

# West Earlham Middle School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120958
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	291923
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Trevor Watts

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–12
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mick Roberts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jaqueline Lodge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Scarnell Road Norwich Norfolk NR5 8HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603454569
<b>Fax number</b>	01603504292

---

<b>Age group</b>	8–12
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	291923

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average middle school taking pupils from Year 4 to Year 7. It is located in the residential outskirts of Norwich and within an area comprising a significant proportion of social housing. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average, and around 60% of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, although few have Statements of Special Educational Need. Around 45% of pupils are entitled to a free school meal, around twice the national average. Almost all pupils are White British. The school is subject to reorganisation and is to become a junior school in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The school's self-evaluation is unrealistic: its view of teaching, leadership and management, the curriculum, assessment and guidance has been too rosy. Insufficient account is taken of how little effect the various aspects of the provision have had on standards. Senior managers have not looked beyond evaluating the quality of teaching to see what limited impact it has had on pupils' learning. Thus, weaknesses have not been acted upon. Any actions taken have not had sufficient determination or focus, and standards of learning and behaviour have not improved. Other necessary improvements have not been made since the previous inspection.

Standards have remained very low over many years. Pupils make too little progress in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. Although teachers plan their lessons well and use their resources capably, expectations are often too low and teachers are frequently unable to keep good control of their classes. The inattentive, and often poor, behaviour of some pupils limits their progress and disrupts lessons for everyone. In the 2006 national tests, pupils' achievements at the end of Year 6 were exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. Fewer than half of the pupils achieved their target levels in English and mathematics. When they leave the school at the end of Year 7, their standards remain inadequate. They are inadequately prepared for their next school and their future lives.

Pupils' personal development is inadequate as a result of insufficient guidance and support. Attendance is very low and the school has no effective strategies for improving it. Although most pupils come into the school with a positive attitude to learning, they gradually lose this as they move through school. By the time pupils enter Year 6, many are disillusioned. Some pupils in Years 6 and 7 constantly shout out in lessons and argue with each other. Some simply 'switch off' and do not pay attention. Although almost two thirds of the parents who responded to the inspection survey were positive about the school, more than a third of the parents who telephoned, asked for a meeting, or sent in questionnaire returns were worried about their children's enjoyment, learning and safety in school. As one parent wrote about the school in general, 'It's nowhere near as good as it should be.' The school has developed sound links with other schools and agencies and the leadership has done well in guiding and overseeing a large programme to redevelop the premises.

The school reacted to the 2006 test results by introducing a wide range of initiatives. Positive changes to the curriculum mean that it is now satisfactory. However, the other changes have been too little, too late and there is no real sign that they are having a sufficiently positive effect on pupils' attitudes or their learning. The school does not give satisfactory value for money

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.

- Ensure that the school's leadership make better use of all the available data from monitoring and assessments to improve the provision and to set challenging targets for pupils.
- Improve teachers' skills in managing pupils' behaviour so that more effective learning can take place.
- Develop a wider range of more rigorous strategies to encourage better attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

The progress pupils make through the school is too slow and their achievement is inadequate. In 2006, national test results at Year 6 in English, mathematics and science were exceptionally low. Fewer than half the pupils attained the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics and too few attained the higher level 5. The school is one of the lowest achieving in the country for adding value to pupils' education, and is in the bottom 3% of schools nationally. Although it did better in science, it was still in the lowest 15% of schools. Over the longer term, there is no difference in the achievements of girls and boys or of those pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 4**

While pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, there are significant weaknesses in their spiritual, moral and social development which show in their responses to learning and to each other. Poor behaviour is seen in class and around school and there are many incidents of bullying and fighting, particularly among older pupils. Teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) enables pupils to discuss these issues, but these lessons have too little impact on their everyday lives. The school has worked hard to raise pupils' awareness of healthy living and the value of exercise. However, the encouragement to eat healthily does not have enough influence on what pupils bring to school to eat. Attendance is well below average, and pupils often arrive late. The school leadership has too few strategies to improve this. One effective aspect of pupils' involvement in school life is the work of the school council, which has a positive and active role. However, there are few other opportunities for pupils generally to contribute to the overall smooth running of the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Teachers' expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour across the school are too low. While there are some well-taught lessons, classroom behaviour is not managed consistently well. Consequently, too few pupils concentrate sufficiently well on their work. The better teaching that was observed demonstrated good classroom management and high expectations of what pupils might achieve and how they can behave. However, too much teaching is not good enough. It fails to motivate pupils, expectations are too low, and the pace is too slow. This leads to unruly behaviour by some pupils, which many teachers are unable to control properly. This prevents other pupils who do want to work from doing so.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

