

Middlezoy Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123687
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314669
Inspection date	8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John English

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Baines
Headteacher	Helen Ormerod
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
School address	Middlezoy Bridgwater TA7 0NZ
Telephone number	01823 698465
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school. Most of the children are of White British heritage, and most live in the village of Middlezoy. There is a small group of children with Traveller or Romany heritage, some of whom stay for relatively short periods while their families are in Middlezoy. There are more girls than boys, although the proportions vary considerably in different year groups. Around a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and receive additional support.

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. The pupils love coming because they enjoy the company of adults and peers alike, and they enjoy learning. Typical parents' comments included: 'super school with a great team of teachers'; and 'my child is happy and confident in a wonderful school environment'. Many commented on how well the school communicated with the parents and worked with them to meet individual needs or resolve problems. Despite substantial changes in staffing, the school has improved considerably in the last year. This has been largely brought about through the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, ably assisted by her senior managers and governors. She has introduced and developed all the key management systems needed to work towards continual improvement. The process for tracking the progress of the pupils is particularly effective, and enables the school to identify areas of weakness and to take action to eliminate them. For example, standards in mathematics were lower than those in English and science. Through effective action this weakness has been eliminated. The school is now well placed to improve further. The pupils enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are broadly in line with expectations, although they are often lower than that in literacy. They make steady progress through the school so that by the time they reach the top three years standards are above average, which indicates good achievement. Pupils feel very safe at school; as one pupil said, 'If I have a problem there's a teacher I trust I can tell things to.' Attendance is above average. The pupils have a very well developed understanding of how to live healthily, and in particular they are all very active and take part in a wide variety of sporting activities. They make an excellent contribution to the running of the school, taking personal responsibility for a number of tasks, for example managing the playground resources. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the way some of them took personal initiatives to improve the way things in their area of responsibility were managed. Their preparation for further work and study is good, and they develop good team-working and leadership skills. Teaching is good, and this is despite the fact that half of the teachers have recently been deployed to classes with age groups new to them, so they are still adjusting their expectations of what their pupils can achieve and how best to plan for them. As a result, the activities planned for the pupils do not always match the needs of the least and most able. Lessons are generally interesting and have a good variety of activities to keep the pupils' attention. They make good progress because of their excellent attitude to work and the very good relations fostered between teachers and pupils and the confidence this gives them. The curriculum is broad and balanced but lacks opportunities for the pupils to develop their creativity. Enhancement activities like clubs and visits out of school are very good, particularly admirable for such a small school. Care, guidance and support are excellent. The school cares very well for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, working well with outside agencies to co-ordinate support. Guidance to pupils on the levels they are attaining and how to improve is also very good. The pupils are set targets and they are given opportunities to assess their own progress and then discuss it with their teachers, which considerably enhances their learning.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Relationships in the Foundation Stage are warm and friendly, helping children to develop in confidence and make good progress. Children behave very well and they share readily with each other. They enjoy lessons and develop good social skills. They make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills through sharing their news together. Good leadership

enables teachers and support staff to plan together effectively to give children a good and happy start to their school lives. A good range of resources is provided for them to work with and the recently developed trim trail encourages pupils' physical development. However, opportunities for them to make their own choices about learning, both in and out of doors, are not sufficiently developed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that the activities organised for the pupils meet the needs of all the different groups in the class.
- Improve the curriculum by providing more opportunities for the pupils to develop their creativity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

With such small numbers, the overall levels of attainment on entry vary considerably from year to year. Typically, children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are in line with expectations, although their personal and social development is above, and aspects of literacy below the expectations. Through the Foundation Stage and on to the end of Year 6 they make good progress in relation to their starting points. Standards rise steadily and consistently in comparison to the national average, so that by the final three years of school they are above average overall. This is a considerable improvement on standards in recent years. Of the core subjects, standards have been least high in mathematics, but due to decisive action, they are now significantly improved. Standards in science are particularly high. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. One pupil said, 'You learn something new every day, not just the same thing.' Pupils play well together during break times and enjoy the wide variety of resources provided, which they share together and use safely. Behaviour is outstanding during lessons and during unstructured times. Pupils feel safe at school because they know there is always someone to turn to if they need help, and they say that bullying is rare. They understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and participate in a wide range of sporting activities. They know about the contribution that healthy eating makes to their own health. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There are good opportunities to learn about other cultures through curriculum topics and when raising money to support other communities. Pupils know their voice is respected and listened to through the school council. They take a wide range of responsibilities, including leading 'Wake and Shake' at the start of the school day and the school grounds team works effectively to improve the school environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Half of the teachers have been recently deployed to teach age ranges that are new to them. They have adapted well and have developed very good relations with their classes. All teachers

