



Middleton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131719
Local Authority CITY OF PETERBOROUGH
Inspection number 293825
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Linda Killman HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Middleton
School category	Community		South Bretton, Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE3 9XJ
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01733262696
Number on roll (school)	291	Fax number	01733 265818
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Barry Blakesley
		Headteacher	Mrs K McDermott
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	21–22 November 2006	293825

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school serves an area of higher than average unemployment and social disadvantage in Peterborough. When children start school in Reception, their attainment is well below average. Most pupils are of White British background. A quarter of pupils are from a variety of different minority ethnic groups. Twelve per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average. A higher proportion of pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The school provides specialist provision for pupils with hearing impairment from Peterborough and neighbouring authorities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Middleton is a good school. Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is good. Its ethos is one of calm purposeful learning and the school is a harmonious and inclusive community. Relationships are good and pupils receive good quality care, guidance and support and share a mutual respect for each other's cultures, faiths and traditions. As a result, pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They behave well, feel very safe and enjoy their lessons.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She is unwavering in the quest to raise standards and is scrupulous in her rigorous analysis of assessment information. This ensures, for example, that pupils in Year 3 are on track to reach their targets after a dip last year. Through accurate self-evaluation the school knows its strengths and what needs improvement although, in its quest to raise standards, too many changes have been initiated at once to be fully effective.

Given their low starting points on entry, pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. Children get off to a confident start in the Reception. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is suitable and combined with sound teaching, ensures that children develop good attitudes and learn with enjoyment through play activities. As children move from Reception into Year 1, the curriculum and teaching methods change too abruptly and they find it hard to adjust because they are not successfully eased from one stage into the next. Good teaching, skilfully supported by the high quality work of the teaching assistants, accelerates pupils' progress through the rest of the school. The pupils have a stimulating range of work to do, matched well to the needs of most pupils, although some of the activities set for the most able in lessons are insufficiently challenging.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The leadership team and subject leaders are in the process of redesigning the curriculum to inject more interesting, enjoyable and practical activities for pupils to do. This has been successful, for example, in literacy where pupils are motivated to write expressively and explore characters through very effective use of interactive whiteboards and role play. The heartening use of opportunities to have real fun, experienced by pupils as they learn, helps them to improve. The curriculum is further supported by an adequate range of visits, visitors and clubs. The pupils develop satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and learn to work well in teams, laying firm foundations for their futures. Pupils who need extra support in their learning make good progress because the curriculum is carefully adjusted to their needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the number of priorities in the school development plan to allow governors and the staff to consolidate improvements.

