

Middleham Church of England Aided School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121614
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314056
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Brendan Giblin
Headteacher	Mrs S Bell
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
School address	Park Lane Middleham Leyburn North Yorkshire DL8 4QX
Telephone number	01969 623592
Fax number	0

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the teaching and curriculum enable pupils to achieve well; pupils' and parents' views of the school; and the features of the leadership and management that contribute to the success of the school. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews with staff, pupils and governors, and scrutiny of documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. The school serves a diverse community and about half of the children are bussed to school from outlying areas. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Children join the school from a few pre-school providers and their attainment on entry varies from year to year. Generally, children's skills on entry are in line with typical expectations for their age. At the time of the inspection all of the Year 6 pupils were on a residential visit. The school has gained the Activemark, Healthy Schools and Inclusion Quality Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Middleham CE (Aided) Primary School provides a good education for its pupils and serves its diverse community well. A strength of the school is the care it provides for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Parents hold the school in high regard. A typical parental comment was, 'Very impressed with the standard of education both academic and social'.

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and builds on a well planned curriculum. As a result, achievement is good for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school as shown in their superb behaviour and attitudes to learning and good attendance rates. Lessons are interesting and capture pupils' imagination. Visitors and visits, including a residential experience, are used most productively to extend pupils' learning. For example, a visitor challenged older pupils to reflect upon a painting and to use their imagination to describe what it meant to them. This resulted in some creditable imaginative writing. Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects, such as in written accounts of investigations in science. High expectations of handwriting result in well presented work in all subjects.

Relationships within class and around the school reflect a happy family atmosphere. Pupils are caring for one another and bullying is not an issue. Assemblies encompass all age groups exceptionally well and provide an important focal part of the school day. The gaining of the Healthy Schools Award reflects the school's good work in this area. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Within classes, work is geared to pupils' level of attainment. Effective use of information and communication technology, such as interactive whiteboards, clarifies new learning as well as providing opportunities to consolidate previous learning. Commercially produced worksheets are used in mathematics but occasionally, investigative tasks could be made more pleasurable by the increased use of first-hand documentation and resources. For example, a lesson on learning to read timetables relied on the use of worksheets rather than actual bus and train timetables which could have made learning more meaningful. The marking of pupils' work is detailed and provides good information on strengths as well as effective support and guidance on how to improve.

Standards by the end of Year 6 vary from year to year because of the different composition of age groups within a small school. In the 2007 Year 6 national tests, standards were exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science as all pupils reached the level expected of their age and a high proportion reached the higher level in each subject. Standards at the end of Year 2 were also exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Present standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average, rather than exceptionally high, because of a higher number of lower attainers in these year groups than in the previous year.

The headteacher leads the staff purposefully. Consistency of good teaching has been achieved throughout the school. Subject leaders are actively involved in rigorously monitoring colleagues' teaching. Sufficient time is provided for thorough observations and feedbacks of 'what went well' and 'points for development'. Data about pupils' performance in end of year tests are interrogated carefully and have successfully helped improve pupils' progress in writing. Recent developments of regularly checking and recording electronically pupils' progress provide a wealth of information about individuals' attainments. This information has still to be used to

track individuals' and age groups' progress over the time that they are at the school in order to assist staff to spot any underachievement.

Governors play an important role in the success of the school. They have a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the school further. They have identified that the accommodation, particularly for the youngest pupils, requires upgrading. Governors, together with staff and parents, have raised a substantial sum of money to improve the provision for pupils. Plans are well advanced to fulfil this development.

The school has improved since the last inspection and it is well placed to continue to do so because of the strengths in the leadership and management at all levels and the quality of teaching, as well as the support of the parents and community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is good as are its leadership and management. Children have a great start to schooling and quickly settle because of close links with the pre-school providers and parents. Standards on entry this year are above typical expectations. During the year these children have made brisk progress and are well prepared to work within the early stages of the National Curriculum when they start Year 1. Progress in linking sounds and letter and calculations was particularly fast as these were relatively weaker aspects on entry. Standards in these are now similar to those in other areas of learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered well. They are keenly interested in learning, behave extremely well and act very responsibly. The children, particularly higher attainers, benefit by working alongside Year 1 pupils. Exciting teaching stimulates children to enjoy their learning. However, they have limited time to extend their education outdoors. Members of staff plan many activities outdoors but accommodation difficulties limit these opportunities. The checking and recording of individuals' progress is very thorough. Children are well prepared for future learning because of their good acquisition of basic skills and wonderful attitudes to learning. Parents are highly satisfied with the progress and care for their children in the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information from the regular monitoring of pupils' attainment to check individuals' and year groups' progress over the time they are at the school.
- Develop the accommodation to provide greater opportunities for linking learning indoors with outdoors in the Reception.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	2
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	1
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 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

Inspection of Middleham Church of England Aided School, Middleham,
DL8 4QX

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so polite and friendly. I enjoyed my visit. I was sorry to miss meeting Year 6 pupils but heard you were having a wonderful time on your residential visit. I want to share with you what I thought about your school.

Your school provides you with a good education. Standards in Year 6 are above average. You make good progress in your learning because you are taught well.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors know how to improve your school and they are assisted well by other staff. To help you reach higher standards I have asked the staff to make better use of the information gained from the regular checking of your work. It would be helpful for staff to record and check the levels that each one of you is working at, as well as the work of groups, throughout your time at school. I have also asked your school leaders to improve the accommodation for Reception to provide greater opportunities for linking learning indoors with outdoors.

I know that you are proud of your school and all get on extremely well together. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour and care and concern for one another.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I wish you well for the future and trust that you will continue to work with the staff to make your school even better.