plan lessons based on clear objectives, which they explain to the pupils so that they understand what they will be learning. Lessons proceed with good pace and a variety of activities to engage the pupils, but although teachers understand the wide range of ability in their classes, they do not always set sufficiently different tasks to meet the needs of the lowest and highest attaining pupils. The enthusiasm of the teachers and the pupils' excellent attitude ensure nevertheless that the pupils enjoy lessons and make good progress. Teacher assistants provide very good support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well organised so that pupils develop key skills through work in all areas of the curriculum. Enhancement activities like visits and visitors are effectively planned into the units of work to provide for a coherent experience. Whilst there is an appropriate emphasis on the core subjects, other areas receive adequate attention. Planning takes good account of groups where there is a gender imbalance. However, the curriculum is at times too prescriptive, and this limits the scope for pupils to think creatively and develop their own ideas and responses. There is a lively programme for gifted and talented pupils. The curriculum is enriched through the addition of specialist teaching in music and French. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to be involved in clubs and activities after school. Sport features strongly, but there is a wide range of other opportunities, including mosaic making activities and gardening, to promote pupils' social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff contribute to the excellent care given the pupils. Many parents noted this, saying such things as, 'Care is outstanding and we have been made to feel very welcome.' The school has a strong nurturing atmosphere. Pupils at risk of underachieving, or with social or emotional problems, are given individual attention, involving where appropriate the outside agencies. The school also fully involves parents in these cases. Safeguarding systems are robust and regularly reviewed. Academic support and guidance are highly effective in enabling pupils to achieve their challenging targets. Good records are kept of their progress in each year group and these are used very well to help the pupils to understand the next stage of their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, well supported by her senior managers and governors, provides outstanding direction to the staff of the school, firmly based on aiming for the best possible outcomes for the pupils. The processes to track the progress of the pupils and to monitor the performance of the adults are exceptionally good. As a result the governors and senior managers have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and planning to eliminate emerging weaknesses is excellent. The attention paid to the care of the pupils extends to all groups and the school plays a significant role in ensuring that minority groups are welcomed and their specific talents encouraged. The governors have clear expectations of the standards they wish to see maintained in the school, and have effective procedures to monitor performance. Despite the recent changes in staffing and the level of pupil mobility, the excellent support

and training provided by senior managers for adults have ensured that in a difficult period, the achievement of the pupils has been good.

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	1

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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

- 22 May 2008 Inspection of Middlezoy Primary School, Middlezoy, TA7 0NZ Dear Pupils Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed with your friendliness and very good behaviour. We think yours is a good school with some outstanding features. These are:
- the way you are developing as mature young people, learning to take responsibilities and contributing to the success of your school
- the way the school cares for you and helps you to understand how to improve your work
- the way your senior managers run the school so that it gets better all the time. We looked at the results of the tests and assessments that you do, and were pleased to see that most of you are making good progress, so that by the time you reach the last few years of primary school, standards are above average compared to all other schools in the country. Your curriculum is good, and you often have opportunities to go on visits or listen to visitors who make it even more interesting, but we thought that it sometimes did not give enough opportunities for you to think things out for yourselves and develop more creative ways of understanding all the things you are learning about, so we have asked for the school to plan to do this. We were glad to hear that you enjoy lessons and learning, and this is because you get on well with your teachers and they plan lessons that are interesting and, as one of you told us, 'You learn something new every day, not just the same thing!' However we thought that sometimes the tasks you are set are not always the best ones to help you get the most out of your learning; sometimes they are too easy for you, and sometimes too difficult, so we have asked your teachers to make sure that in your different groups in the class the tasks are always at the right level for you. You can help by trying very hard if in future you think a task is more difficult than the ones you are used to! With very best wishes, John English
Lead inspector

22 May 2008

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John English
Lead inspector