

Scissett Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107765
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309502
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Heather Barnett HMI

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	584
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Barlow
Headteacher	Mr Michael Moriarty
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 1997
School address	Wakefield Road Scissett Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 9JX
Telephone number	1484 222930
Fax number	1484 222932

Age group	10–13
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Inspection number	309502

© Crown copyright 2008

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Scissett Middle School is situated in a semi-rural location within Kirklees with most of its pupils coming from the Denby Dale and Kirkburton wards. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below the national average, although there are quite large variations between year groups. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has achieved a number of awards such as the National Healthy School Gold Award, Artsmark Gold Award, Sportsmark Gold Award and Investors in People Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Scissett Middle School is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides a warm and welcoming environment where every pupil feels they matter. Pupils settle quickly into the school and make at least satisfactory progress in the two terms before they sit their Key Stage 2 assessments. They achieve broadly satisfactory results, but the school is not satisfied with this and is working with the feeder schools to improve progress further in all subjects, particularly in science. Progress accelerates in Years 7 and 8 so that, by the time they reach the end of Year 8, progress is good and the standards reached are above average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe and work hard in their lessons. They have an excellent understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and enjoy making a contribution to local, national and global communities. They develop the skills needed to help them achieve well in later life, such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Teaching and learning are good, with effective planning and a good range of activities used to motivate pupils. Pupils have clear targets and know how well they are doing. However, the use of detailed written guidance telling pupils how to improve is not fully embedded across all subjects. The curriculum is well developed to meet the needs of all the pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The extra-curricular and enrichment activities are a particular strength and support pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Care, guidance and support are excellent, with the transition arrangements and support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities being particular strengths.

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The whole school community works together extremely well to help each child succeed. Many initiatives, such as the increasing use of targets and data, can be shown to be having a positive impact. Good progress has been made in all areas identified as needing improvement in the last inspection. Some of them, such as the use of ICT across the curriculum, are now strengths. Consequently, the school is very well placed to improve further. Its partnership working is excellent and there are particularly effective links with feeder and progression schools.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop strategies to improve progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in science.
- Ensure written feedback to pupils provides details on how to improve across all subject areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and reach high standards in their three years at this school. School data show pupils' attainment on entry at the beginning of Year 6 is broadly average. Pupils settle quickly in the school and make at least satisfactory progress during Year 6. They attain broadly average standards in the Key Stage 2 tests after two terms in the school. The school is working closely with its partner first schools to increase rates of progress over Key Stage 2 which have improved in English, been static in mathematics and declined in science over the last three years.

The rate of pupil progress accelerates in Years 7 and 8 due to the positive school ethos and well-structured learning environment which promotes high expectations. Good quality

assessment and enjoyable lessons enable all pupils to progress well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils respond well to the challenging targets they are set and the advice they are given about goals for improvement. In 2007 the good achievement and standards were confirmed by the end of Key Stage 3 results, showing that Scissett Middle School pupils made good progress and achieved well above national averages in English, mathematics and science after two terms at their secondary school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show consideration for each other, welcome visitors and have good attitudes to their work. They say that they feel safe and have confidence that they can get support if troubled by any issues. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. The Pupil Progress Monitoring scheme in place helps to identify and focus on individual needs quickly and effectively. The impact of this scheme, which is consistently implemented across all years and all abilities, is visible in pupils' good behaviour, positive attitudes, cooperative learning and team working skills. Pupils particularly like the 'postcards' that are sent home to tell their families about their efforts.

Pupils have an excellent awareness of the importance of a healthy and safe lifestyle and this is evident in the schools many awards and prizes in this area. Pupils make a positive contribution to both local and global communities, for example, a 'dress differently day' raises funds for children in Africa and pupils have pen-friend links with a school in France. Closer to home, the school choir are involved annually with the Lord Mayor's carol service at Huddersfield Town Hall and in 2007 a pupil was elected to the Kirklees Youth Parliament. The good progress pupils make in literacy, numeracy and ICT enhances their opportunities for achieving economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils and careful planning provides appropriate levels of challenge and identifies the different ability levels or needs of pupils. Class activities are well sequenced so that pupils build very effectively on previous learning. All lessons observed during the inspection were good or outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and are competent in the use of interactive whiteboards as a resource for learning.