- Strengthen teaching, learning and the curriculum as pupils move from the Foundation Stage into Year 1 so that it supports the needs and abilities of all learners.
- Ensure that high ability pupils are sufficiently challenged in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They make satisfactory progress from Reception to Year 2. Their progress accelerates between Years 3 and 6 and pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with English as an additional language is good because the curriculum is skillfully adapted for them. The standards reached by pupils in Year 2 between 2000 and 2005 rose considerably in reading and writing. In 2006 standards fell to below national averages. The reasons for this have been identified by the school and constructive changes in provision have been made. Realistic targets set for pupils in Year 6 were exceeded this year in English and mathematics. For most pupils achievement in lessons is good. However, too few more able pupils reach the higher than expected level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles through regular opportunities for exercise and healthy eating. They feel extremely safe in school because they are well cared for. During the inspection, anti-bullying week was used effectively to raise pupils' awareness of what to do if they do not feel safe. Older pupils act as good role models and 'buddies' for others. The pupils behave very well in lessons and at break times and enjoy school very much. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly because many lessons are interesting and fun and they recognise that their work is improving. Effective decisions made by the school council have led to improvements to the toilets and in the provision of playground equipment. The pupils also devise their own schemes for raising money to contribute to local charities. The knowledge pupils gain, such as in reading and writing, and their good social skills mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and later lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school effectively draws on the rich diversity of cultures and beliefs of pupils attending the school to advance all pupils' cultural and spiritual development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Systematic tracking of pupils' progress enables staff to know exactly where pupils are in their learning and to plan, in the main, effectively for the next steps. The challenge for more able pupils provided in some lessons is not high enough and they do not make all the progress that they could. Those with additional learning needs are very well supported by the generous staffing levels and expert teaching assistants. The pupils show good attitudes to their work and make progress as a result of effective and, in some cases, very inspiring teaching. Relationships are good, behaviour is managed well and pupils are keen to do their best. The older pupils are actively involved in assessing their performances regularly during lessons. They know how to improve their work and this enables them to work confidently on their own.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage the school provides an adequate curriculum for children, such as learning through organised play activities. Nevertheless, opportunities are missed for them to freely experiment and explore. The school recognises that differences in the curriculum and teaching methods do not allow a sufficiently smooth transition for children from Reception into Year 1. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum focuses on improving attainment in literacy and numeracy because the school has rightly identified the need to raise standards. The broader curriculum satisfies statutory requirements but does not provide a particularly rich variety of experiences. Nonetheless, a range of theme weeks, such as Diwali week and anti-bullying week, as well as extracurricular activities such as football and recorder clubs, enrich the pupils' experiences and develop their personal skills well. The curriculum is adapted very skilfully to meet the needs of all pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Helpful adaptations are made for pupils who are learning English as a new language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for and receive good quality support and guidance. Developing pupils' personal and social skills and fostering a positive attitude to learning are high priorities. Children are sensitively supported when they start school for the first time through well planned induction activities. All pupils have targets to meet that are regularly reviewed by staff although it is the oldest pupils who know and understand them best. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies across the school, from weak to very good. Systems for checking how well pupils are doing are robust and adults are adept in modifying the support they provide for most groups of pupils so that they learn well. A good close working partnership with a wide range of outside

agencies ensures that pupils who need specific support get extra help. Procedures for child protection are robust and the school takes health and safety issues very seriously. Good links with the secondary school provide valuable opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to be taught by specialist teachers to extend their skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is focused on the achievement of all pupils. She has developed a strong team that shares her commitment to meet the needs of all pupils but recognises there remains work to be done to secure consistency. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for pupils with English as an additional language is well led. These pupils are successfully involved in school life and learn effectively. Well established systems for monitoring and evaluation enable the headteacher and other senior staff to accurately analyse school effectiveness and identify priorities for improvement. The school recognises that too many changes are being tackled at once, and that this reduces their effectiveness and sustainability. Governors visit the school regularly and give good support as well as critical challenge to the headteacher. The school works successfully to establish strong links with parents and other agencies. Effective financial planning enables all staff to receive regular training and development to improve their performance. The good progress made since the school's previous inspection and the strength and skills of the leadership team indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

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?	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	3
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	3
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?	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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

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?	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?	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

23 November 2006

Dear Children

Middleton Primary School, Middleton, South Bretton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 9XJ

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We felt very welcome at Middleton Primary School! We were glad to hear that you enjoy your lessons. We could see how much you were enjoying your learning when we visited your classes. You are keen and interested and want to succeed. Your teachers and other staff know you well, care about you and work hard to help you to be successful. You told us that you feel safe at school, knowing that an adult will always step in to help you if you need it.

Your headteacher and all of the staff are doing a good job at Middleton. They want you to learn as much as you can to help you as you grow up. Your teachers give you extra help if you fall behind. This is helping you to make good progress by the time you reach the end of Year 6.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked the school to do.

- Make fewer changes at any one time in the ways that you are taught.
- Make sure that, as you move from Reception into Year 1, the way that you learn does not change too suddenly.
- Give those of you who find learning easy even greater challenges.

I am sure that you will keep working hard so that you make good progress during your time at Middleton.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman Her Majesty's Inspector