

# Middleton-in-Teesdale Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 114109            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Durham            |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 311486            |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 1 November 2007   |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Moira Fitzpatrick |

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>                     | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3-11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     | 117  |
| <b>School</b>                             |  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Frank Smith   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Steve Vallack   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 February 2004  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Town End<br>Middleton-in-Teesdale<br>Barnard Castle<br>County Durham<br>DL12 0TG |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01833 640382   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01833 640152   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, the personal development of pupils and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, looking at pupils' work and scrutiny of assessment data and other documents, as well as from discussion with staff, governors and the children. Other aspects of the school were not inspected in detail but there was no evidence that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included in the report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a rural community. The majority of pupils are from White British background. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need. There is a higher proportion than usual of looked after children in the school. Children start school in the Nursery with attainment that is typical for their age, though there are sometimes weaknesses in language and communication skills. A Sure Start Children's Centre has recently been established on the school site.

## 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, which has some outstanding elements. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher the school is improving rapidly on many fronts. Pupils of all ages, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as pupils who are vulnerable, now achieve well. The school is held in very high regard by pupils who say, 'It is a happy place because everyone looks after each other,' and parents, who say, 'Teachers know the children very well and are very approachable.' Parents are rightly proud of their children's academic and personal achievements, which have improved significantly since the school was last inspected. The high standards that pupils reach are reflected in their national tests results at the end of Year 2, which have been above average for the last three years. In the 2007 national tests, Year 6 pupils reached challenging targets to achieve above average standards. Their exceptional progress placed them in the top 3% of schools nationally. Pupils did particularly well in mathematics. Similar high standards were seen during the inspection, with presentation of work and quality of writing being notable because they represent the impact of the school's recent initiatives to improve these aspects of pupils' work.

Pupils' good achievement is the result of consistently good teaching and learning. In some classes teaching is of an even higher quality, for example in Year 6, where pupils' progress accelerates noticeably. All teaching is securely based on a good knowledge of pupils' needs. Teachers make regular and accurate assessments of pupils' learning and use this information well to plan activities that help pupils to learn independently and at a brisk pace. Occasionally, in the younger classes, teachers do not identify the most able pupils early enough so that their targets are not as challenging as they might be. Teaching assistants are well informed to give good support to vulnerable pupils and pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which ensures that they make the same good progress as their peers. The curriculum is well planned and provides excellent enrichment for pupils to develop special interests and talents. Currently, all Year 3 pupils are learning to play the guitar and it was evident during their lesson that they are having great fun, despite having to concentrate so hard to master the skills.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. In all areas of school life pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are caring and considerate, ensuring that classrooms are calm and happy places for learning. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is seen in their very good attendance and in their total commitment to everything the school has to offer. They know that their views are valued and quickly learn to express their ideas and make suggestions for improvements to the school. They comment confidently on their learning and the pupils' survey last year prompted staff to make worthwhile changes to the science curriculum. From the time they join the school, pupils are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility both for their learning and for the smooth running of the school. They seize opportunities willingly and become so skilled at organising, that they are sorely missed by staff when they go on residential trips in Year 6. Pupils make a similar contribution to the local community so that the school is frequently a focus for village activities and fund raising events such as the recent 'Big Stir' and the forthcoming chrysanthemum show. Pupils understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and the school meal service makes very good provision for pupils to exercise healthy choice at lunchtime and learn the value of a 'clean plate'. Their enthusiasm and commitment to exercise and sport has been recognised with the national Activemark Gold award. Pupils of all abilities are very well prepared for the next stage of learning through their excellent personal qualities and their good standards in basic skills.

The school's care, support and guidance for pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very well cared for in a safe and secure environment. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are securely in place. Pupils feel safe and happy and say they would know where to find help if they had a problem. Staff value pupils as individuals, form excellent relationships with them and nurture their strengths so that they develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for, many are delighted with and grateful for the 'Dawn to Dusk' provision because they know their children are 'looked after in a caring, family atmosphere'. Parents of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and carers of looked after children, are unanimous in their praise for the way the school looks after their children's needs and helps them to support their children's learning. Pupils receive very good guidance on how to improve. They have a good knowledge of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further because of teachers' high quality marking, some of which is excellent in the way it impacts on pupils' enthusiasm and ability to do even better.

The school is well led and managed through very good team work. Staff are committed to improvement, they work hard and share the headteacher's vision for the best for every child. There is a strong collegiate approach which involves staff at all levels in monitoring the school's work and making suggestions for improvement. This has been central to the very good improvement that the school has made to standards, achievement and the quality of provision since the last inspection. Excellent management of new initiatives by the headteacher, who is very ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has allowed the school to improve at a rapid rate despite the upheaval of building work and reorganisation required to establish the Sure Start provision within the school. Governors give very good support to the school and play a key role in making it a focal point for community activities. Given its record of success since the last inspection, the school is very well placed for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and improving. Children start school in the Nursery with attainment that is typical for their age, though in recent years increasing numbers have joined with weaknesses in language and communication skills. Recent changes to provision for language development are already bearing fruit as children become more aware of the importance of words through activities such as 'word detectives'. Children make good progress so that by the end of the Reception class nearly all reach the levels expected for their age and each year a few exceed them. A well planned, rich and exciting curriculum stimulates children to learn by challenging their thinking and giving them good scope to explore and investigate. Children quickly develop confidence and become independent because of the expectations that adults have of them. They make good progress in their personal and social skills so that they are competent to suggest class rules to help learning run more smoothly. Very good links with parents enable them to give good support to their children's learning through regular activities at home. Leadership and management are good, as is the support given by teaching assistants who work in the unit.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that all potential higher attainers are identified at an early stage, so that even more pupils reach higher standards by the end of Year 6.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

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

### 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   |
| 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?  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage  | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |

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



## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

1 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Middleton-in-Teesdale Nursery and Primary School, Durham, DL12 0TG

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently and thank you too for helping me find out about your school. I was sorry to miss you Year 5 and 6 pupils, but the rest gave me all the help I needed to find out that your school is a good one, with some excellent things happening.

I saw how hard you work in lessons so it is no surprise that you do well in your learning and make your parents and teachers proud of you. The Year 5 and 6 books showed me that you work hard too and make extremely good progress in your learning. Well done all of you. One of the excellent things about your school is the way it helps you grow into mature and caring people who are willing to have a go at making things better. You really do make your school run smoothly by making such good suggestions and offering to help with different projects. Your excellent behaviour makes your school a happy place to visit; that is why people in the village love to come there for the different events you help to organise.

You told me your teachers take very good care of you and I agree. It was good to hear that you would know who to ask for help if you had a problem and that you are confident about getting help with your learning in lessons. I was also impressed by the things you know about your learning and how well you are moving towards your targets. This is because your teachers work hard to find out what you need to learn next so that work is always interesting and fun. The staff are going to look a bit harder at those of you who are doing well to see if you could learn a little faster and reach even higher standards before you leave for secondary school. I know that you will all do your bit to help your school get even better by listening well in class and working hard at your tasks because they are some of the things you already do very well.

My very best wishes to you and your teachers for another successful year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Additional Inspector