All the statutory subjects are taught, and there are good additional elements, including a wide variety of out-of-school visits to support learning across the curriculum. There are also many well-attended clubs at lunch-times and after school. Changes have been made to the long-term planning for English and mathematics. The effect of these, combined with increased links between different subjects, is beginning to be seen in more imaginatively presented activities, and increased opportunities to practise basic skills. Well developed aspects of the curriculum include French and, particularly, music. Both are run by an enthusiastic specialist teacher, and the good behaviour and high quality singing of many pupils shows what can be achieved. Physical education is particularly well supported through good links with a secondary school.

The personal, social and citizenship curriculum is good, but the effect that lessons have on pupils' personal development is often minimal, so the outcomes are unsatisfactory.

A recently created 'nurture room' provides support for those pupils who struggle to cope in their own classes. Here, staff try to ensure that lessons are relevant to what is being taught in each pupil's own class. A satisfactory temporary curriculum is provided, but the facility is too new to judge how effective it is in keeping pupils in school, and improving their behaviour.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

Teachers know their pupils well at a personal level but pupils themselves do not feel confident about approaching all adults if they have a problem. As one pupil said, 'not all teachers understand'. Statutory procedures for protecting pupils are securely in place and understood by all. However, pupils say that incidents of bullying and fighting incidents are not always dealt with appropriately.

A sound start has been made to include pupils in evaluating their work. Pupils know their targets and progress towards these is recorded in the back of their English, mathematics and science books. However, teachers and pupils make little day-to-day use of this to see what needs to be taught and learned next, or to improve pupils' rates of progress. Procedures for checking their academic progress and personal development have been introduced too recently to judge how effective and valuable they might be.

Links with the various support agencies are mainly satisfactory. However, the procedures in place are not sufficient to meet the very serious needs of the school in tackling inadequate achievement, the wide range of behavioural problems and pupils' low attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are inadequate because there has been too little improvement since the previous inspection. The school's self-evaluation is weak because it is not sufficiently focused on the outcomes of the school's provision. At all levels, senior leaders, governors and managers have had a limited impact on improving the school's provision, or evaluating the outcomes of that provision. Governors do not understand pupils' achievements and standards well enough to hold the school to account over the poor results. Although several new initiatives

to raise standards, especially in English, have been undertaken in the past few months, their effects have yet to be seen. In view of the school's continuing low performance since the previous inspection, it does not demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	4
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The behaviour of learners	4
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	4
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	4
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	4
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	4

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Earlham Middle School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, NR5 8HT

I am sure that you will remember when two inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for speaking with us so readily, and showing us your work. Many of you and your parents and carers told us that you liked the school and wanted to do well.

Unfortunately, we found that most of you do not make good enough progress in your work, especially in English and mathematics, and many of you have not done as well as you should have by the time you leave the school. The main reason for this is that some of your lessons have not been very interesting, and your teachers often spend too much time trying to make sure all of you are paying attention and behaving well. Your teachers have been trying to make things better, and the lessons you are taught are now often well planned, and are becoming more interesting for most of you. Even so, more of you need to pay attention, and do your best when you are given work to do.

We think that the school's leaders need to do more to help and guide your teachers, and to do more to improve the behaviour of some of you. You tell us that you know you can talk to some of the teachers about your problems. We are asking the school's governors, headteacher and teachers to help you to do better in your learning, especially in English, mathematics and science. To do this, we have asked that teachers make some of your work more difficult as well as more interesting. The other thing we have asked is that school leaders do more to get some of you to come to school more often, and on time - but this is up to you, as much as anyone else.

I wish you good luck for the future.

Trevor Watts

Lead Inspector