In the best lessons pupils are highly focused and fully engaged in active learning. High quality teaching ensures that pace is maintained and pupils make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they enjoy positive relationships with pupils. Good questioning is used to check and to develop progress in pupils' learning. The plenary at the ends of lessons are most effective when they are used to consolidate learning and promote a sense of achievement.

The most helpful marking and assessment shows pupils how well they are doing and provides clear guidance about improvement through teachers' written comments although this is not fully embedded in all subject areas. Good use is made of peer assessment as part of the learning process. Pupils have clear learning targets and the regular tracking and assessing of pupils' progress is a key feature in raising standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some very strong features. The curriculum is inclusive and ensures the good development of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school makes effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils and meet their individual needs. Effective collaboration ensures there are very good arrangements to maintain curriculum continuity and a smooth transition of pupils both in to Year 6 and then on to Shelley College when pupils transfer to Year 9.

The strong emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills has begun to raise standards. The recent developments in ICT facilities have had a positive impact on the quality of the teaching and have improved pupils' attitude and motivation. The very good displays in classrooms and circulation areas, especially of art work, help to provide a bright and stimulating learning environment. Additional staff in Year 6 have enabled smaller classes to be created in English and mathematics, which has improved pupils' confidence and participation in lessons. Ability sets in English and mathematics in all year groups are also having a positive impact on pupil progress and achievement.

The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is highly valued by pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of school. There are numerous enrichment activities ranging from theatre visits to a residential at an outdoor activity centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. A very strong ethos of care and support exists where a personal approach is taken, attention is given to the individual and pupils feel they matter to the staff. Parents are very supportive of the school, as their questionnaire returns bear out. A typical comment from a parent states, 'There is an ongoing and positive attitude to rewarding not only academic achievement but also attitudes, behaviour and effort.'

Procedures for the safeguarding and protection of pupils meet statutory requirements and are extremely robust. Throughout the school, skilfully used praise and a constructive reward system lead to pupils having positive attitudes, behaving well and having confidence in themselves. Pupils receive very good academic guidance, which contributes to their clear understanding of how well they are doing. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptionally strong.

Considerable time, energy and diligence are taken to ensure that transition arrangements result in positive experiences for all pupils. Very effective liaison with local schools and strong links with outside services complement the wide-ranging support offered by the school. This ensures that pupils are well prepared, happy and confident about the next step in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are at least good in all aspects with many strong and some outstanding features. The headteacher and senior leadership team set a clear direction for the school which is effectively communicated to all members of the school community. Everyone

is made to feel that they have a role to play in helping pupils and the school to achieve success. Managers at all levels are very enthusiastic and work together very well to support improvements. This can be seen in the improvements in teaching and learning and the good and improving use of ICT across the curriculum. In every aspect of the school's work there is a focus on the individual pupil and what can be done to help them develop, mature and achieve.

Self-evaluation is thorough and is being developed further, to increase the role of middle managers. Planning and reviewing processes are linked together well. There is a good and improving use of targets and data. For example, they are used to highlight pupil underachievement and track improvements once support strategies are put in place. Meetings are used well to share good practice and to focus on school priorities.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and provides a good level of challenge to the leadership team. The governors are very committed to the school, have a good knowledge of it and are linked to individual departments. There is strong financial management and the school provides good value for money. Links with the local community and other partners are excellent and used well to promote pupils' well-being. This is particularly true of links with partner schools.

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

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for all of the help you gave to the inspectors when we were at your school. We enjoyed talking with you, observing your lessons and seeing the work you were doing. As well as looking at your work we read the questionnaires completed by your parents: they were most helpful and the vast majority were very supportive of the school.

We think that your school is a good school where you are happy, feel safe and make good progress. Your personal development is good and your understanding of healthy lifestyles is excellent. Teaching and learning are good as is the curriculum. You enjoy all the extra-curricular activities, particularly the sporting and arts ones. The care, guidance and support the school provides for you are outstanding. The arrangements to help you settle into Scissett and to move on to your next school are excellent.

The staff are always focused on what can be done to help you do the best you can and for the school to continue to improve. We have asked them to focus on two areas.

- Further develop strategies to improve the progress you make in Key Stage 2, particularly in science.
- Making sure written feedback to you provides details on how to improve your work in all subject areas.

Your school has improved in many ways since the last inspection and with your support can continue to make good progress in the future.