

# Goldington Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109642
<b>Local Authority</b>	BEDFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	301750
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Matharu HMI

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>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	675
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Hallett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D M Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 June 2000
<b>School address</b>	Haylands Way Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 9BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234261516
<b>Fax number</b>	01234272344

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Goldington Middle School is a large, middle deemed secondary school for pupils aged 9 to 13. It serves the urban area of north east Bedford. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. There is a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The population of the school is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the proportion of pupils from a White British background lower than the national average. The school has gained the Sportsmark Gold, Artsmark Gold and Activemark Gold awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Goldington Middle School is an outstanding school with many significant strengths. Pupils achieve very well across the school, making particularly good progress in Years 7 and 8. Standards at Key Stage 2 have been consistently high over time, which represents good progress, given pupils' starting points on entry to Year 5. The school is part of a wider area initiative to raise standards from Years 3 to 6 overall. The impact of a number of effective strategies to raise achievement across Key Stage 2 and 3 are beginning to have an impact on pupils' work and progress; this can be seen in the excellent progress of current Year 8 pupils.

The school ethos is warm and supportive; pupils blossom within the highly positive learning environment. They display confidence and increasing maturity due to the many imaginative opportunities for personal and social development that the school creates. Pupils are extremely positive about school and their contributions to school activities are outstanding. They appreciate the lengths their staff go to in providing a range of activities to extend the school curriculum.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. The school rightly judges that a very large proportion of teaching is either excellent or consistently good across the curriculum. Such teaching is characterised by enthusiasm, an energetic pace and a variety of interesting learning activities which engage pupils and enable them to assume increasing responsibility for their learning.

The curriculum is rich and wide ranging and meets the needs of pupils really well. There is an appropriate focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which prepares pupils very well for their future lives. The range of subjects and additional curriculum experiences provided support learning well, and develop strong personal and social skills. Further, an impressive extra-curricular programme contributes greatly to the learning and enjoyment of many pupils.

Care, guidance and support are significant strengths. The school is building upon its excellent pastoral care to include a focus on academic monitoring and guidance. This ensures all pupils are supported to achieve as highly as possible.

A large number of parental questionnaires were returned during inspection; these indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the school. Outstanding leadership and management of the school ensure it is reflective of its performance and analytical of pupils' progress. As a result, plans for future developments are well founded. The school monitors and evaluates teaching and learning thoroughly, although the focus on outcomes for learners is not as sharp as it might be in assessing the impact of various teaching activities on learning. There is, however, a clear focus on meeting the needs of all pupils and seeking ways to involve pupils and parents in identifying and planning improvements. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is excellent.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop strategies, including collaborative working with lower schools, to further raise standards at Key Stage 2.
- Adjust the focus of lesson monitoring to ensure that outcomes for learners, rather than teaching activities, are the prime focus.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good overall, and excellent in some subjects. When pupils enter the school in Year 5 their attainment overall is broadly average, although progress is variable in previous schools. Pupils make good progress over the remainder of Key Stage 2 to reach above average standards in mathematics, English and science in national tests. There is very little variation between the subjects. This level of performance has been consistent over the past few years. The Key Stage 2 results for 2006 met the school's challenging targets. The standards reached by the end of Year 8 are also above average.

Progress of pupils in Year 8 made over the two years of Key Stage 3 was good overall in 2006; it was excellent in mathematics given pupils' starting points. The progress of Year 7 pupils overall in 2006 was better than that of Year 8, showing an impact of recent teaching strategies being effective. Progress is at least good in foundation subjects but notably very good in French and physical education.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 due to the good level of support and a well planned curriculum. Higher ability pupils and those who are gifted and talented achieve well as a result of the high expectations that teachers have for both learning and behaviour. The school's proactive approach in addressing the achievement and needs of individual pupils ensures that all pupils, irrespective of cultural background, are progressing at least well and sometimes very well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons. They say they enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is strongly underpinned by a comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education and a school ethos which emphasises personal responsibility and concern for others. Behaviour is of a very high standard both in lessons and around the school and excellent relationships are evident between pupils and adults and amongst the pupils themselves. These give rise to a relaxed but very productive learning atmosphere. Pupils display confidence and politeness when talking about their work in school. They contribute very well to the life of the school, for example through their part in assemblies and school events, acting as reading partners, supporting fund-raising and running the school bank. Pupils say that bullying is rare and incidents are dealt with swiftly. They have great confidence in their teachers' responses should this occur. The school council is well established and has been successful in realising a number of improvements and pupils feel that they are listened to. Initiatives to encourage healthy eating have been successful; pupils are very aware of which foods are better for them. They also understand the need for physical exercise and many take part with great enthusiasm in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities available to them.

