



Middlestone Moor Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131886
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 293877
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rock Road
School category	Community		Spennymoor, County Durham
Age range of pupils	3–11		DL16 7DA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01388 816351
Number on roll (school)	245	Fax number	01388 818596
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Julie Simpson
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006	Inspection number 293877
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Middlestone Moor is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are White British with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is above average. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The current headteacher took up post in November 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

- The new headteacher is leading the school well and the pace of improvement is picking up. A rigorous audit has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and set clear priorities for improvement.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. They start school with standards that are broadly in line with their age group, but this does vary from year to year and in some years there are more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2005, standards were broadly in line with the national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In 2006, not as many pupils achieved the nationally expected levels in Year 2, with fewer pupils reaching the higher levels. The Year 6 results improved in English, mathematics and science, but again, fewer pupils achieved the higher levels of attainment. The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. However, this overall steady picture masks some inconsistencies in pupils' progress and not all consistently make the progress they should, especially in Key Stage 1.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. The setting up of the new school council has already provided pupils with a say in the proposed playground improvements and pupils are beginning to take a pride in being more involved in decisions affecting their school community. New initiatives aimed at achieving the healthy school award are beginning to develop pupils' understanding of the need to make healthy lifestyle choices. Most pupils say they enjoy coming to school and make particular reference to how well they all get along together. This, together with the good pastoral care provided by staff, is why they feel safe in school. The school had some success in improving levels of attendance following the last inspection but this has not been maintained and it is below average. This contributes to some of the inconsistencies in progress and the standards attained.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and the teaching in Year 6 is good. However, there is some inadequate teaching and this accounts for the fluctuations in progress. This is because assessment information is not used well enough to plan work which meets the needs of all pupils. Improvements to the curriculum, for example, the blocking of time for foundation subjects and the investment in information and communication technology (ICT), are having a good impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning and are contributing satisfactorily to their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the appointment of the headteacher in November 2005 there are clear signs of improvement. Tracking systems enable the headteacher and senior staff to identify those pupils who are not making the progress expected and to take action. However, subject leadership is having little impact in raising standards conclusively because the tracking systems are not being used

effectively. Nevertheless, the headteacher and governors now have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly with regard to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and the school has the capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Ensure that the systems for tracking progress are consistently applied to assist in raising standards.
- Improve levels of attendance, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils begin school with the skills and knowledge broadly typical of their age group, although some cohorts fall below this level when they contain more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most children make steady progress and meet the early learning goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In 2005, pupils at the end of Year 2 attained standards that were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2006, standards were lower with fewer pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Standards at the end of Year 6 were also broadly average in 2005 and improved in 2006, but fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This particular group had a higher number than usual of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the school's tracking records indicate that the whole year group could have done better because they lost ground in Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, the records show that there are some middle and higher attaining pupils who could do better, especially in Key Stage 1. Their progress picks up in Key Stage 2, but significantly so in Year 6 due to the good teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Most pupils like coming to school and particularly enjoy the after school clubs and practical activities planned for them. Despite the school's efforts which brought about some improvement following the previous inspection, attendance in the last two school years has again been below average. It is adversely affected by pupils being taken on holiday during term time and this in turn affects the progress they make. Most pupils know about safe and healthy lifestyles. They take advantage of a range of sporting activities and the 'Huff and Puff' activities at playtimes. Pupils' lunches do not, however, always promote a healthy diet and the school is still working towards providing pupils with the recommended two hours of physical education each

week. Pupils are friendly and polite and behaviour is good. They willingly take on responsibility and help each other in the playground when acting as buddies and mini buddies. Pupils have recently been involved in the redevelopments to the playground, and the newly formed school council is beginning to give pupils more say in school decisions. Involvement in local competitions and organizing events such as the coffee morning, held during the inspection to support the Macmillan Nurses, enable pupils to contribute effectively to the wider community. Pupils' progress in developing economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but the quality is not always consistent or sufficient to ensure that the pupils build upon their progress year on year. Teachers are hard working and they work well together. Assessment information is provided to help plan relevant learning experiences for all pupils, but not all teachers use this information effectively. Some unsatisfactory teaching, together with too much absence in Key Stage 1, means that pupils sometimes lose ground by the end of Year 2. The strongest teaching is at the end of Key Stage 2 where pupils' progress is better due to a clearer understanding of what pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils' work more closely matches their needs. Throughout the school, lessons are normally paced appropriately and teachers are skilful in developing good relationships. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils enjoy school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, including provision in the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory. The school now gives sufficient time for all subjects to be taught. It is beginning to block subjects together to make learning more relevant and interesting for pupils and this was seen clearly in Year 5's enjoyment of their topic about Ancient Egypt. Provision for ICT is satisfactory. Governors have invested heavily in new hardware and the use of modern technology is now a more regular feature of lessons. The curriculum for the teaching of literacy and numeracy is not always planned well enough. Guidance for the teaching of particular year groups is often followed with no amendment to take into account the needs of all groups of pupils. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly the more able. Provision for pupils' personal development contributes satisfactorily to their understanding of citizenship, being healthy and staying safe. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the good range of after school clubs. Visits and visitors enhance and extend pupils' learning experiences and develop their personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's pastoral care for its pupils is good. Pupils say that school is a happy place to be and they feel safe and secure because everyone gets on well together. Systems for safeguarding pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place and meet government recommendations. Academically, however, pupils are not given enough information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Throughout the school, teachers' marking is not rigorous enough and rarely provides pupils with the information they need to improve. Whilst the school responds well to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, involving other agencies when appropriate, support or intervention for other pupils is less successful. This is because assessment of pupils' previous work is inconsistent in quality and, as a result, teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of what pupils already know or can do.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is leading the school well with good support from the governing body. There is a clear focus on improvement which has had some success. For example, most pupils made satisfactory progress to reach the school's targets in 2006. Recent implementation of a rigorous tracking system now enables the headteacher and senior staff to quickly identify those pupils who are not making expected progress. Assessment by individual teachers, however, is still inconsistent and this has limited the impact on standards. Subject leaders are undergoing a programme of staff development and are committed to following the headteacher's lead in raising standards. This was, however, a key issue for the school at the time of the last inspection and progress in this area has been too slow. Changes to the curriculum, also an issue at the last inspection, have been more successful, and one of the reasons why pupils enjoy school.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	No

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	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	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?	3

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	4
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

Middlestone Moor Primary School

Rock Road

Spennymoor

County Durham

DL16 7DA

28 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. It is clear that you enjoy the activities that you take part in and some of you do really well. We have asked your school to make sure that all of you do as well as you possibly can, so that means everyone working hard!

It was good to see how well you behave and that you are now having the chance to make decisions about what you would like to change as members of the school council. Your teachers look after you well and are getting better at knowing when you could do better. We have asked the teachers who lead subjects, especially English and mathematics, to be sure that you all find your work challenging. We have also asked the school to keep trying to make sure that your attendance improves. You can all play your part by making sure you all come to school regularly.

Thank you again for your help and best wishes for your future learning.

Linda Buller

Lead inspector