

Kirkburton Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107773
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	301674
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Les Schubeler

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	10–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	485
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr A Parker
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Turnshaws Avenue Kirkburton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 0TJ
Telephone number	01484 222737
Fax number	01484 222736

Age group	10–13
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Inspection number	301674

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kirkburton Middle School serves an area of semi-rural village communities. Pupils are in the school for two terms before they take the national Key Stage 2 tests and leave the school two terms before they take the national Key Stage 3 tests. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. There are very few minority ethnic pupils, including those whose first language is not English. The school has received the Healthy Schools and Sportsmark Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is well regarded by pupils and parents because pupils enjoy being here and so achieve well. The standards of pupils entering the school aged 10 are generally similar to those expected for their age. When pupils take the national tests after only two terms in the school, standards are broadly average. Pupils make good progress overall. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 8, they reach standards that exceed expectations for their age in mathematics and science. In English, where there has been recent staffing instability, standards of current Year 8 pupils broadly meet expectations but the higher-attaining pupils make less progress than expected.

There is a shared commitment at all levels to provide an interesting and relevant education for all pupils. The school provides a good curriculum which is broad and balanced. There is an impressive range of out-of-school activities in and beyond the school day which supports pupils' personal development and adds to their enjoyment of the school's curriculum. The physical education and design and technology curriculum are particularly strong in developing positive attitudes to the adoption of a healthy and active lifestyle, and the school has received the Healthy Schools award and the Sportsmark.

The personal development of pupils is good. They behave well and show good attitudes to learning. Attendance is good, with few incidences of unauthorised absence. Pupils feel safe and well cared for as a result of the school's successful promotion of respect for others. There are secure, positive relationships among all who work in the school. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school in roles such as school councillors, house captains, befrienders or junior sports leaders, all of which help them to grow in confidence and maturity as they move through the school. Strong and effective partnerships with other local schools and with external agencies help to ensure the school's inclusiveness and the good quality of its care and support for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers successfully motivate pupils by planning interesting lessons that contribute to pupils' good achievement. Marking, however, does not always show pupils how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership team provides a clear vision for the development of the school. A common sense of purpose has emerged among staff and helps to foster the positive learning atmosphere throughout the school. The increasing involvement of middle managers in monitoring standards is leading to a wider sharing of ideas and ensuring that the capacity for further school improvement is good. The school has dealt effectively with issues from the last inspection, and its self-evaluation is accurate. However, in monitoring the school's performance, the school's leaders have had an insufficiently sharp focus on the achievement of individual pupils.

Governors are fully involved in developing policies and the strategic direction of the school. Consequently, they know the school well. Sound financial management helps to ensure that the school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English.
- Ensure that the monitoring of the school's performance focuses more closely on the achievement of all individual pupils.

- Ensure that marking of pupils' work gives them a clear understanding of how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. School records show that pupils accelerate their learning as they move through the school. To raise standards in English and bring the rate of progress in line with that in the other core subjects, the school has put a firm focus on raising the quality of writing. This is targeted at boys' ability to write fluently and accurately at length. Signs of some success are evident, but the improvement seen in the 2006 national tests in English at the end of Year 6 has yet to work its way through Years 7 and 8, particularly among the higher-attaining pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because there is a clear focus on meeting those individual pupils' needs, through effective support and good use of data and target setting at individual pupil level.

When pupils take their national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in the local high school, the school's data show that they reach standards above the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, although the spiritual element is less well developed than the others. Pupils develop good cultural and multicultural awareness by experiencing food, art and music from different parts of the world and visiting sacred places of different faiths.

They work productively together, listen well to each other and show mutual respect. They enjoy being at school, particularly for the wide range of extra-curricular sporting and musical activities. They are eager to participate in class and feel that teachers try to make the lessons interesting. They say the rare cases of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school council is effective in communicating pupils' views. It promotes energy saving and healthy lifestyles and eating, organises sports activities and has participated in the recent review of the school's rewards and sanctions policy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive and encourage pupils to want to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants create a positive climate for learning in which pupils are encouraged and given good support when they find the work difficult. Pupils commonly show that they are enjoying their learning by good cooperation and complete involvement in the lesson. They are well managed and lessons proceed according to plan. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. The best teaching is characterised by effective individual tuition, which includes highly perceptive questioning of individuals' understanding and leads to opportunities for a good range of independent learning. Lesson activities are generally well planned, but at times not enough attention is given to setting tasks that meet the needs of different groups of learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, resources are insufficient to enable pupils to use information and communication technology often enough in their everyday learning. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local museums and galleries, visitors and specialist sports and music teachers. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school choir and instrumental groups, sports activities, well attended gardening, art and mathematics clubs, for example, broaden pupils' experiences and develop their interests and skills. Residential visits, too, in both the United Kingdom and France contribute valuably to pupils' achievement, enjoyment and personal development.

The personal, social, careers and health education syllabus offers plenty of activities, including elements of financial management, to support the acquisition of life skills that prepare pupils well for the next stages of education and the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Procedures for the transfer of pupils from feeder first schools and into high school are good. Frequent liaison ensures particularly that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those with behavioural or emotional problems, receive continuity of support. Effective monitoring of the progress of these pupils ensures that appropriate action is taken to support them in their learning and help them achieve well. However, many other pupils have an insecure understanding of their level of performance and of how to improve. The recently introduced behaviour policy has had a substantial influence on reducing the number of exclusions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. As a result, the school successfully promotes good achievement and personal development. Day-to-day management is good and the school runs very smoothly. Middle managers, such as subject leaders, are increasingly involved in evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified appropriate priorities for development. They are developing more robust procedures to improve standards and the quality of teaching in their subject areas, but this work is still developing and has yet to make its impact fully felt across the school.

As a result of action taken, standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. The school is beginning to make more effective use of assessment data to raise performance. Governors carry out their roles seriously. They are committed to the future development of the school, including improvements in the accommodation.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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 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	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

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	2
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	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?	2
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.

Annex A

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

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the three inspectors who visited your school recently. We would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out your views about the school. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. We decided that Kirkburton is a good school that provides many opportunities both in lessons and out of school to help you to learn and develop useful interests and skills.

We think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you well, keeping you safe and healthy. It was very pleasing to see that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you. We think that you make good progress in mathematics and science but you could do better in English. Your teachers have introduced ways of checking your progress that help you to know better how to improve. We think that if you concentrate on trying to reach the targets that your teachers set for you and listen carefully to the advice they give you on how to make progress, then the standard of your work will get better.

To help your school to improve further, we have also asked your headteacher and the other staff to look more closely at how well you as individuals are making progress. We are sure that you will carry on enjoying school and continue to build on the improvements that you are making now. Most of all, we hope that you will continue to work hard and help all the staff to make Kirkburton Middle an even better school in the future.