Older pupils start to learn about possible career options and the development of work-related skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are well provided for.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

The school rightly judges its teaching and learning to be outstanding. Areas for improvement in the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. Pupils achieve well. A positive and informative approach to assessment has been implemented to ensure that all pupils know how to improve. Marking indicates targets for pupils to work towards and provides diagnostic feedback. Peer and self-assessments enable pupils to identify for themselves the level at which they are working. They can then see what they must do to achieve the next level.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning ensure that new initiatives are embedded in classroom practice. A focus on questioning techniques has resulted in many teachers skilfully extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, resulting in a relaxed, positive learning environment in which pupils are valued. Staff have high expectations and challenge pupils' understanding. They create good learning environments which support pupils in developing their independent learning skills. Pupils display very positive attitudes to lessons and contribute well. They are well motivated to take ownership of their own learning, and are encouraged to support each other. Interactive whiteboards are used imaginatively to capture the interest of pupils, reinforcing understanding and extending learning. Pupils' views regarding teaching and learning are sought by subject co-ordinators, and areas for development are identified. Pupils say that in particular they enjoy active learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum offered by the school is outstanding and provides a wide range of experiences that meets the needs of all pupils. Considerable emphasis is placed on the core subjects but not at the expense of appropriate time for other subjects, exciting activities in the normal school day and extensive extra-curricular opportunities at lunchtime and after school. The curriculum is extended well in a number of ways, including timetabled drama and an imaginative programme of personal, health and social education. There are particular strengths in physical education, performing arts and music, and the school's commitment and expertise in these areas has been recognised through the awards of Sportmark Gold and Artsmark Gold.

The inclusion of specialist French teaching in Years 5 and 6 is beneficial; some pupils indicated they would like to study a second language in Years 7 and 8. Imaginative opportunities are found to enhance the curriculum through Activities week, visiting speakers, occasional trips and use of the local community. An extensive, rich programme of extra-curricular activities is organised. A very popular example is the annual dance and gymnastics production which involves a very large number of pupils. Booster and catch-up clubs are organised to support learning, as needed, and the curriculum arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well established and effective.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school provides pupils with outstanding care, guidance and support. Dedicated staff ensure the strong pastoral system is closely linked to learning, providing effective support for every

child. The strong commitment to involving pupils in the running of the school, for example by ensuring that the student council has a role to play in decision-making, has enabled an ethos of mutual respect and openness to develop in the school. Pupils' and parents' opinions are canvassed actively, and suggestions are acted upon. Recently, in response to pupils' comments about disruption in class, the school developed a lesson agreement which pupils say has been effective across the school.

The school works well with a variety of different external agencies to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and fully supported. The community police officer and school nurse provide information and guidance to the whole school. Robust school systems ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils. Carefully managed arrangements support pupils in their transition from lower schools and to upper schools. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported, enabling them to make good progress. Assessment is used effectively to identify and tackle underperformance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding, with purposeful and effective leadership evident at all levels in the school. The newly restructured senior leadership team are well organised and have a very clear strategic overview. They are efficient in managing the school's resources well to achieve good outcomes. The headteacher and senior team provide a clear vision, direction and support for the work of the school. Clear procedures and systems within a supportive ethos and atmosphere enable staff to flourish and make strong contributions to the school's continuing success. The senior team have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their roles and responsibilities reflect the school's priorities and these are well documented in very detailed improvement plans, which are clearly communicated to and shared by the wider staff. There is a sharp focus on raising achievement and standards and appropriate attention on improving teaching and learning and developing staff expertise as the means to achieve improvements.

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. There are very good monitoring and evaluation procedures across the school, and excellent use of detailed pupil performance data to track pupil progress and target intervention programmes. The school rigorously monitors teaching and learning, although lesson observations are currently too heavily focused on teaching activity rather than on learning outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders are very effective, both in curriculum and pastoral roles. They understand their roles in monitoring and evaluation and the significance of using the outcomes from this to plan improvements. Their impact on whole school improvement is significant.

The school is increasingly responsive to the views of pupils and parents and acts upon feedback gained from regular surveys and pupil interviews. The newly created Parents' Forum evidences the commitment to engage more with parents. Governors are well organised and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have a clear grasp of their strategic function and fulfil their role as critical friends admirably.

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## 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>
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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>	1
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	1
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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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	1
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

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Goldington Middle School, Haylands Way, Bedfordshire, MK41 9BX

Thank you for your help with your recent school inspection. Your comments and opinions were important to us in confirming what staff, your parents and school governors told us about Goldington Middle School. You told us very clearly how much you enjoy your school and the many things you appreciate. We agree with you and found that your school is outstanding.

We were impressed with lots of things.

- The high standards of your work.
- Your excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
- Your sense of responsibility and the personal skills and qualities you display.
- Your lively participation in lessons and in the huge range of extra-curricular activities available to you.
- The outstanding care and help you receive to do your best.
- The wide and varied curriculum provided and the excellent teaching you receive.
- The excellent leadership of Mr. Johnson, his senior team and the governors of the school.

Most of you work very hard and make good progress in lessons. However, even outstanding schools can always improve! One of the reasons your school is so successful is because it constantly looks for ways to improve. We have asked Mr. Johnson and your staff to continue to find ways to make sure that you make even better progress in your learning over the four years you are at Goldington. We have also suggested that when lessons are being observed by senior staff, they particularly consider how the teaching is helping you to learn well and what the most important parts of the lesson are, to help you to enjoy your learning and achieve your best.

We are confident that your school will continue to shine and we look forward to hearing how well you are doing in the future.

Best wishes

Judith Matharu, Her Majesty's Inspector