



# Five Oaks Middle School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 109664  
**Local Authority** BEDFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 294541  
**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Kenneth Thomas

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Caddington
<b>School category</b>	Community		Luton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13		Bedfordshire LU1 4JD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 726058
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	145	<b>Fax number</b>	01582 727626
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2005		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
9–13	17–18 October 2006	294541

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors over two days.

## Description of the school

This is a small middle school. Pupil numbers have dropped significantly over the last two years. At the last inspection the school was given a Notice to Improve because significant improvement was required in the standards pupils achieved. In order to improve the school, a partnership was established with another Bedfordshire middle school. After a period as acting headteacher of Five Oaks, the headteacher of the partner school was appointed as the permanent headteacher of both schools.

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and some have minority ethnic backgrounds. About 6% of pupils are from Traveller communities. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. An above average number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than at the beginning and end of the year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13(5) of the education act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school now provides a good quality of education across all major aspects of its work. Because pupils are making good progress, standards have risen sharply and are now above average in most subjects. In order to continue the drive for improvement the school is correctly setting targets that are even more ambitious. Central to the improvement seen in the school are the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher, the very effective use of the expertise available from the partner middle school, well focused management by a strong leadership team and good support from governors. The key issues identified in the last inspection report have been tackled successfully and because the evaluation of performance is accurate, the school knows where more work needs to be done to improve even further.

Considerable attention has been given to improving teaching and learning. Because of this, teaching has improved and there are now many examples of good practice. In most lessons, pupils make rapid progress because pupils' learning targets are clear and they are stretched by the tasks they have to do. In a minority of lessons, pupils are too passive because they are not given enough opportunities to ask questions and work independently. More effective use is being made of assessment information to ensure that lesson plans take account of pupils' different capabilities. There is more work to be done in this area, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

The school is keen to develop the curriculum, so there is a willingness to listen to and adapt new ideas. As a result, the curriculum promotes achievement well and pupils have a good range of enriching experiences, both during and after school. Staff share a desire to help pupils develop into confident and caring individuals, and the guidance and support given to pupils are good. Pupils' progress is now carefully monitored so that underperformance can be tackled at an early stage. This feature is contributing to the rise in standards.

The school works exceptionally well with other schools, agencies and with the community to enhance pupils' education and ensure their well-being. It provides numerous opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership and their self-confidence increases as they progress through the school. Pupils appreciate how to live healthily and they are well prepared for the next stage of education. The school provides a purposeful learning environment in which pupils are valued, listened to and respected. Both pupils and parents alike recognise the transformation in the school. As one parent wrote, 'I have seen the school change from one that was failing to provide my child with an acceptable standard of education to a school that has improved beyond all recognition'. The school gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by ensuring that pupils are actively involved in their learning in all lessons.

- Raise standards further by ensuring that full use is made of assessment information in the planning of learning tasks, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 is good. They enter school with a wide range of starting points but overall attainment on entry is average. At the time of the last inspection, achievement was inadequate and results in the end of Year 6 national tests were falling. In 2005 these results were well below average. Nevertheless, it was reported that as a result of more effective management and better teaching, pupils' progress was improving, although the improvement was yet to be seen in the test results. The improvement was seen in the 2006 test results in English, mathematics and science. These results exceeded the school's quite challenging targets and were well above the school's 2005 test results and above the 2005 national averages. Inspection evidence shows that this good progress is being maintained and that pupils are making similarly good progress in most other subjects. Because pupils make good progress through Years 7 and 8, they are now better prepared for their upper school education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Traveller pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils. Reflecting the marked improvement in achievement and standards, the school has set even more challenging targets for 2007.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school and attitudes to learning have vastly improved over the last year because the ethos in the school and expectations of teachers have so radically changed. The pupils are now proud of their school. Enjoyment is reflected in pupils' high level of participation in many aspects of the school's work and in the community. Pupils are eager to undertake responsibilities.

Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly. This is a result of rigorous monitoring, encouragement of pupils through rewards, as well as their renewed enthusiasm for learning. Behaviour is good and has improved out of all recognition. Pupils say that they no longer have concerns about bullying or other intimidation. They understand extremely well how to keep themselves safe because of the good level of care and guidance. Pupils understand the need for a healthy lifestyle in seeking to have increasingly nutritious meals and enthusiastic involvement in extracurricular sport. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall but spiritual reflection and multicultural awareness are not yet sufficiently well embedded in subject planning.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The school has made excellent use of the expertise available in the partner school to improve teaching and learning and the benefits of this showed in the many good lessons observed during the inspection. Typically, lessons begin in a calm and orderly manner, reflecting the positive impact of the school's behaviour strategy. In the best lessons, teachers take every opportunity to ensure that pupils are actively involved and encouraged to share ideas. In discussion, pupils say that they like these lessons because the varied activities help to maintain their interest. In less effective lessons, progress slows because pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher. In these circumstances, interest wanes and some pupils become inattentive. A strong feature of many lessons in Years 5 and 6 is the effective use of assessments of pupils' attainment and progress to match learning tasks to pupils' abilities. This is a weakness in some lessons in Years 7 and 8. In these lessons, work is not well matched to pupils' attainment levels and expectations of pupils are too low. Nevertheless, one of the significant features of lessons is mutual respect and the willingness of pupils to comply with the requests of teachers. This makes a major contribution to the good progress pupils are now making.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. The amount of teaching time has increased and considerable benefit has been gained from the school's links with other providers. For example, in collaboration with a specialist sports college, the school provides swimming tuition so that all pupils have the opportunity to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6. Further collaborative activities include master classes in French and sport. These activities cater well for the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and the needs of Traveller pupils are identified carefully and accurately, and pupils have a range of relevant and varied work.

There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in numeracy, literacy and science. This has a positive impact on standards. The personal, social and health education and citizenship programme is well thought out and well taught. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons, including a variety of musical and sporting activities. These, together with visits to residential centres, museums and other places of interest extend the curriculum well. Facilities such as the resource centre and Internet cafe give pupils increasing access to computers enabling them to work independently at lunchtimes.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The provision of care, guidance and support is good, and contributes well to the safety and enjoyment of pupils. They know there is support from teachers if they need it. Adults train many older pupils to be peer mediators. They carry out this role responsibly and have contributed to the improvements in behaviour. Any incidents of bullying or racism are carefully logged and addressed. Child protection procedures are very thorough. Health and safety procedures are robust and regular risk assessments are undertaken. Pupils benefit from the school's very good links with external agencies, including the Traveller Education Service.

Senior staff carefully monitor pupils' academic performance. Pupils understand their targets fully and record them into their planners. There is some inconsistency in the extent to which teachers use this information in lesson planning. Pupils say that teachers mark their work regularly and that they know what they need to do to improve. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities and provides appropriate support and extension activities for them.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported very ably by his deputies, has had a huge impact on the rapid improvement seen in the school. The school has also benefited from the sharing of successful management strategies and expertise with the partner school. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have established a calm and productive climate for learning and are raising expectations for staff and pupils alike. Surveys of the views of parents and pupils show recognition of the school's improvement and a high level of support for the school and its leadership.

Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are rigorous and accurate. As a result, the school knows its strengths and identifies the right areas for improvement, such as to improve the consistency of teaching across the school. This, together with a strong commitment to professional development, has a significant impact on standards. Governorship has improved and governors are now more effective in guiding and supporting the school's work and providing challenge for further improvement. The school has good potential for further improvement. Financial management is secure. Good resources and accommodation ensure a very pleasant learning environment. The school provides good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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	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

19 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Five Oaks Middle School, Caddington, Luton, LU1 4JD

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. Firstly, I would like to thank you all on behalf of the inspection team for the help you gave us during our visit. We greatly appreciated your comments and opinions and were very impressed with your enthusiasm and really good attitudes to school.

You told us you are proud of Five Oaks and we think you are right to be so. Some of the older pupils told us about the changes in the school and how much it has improved since the time they started there. We agree that the school has become much better over the last couple of years and want to congratulate you for the part you have played in making Five Oaks a school to be proud of.

We thought you would like to know what we think is good about your school and how we think it could get even better. You work hard and now do well in your national tests. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 also do well and achieve good results when they go to the upper school. One of the things you pointed out to us was how much behaviour has improved and we agree. Your behaviour is good and you are willing to take on lots of responsibilities around the school. This is a real help to your teachers because they can concentrate on helping you to learn. You told us how much you enjoy lessons in which you are active and we have asked the school to make more of your lessons like this. We have also asked that teachers make full use of their assessments of your progress in the planning of lessons throughout the school. We really liked the friendly and positive atmosphere in the school and the very good relationships between yourselves and the staff.

We were very pleased to see that so many of you are keen to make the most of the opportunities the school is providing for you. We wish you continued success in the future.

Dr K C Thomas

(Lead inspector)