachers and most try hard in lessons. However, pupils do not know well enough how they can improve their work in the long term.

The curriculum is organised satisfactorily with strengths in physical education, and science. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities in which sport features strongly. Pupils are keen to come to school. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are treated as individuals. Pupils are being prepared satisfactorily for their future schooling and for later life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attainment of boys in reading and the speaking skills of both boys and girls.
- Monitor teaching and learning and the work of subject leaders more rigorously and take action to improve further the quality of teaching.
- Improve the curriculum for ICT and use computers more effectively in day-to-day lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Whilst results in national tests fluctuate from year to year, dependent on the make up of the Year 6 group, pupils generally reach average standards. 2006 results were an improvement on the previous year, with the majority of pupils reaching expected levels in English, mathematics and science. The improvement was very marked in writing as a result of a school focus on this area. Boys' progress in English has not been as good as that of the girls over time and there is some underachievement in reading because boys do not always understand the full meaning of the text. While pupils' listening skills are satisfactory, speaking skills are not as well developed. Year 7 pupils make satisfactory progress and mostly attain the expected levels for their age.

Pupils achieve well in science as a result of good subject teaching and plenty of investigative opportunities. Throughout the school pupils with learning difficulties and more able pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils' skills in ICT are improving compared to the last inspection, but they lack experience in the control and monitoring elements and do not use computers enough in different lessons to refine their skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their improving attendance which is now around the national average. They participate keenly in extra-curricular activities. This was evident when 80 pupils took part in a lunch time Christian club and sang and joined in the activities with great gusto. Most behave very well. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and leading healthy and safe lifestyles and this is shown in their participation in a very full programme of physical education.

Pupils' social and moral development is a real strength. Their cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. They readily take on responsibilities and very willingly contribute to the life of the school community. Older pupils say 'It's up to us to set an example'. They learn about democratic processes in selecting their school council members. Others develop good social and negotiating skills by befriending lonely pupils or sorting out minor playground disputes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While teaching is satisfactory, little is really exciting, except in science and physical education. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these lessons because of the practical approach to learning. Groups of Year 6 pupils in a science lesson were absorbed finding out the factors affecting surface drag using common articles, such as shoes and bricks.

Lessons are orderly and well prepared and sound use is made of resources. Pace is satisfactory but when teachers use interactive whiteboards to demonstrate, the pace and pupils' interest pick up noticeably. The sharing of learning intentions at the beginning and reviewing success in learning at the end work effectively and help teachers to check pupils' understanding. Often good attention is given to pupils' different abilities but this is not always evident in mathematics lessons in Years 4 and 5. The teaching of able pupils in mathematics is improved in Years 6 and 7 by setting which enables the work to be well matched to pupils' needs.

Pupils listen well. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs and groups to improve pupils' speaking skills but currently their limited vocabularies prevent them from benefiting fully. Marking is satisfactory but some teachers do not have high enough expectations for the pupils' presentation of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum builds sequentially on learning from the previous year, although there are limited connections between subjects. As a result pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to develop their speaking skills, for example through drama. The organisation of books in the library and classrooms does not encourage reading for enjoyment and this affects boys' reading skills. Science, physical education and the humanities are curriculum strengths because of the blend of specialist teaching and the work of the subject leaders. Visits to places of interest, such as the Tudor study of Montecute House, and visitors to school add to the variety of pupils' experiences and support learning effectively. Special days in school such as Tudor Day when pupils dress up in period costume and taste food of the time help pupils gain a real understanding of history.

Satisfactory arrangements are made for pupils with learning difficulties. Increasingly more activities are available to able pupils, much provided by local authority initiatives. French makes a sound contribution to pupils' overall learning and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school which supports pupils well and provides them with very effective pastoral support. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy and say they enjoy school. They feel free from bullying and are confident that there is always an adult or a friend to talk to if they have any concerns. This good quality of care is also evident in the keen focus on ensuring that every individual matters and feels respected.

Parents value highly the level of care and support the school provides for their children and their responses in questionnaires reflect this. These included comments such as, 'The support given to my child by the school has been second to none'.

Teachers track pupils' progress very carefully and regularly and know the level they have reached. Teachers mark pupils' work well against the learning objective for the lesson and their written comments are very helpful to pupils. However, pupils' long-term

targets for improvement are sometimes too general and they are not always clear what they need to do to achieve these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has persevered over a long period of staffing difficulties and created a stable, purposeful and caring school. This is now beginning to reap rewards. Improved behaviour management has resulted in settled classes with pupils who want to work. Systems are now in place to begin to ensure that underachieving pupils are identified and that the needs of pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties are met more fully.

Efforts to raise the expectations for pupil performance are becoming more successful and the impact is shown in improved test results. Nevertheless, the influence of some subject leaders does not always reach across the school because they do not address points for improving lessons with individual teachers well enough. Where monitoring of lessons and analysis of pupils' work have identified development areas, these have not always been rigorously followed up to ensure sustained improvement. As a result, planned improvements to the quality of teaching have not yet fully materialised. The school is aware of this and steps have been taken to strengthen leadership, including a complete restructuring of the leadership team. Capacity to improve further is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and becoming more incisive in challenging the school about its performance.

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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	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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work. Your school is an improving one and gives you a satisfactory education. You are well looked after by the staff. You clearly enjoy school and most of you behave very well. We noticed how much you like science lessons and how you like to work practically and find out for yourselves. You also enjoy physical education and the extra sporting and other activities at lunch time and after school in which you eagerly take part.

In your work most of you reach the expected standard for your age and some of you reach a higher standard, especially in science. Usually you make satisfactory progress. On the whole, the boys find reading and writing more difficult than the girls. The reorganisation of the books in the library and in classrooms could help you with your reading choices because reading good books is so important. We think that you could improve your speaking skills also so that you can use a range of words when you talk and reading more good books should help in this. We have also asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to use computers in classrooms to improve your skills.

The headteacher needs more help from subject leaders to make your lessons more interesting and informative. We think that those who lead subjects in the school could check up more regularly on what happens in lessons and what you achieve in your work. They could then do more to make sure that any improvements they suggest make a difference to the way you learn.

We wish you every success for the rest of the school year and beyond. We hope that you will reach your career ambitions in the future. We are sure that you can with continued hard work.