

# Middleton Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122427
<b>Local Authority</b>	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	314293
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Brennan

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>	
School	407
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jonathan Pierce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Rebecca Plaskitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Harrow Road Wollaton Park Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG8 1FG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 915 3261
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 915 3262

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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 pupils' achievements, including that of pupils of differing ethnic groups. In addition, evidence was gathered from classroom observations and school documentation to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Middleton is a larger than average and popular primary school serving the Wollaton area of Nottingham. The area is culturally and economically diverse and this is reflected in the school's intake. Approximately 40 % of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic groups, with a significant number of pupils from a Pakistani or Indian background. Children's skills and abilities on entry to the nursery cover the full ability range but are broadly typical of this age-group overall. They are however, lower in literacy than in other areas of learning. A growing number of children who start school, or who join the school at other times, are at the early stages of learning English. The school has been awarded the Gold standard as a Healthy School, is an Eco-school and has achieved the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Middleton is a good school that has improved well since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. As one parent commented and many others echoed, 'Our children are brought up in a well rounded environment.' This does not happen by chance and this has not gone unnoticed by parents, the vast majority of whom fully support the school. The relatively new headteacher has done a first rate job in building upon existing strengths and bringing a fresh vision, energy and ambition to the school. She has been careful to consult with parents, pupils, staff and governors. As a result, a sense of common purpose has emerged. Governors do a good job in both supporting the school and in holding it to account. Management systems, such as those for tracking pupil progress, have been strengthened. The school is spot on in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses and has well devised plans for future development. Some areas of the school, such as the Foundation Stage, have benefited from an experienced manager and are well led. Several other leaders, such as in literacy, are new to post and have made a good start. They have been helped by a careful restructuring of the management team, a clarification of roles and responsibilities, and some training in how to be effective leaders. Where necessary, as in the case of leadership of provision for pupils speaking English as an additional language, the headteacher has worked very effectively alongside existing leadership. This has helped bring a fresh impetus and clarity of purpose to an area of the school she has rightly recognised is in need of some improvement.

Pupils achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage make rapid progress in all areas of learning. This good start is generally built upon well through the rest of the school, with most pupils making good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved well in reading, writing and mathematics and are now significantly above average. Throughout the school pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. Although most pupils continue to achieve well through the juniors to reach standards that are also significantly above average, pupils do not achieve quite as well in English as they do in mathematics or science. Those who are at the early stages of learning English make rapid progress in acquiring English. However, some potentially higher attaining pupils, in particular Pakistani pupils, having reached a reasonable level of competence and confidence in reading, writing and speaking, do not progress sufficiently to reach higher levels. This is especially the case in writing.

Pupils' personal development is good, and in some respects outstanding, especially their spiritual and moral, social and cultural development. Pupils willingly take and seek responsibility for their school, the wider community, their learning and the environment. The School Council is highly influential and pupils have been encouraged, for example, to consider ways to reduce their carbon footprint. Pupils are very culturally aware, and learn to respect difference and diversity. The school operates as a harmonious community, with pupils getting on very well with each other. Pupils are very active and well behaved at playtime and, in the main, make good use of the imaginative play area. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and many put principle into practice by eating healthily at school. Attendance rates are above average. Pupils are well placed to make the most of the next stage of education and, through applying and being interviewed for positions such as a playground 'buddy', gain an understanding of the world of work.

The school's teaching, curriculum and arrangements for the care of pupils are all good. 'Steps to success', which are talked through with pupils for each lesson, ensure that learning has clarity of purpose. Pupils say that these steps help them to achieve their goals. Planning is thorough

and ensures that, during group tasks, work is well matched to pupils' differing needs. Interactive whiteboards are used well to encourage engagement and interest in lessons. However, there are times during whole class sessions, when questioning does not stretch the thinking of all higher attaining pupils or consistently support the learning of pupils with language needs. This can lead to some pupils not being engaged in learning sufficiently. The school offers pupils a good curriculum, especially for their personal and social development. The regular use of theme weeks and other good enrichment opportunities, such as a French week, when, for example, pupils in Year 2 wrote letters in French, add vitality to the curriculum. The curriculum helps pupils to learn about different cultures. It is based on first-hand experiences and increasingly links work across subjects to challenge thinking and to provide a vehicle for acquiring and using key skills. The school takes good care of pupils. Formal systems, such as those for child protection, comply with the latest guidelines. Tracking procedures are clear and are used to good effect to help teachers identify the next stages in learning and to ascertain how different groups of pupils are getting on. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is well thought out. The school provides support for younger pupils learning English as an additional language. It acknowledges, and has begun to address, the need for more support for older pupils, particularly the more able and those who have already made some gains in learning English.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children thrive in the Foundation Stage because the curriculum is vibrant and teaching of a good quality. By the time they leave Reception the vast majority have achieved the expected goals, with a significant proportion of children going beyond them. Standards in communication, language and literacy are not quite as high as other areas of learning. Although children subsequently achieve well, this does not fully make up for the weaker English skills many have on entry to school. Staff carefully adapt their approach and activities to match children's very wide range of ability because assessment procedures are thorough and staff know their children and their needs well. Children who need help to clarify their thinking before venturing into speaking and other elements of literacy are given time and encouragement to do so. Those that have the confidence and readiness to write are given equal encouragement. A good balance is struck between learning indoors and outdoors and between teacher led and child led learning. As a result, children quickly grow in confidence and self-esteem so that their education gets off to a flying start.

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

- Improve the achievement of potentially higher attaining minority ethnic pupils, especially Pakistani pupils and especially in writing.
- Improve the consistency with which questioning engages pupils of all abilities during whole class teaching and learning.

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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 <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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
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

<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	3
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

12 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Middleton Nursery and Primary School, Nottingham NG8 1FG.

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently. It felt like I was visiting one big happy family. I would like to tell you what I thought about your school.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make your school the best it can be. You told me that the school asks you for your ideas and listens to your views so you too play your part well in making this a good school. You take on a lot of jobs and responsibilities, including running clubs for each other, which you do very well. I could see, and you told me, that children get on well with each other and that school is fun. You know a lot about each other's different cultures and backgrounds. There is lots to do in the playground and nearly everybody plays properly. It was good to see that many of you do your best to eat healthily and that you think carefully about how to look after the environment.

The school has worked hard to make lessons interesting and, largely, it succeeds in this. You told me how much the use of interactive whiteboards has helped in this respect. Most children work very hard in lessons, but there are times when some pupils do not join in enough when the teacher is talking to the whole class. I have asked the school to think about ways in which to overcome this and you can do your bit by making sure you all join in and try to answer the questions that teachers ask you. The school is quick to give you extra help should you need it, so that most of you improve your work well. There are some pupils, higher up the school, who still need help to make the most of their abilities. I have asked the school to think carefully about how this might be done so that all of you, no matter what your background or ability, do as well as you can.

Thank you once again for being so friendly.

John Brennan

Lead inspector