

# Minehead Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123876
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314752
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Timothy Gilson

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>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	582
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geoff Lloyd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Rushforth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Ponsford Road Minehead TA24 5RH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01643 704191
<b>Fax number</b>	01643 705693

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Minehead Middle School is a larger than average middle school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than seen nationally. Attendance is higher than in most schools. Most of the pupils are of White British background. The school serves a large catchment area with some isolated rural areas and areas of social disadvantage.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Minehead Middle School is a satisfactory school with good features. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel a sense of pride in being part of the school community. This is shown by their good behaviour and good relationships with their teachers and each other. Pupils are very smartly dressed and enjoy welcoming visitors to their school. Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 8. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils make better progress in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. They do best in mathematics, where they make good progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but are inconsistent. Whilst some teaching is good or outstanding, too much is satisfactory, and some teaching does not challenge pupils enough. Teachers' planning focuses too much on what the teacher will do and not enough on what pupils are expected to learn. Marking is generally consistent across the school and used effectively to show pupils how they can improve their work.

The determined leadership of the headteacher has contributed to the improved reputation of the school locally and created a climate where pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The work of subject coordinators is not monitored regularly enough, however, and this has contributed to inconsistencies in the tracking of pupils' progress and the effectiveness of intervention strategies in their subject areas. The school is aware of this and has an appropriate strategy in place to remedy the situation. The governors carry out their duties well.

This is a caring school. Pupils feel secure and are confident that their teachers have their interests at heart. Parents are generally supportive of the school and many comment favourably on their child's experience. 'Staff in the school go to great lengths to be helpful and supportive' is a typical comment. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility, such as the head boy and girl, the prefects and the sports captains. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits enriches the good curriculum. The school runs a good range of sports teams and successfully competes with other local schools. The award winning school canteen provides a good range of healthy food that pupils appreciate. Pupils play actively at break times and are aware of the need for healthy lifestyles.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6.
- Use the outcomes of monitoring to target professional development and support where teaching most needs improvement.
- Use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards on entry to the school in Year 5 are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards at the end of Year 6, as measured by national tests, are also broadly average. Over the past five years, standards at the end of Year 6 have remained static overall but declined in

science. By the time pupils leave in Year 8 their standards are broadly in line with national averages overall and above average in mathematics..

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress. They make better, and sometimes good, progress in Years 7 and 8. Progress is inconsistent in different subjects, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in mathematics due to good teaching and a thorough system of pupil tracking. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language, those from ethnic minority groups, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities all make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. They are well focused in lessons where teaching is stimulating and challenging and, consequently, make good progress in their learning and the development of independent learning skills. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. However, it deteriorates where teaching fails to engage their interest. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and are happy to approach staff if they have any concerns. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. There is a good range of after school sports clubs, which are well attended.

Pupils make the most of the opportunities to accept responsibility, such as the eco- committee, prefects and buddy system. As a result, they develop leadership skills which prepare them well for life beyond school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils are able to develop empathy for other cultures through a wide range of activities such as visits, workshops and debates, and pupils explore the nature of diversity in several subjects. Pupils were inspired to achieve highly in one lesson due, in part, to the high quality of pupils' work displayed. Their cultural development is good and many pupils perform in the orchestra and other school productions.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there is a wide variation in practice across the school. Pupils are keen to learn and readily engage in the activities organised for them by teachers. All lessons are characterised by the good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. However, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. The better lessons are well planned, imaginative and stimulating, capturing pupils' attention throughout. For example, the learning activities in some science lessons have a clear focus on developing pupils' sense of curiosity and enquiry of the world around them. In these lessons, teachers promote high expectations for pupils and the work is challenging and is delivered at a fast pace. Other teaching does not expect enough of pupils, activities are not challenging enough, or the pace of learning is too slow. Some satisfactory teaching relies too heavily on the teacher's input and pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their independent learning skills. The use of marking is more consistent. Most teachers provide good feedback to pupils on their progress and set appropriate targets for improvement. As a result, most pupils are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

The school provides a broad curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs. The school is an attractive learning environment and pupils' work is creatively displayed throughout. There is a clear focus on developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Satisfactory learning programmes are in place to help those pupils who have fallen behind in their literacy and numeracy development. There is a good range of provision to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Pupils' personal development is well planned through the school's personal, social and health education programme. The school makes good use of visiting theatre groups, musicians and residential trips to enliven learning for pupils. A wide range of clubs and activities are offered to pupils, particularly in music and sport. A number of these take place at lunchtime to support the development of the large number of children who travel home by bus at the end of school. These clubs are well attended and make an important contribution to pupils' personal development.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are good. The transition from first school is particularly good and this helps pupils to settle quickly into Year 5 and ensures that vulnerable pupils' needs are identified early. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given satisfactory support and, if appropriate, intervention programmes put in place to raise their achievement in literacy and numeracy. However, there is a lack of rigour in the tracking of these pupils to check their progress and the success of intervention strategies. The school makes good provision for those with behavioural difficulties and a range of programmes, such as anger management, help pupils to take ownership of, and improve, their behaviour.

All pupils are clear about their academic targets and how to improve their work to achieve them. Year 8 pupils are confident about their move to the upper school. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are secure. 'You know your children will be happy and well cared for' was a typical comment from a parent. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 take part in an internet safety scheme to raise their awareness of potential dangers. Partnerships with external agencies are effective and form an integral part of the support that pupils and their families receive.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team provide clear and determined leadership and this has contributed to the improvements in the school and its improved reputation locally. The school undoubtedly enjoys the confidence and support of parents. The school has made substantial investments in enhancing the quality of the buildings and facilities. The headteacher has made significant progress in improving behaviour which is now good throughout the school.

The senior leadership team has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the actions that need to be taken to achieve further improvement. Actions taken to raise standards have been more successful in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. The school has a great deal of data about pupils' progress, but the evaluation of what the data

shows is not always accurate. In addition, middle leaders are inconsistent in their leadership and management and are sometimes not rigorous enough in monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. The school does not currently check their work effectively, although the new leadership structure is intended to address this issue.

The governors of the school are well informed and have good procedures for monitoring the work of the school through the link governors. They discharge their role as critical friends effectively. Issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been adequately addressed and the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The headteacher has made a major contribution to the development of the West Somerset Federation with three of the school's feeder first schools. This is clearly focused on raising pupils' achievement. Relations with outside agencies and the local community are good.

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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>
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### 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>	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<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>	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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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**

17 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minehead Middle School, Minehead TA24 5RH

As you know, a team of three inspectors recently visited your school and I am writing to let you know what we found.

Thank you very much for the polite and friendly welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour, smart uniform, and the pride you have in your school.

Minehead Middle School is a satisfactory school, with some things that are good. It is clear that your teachers care for you very well and we were impressed with the good relationship you have with them. There are many good activities outside your normal lessons, such as visits and sporting events. You have a good range of subjects to study and you clearly enjoy being at school. We found that the school works well with other schools and the community. You have plenty of opportunities to take responsibility in the school and you are being well prepared for the next stage of your education.

We found that you make better progress in Years 7 and 8 than you do in Years 5 and 6. As a result, we have asked the school to concentrate on improving the progress that you make in your first two years at the school. We have also asked the school to look at ways of using the information they have about you gained from tests and assessments to help you make better progress. We would like the school to help teachers share their best ideas about lessons. We think that sometimes you could be challenged more in lessons and that you shouldn't rely on the teacher as much.

You can help by working more independently and always trying your best in lessons.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Timothy Gilson Lead inspector



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Lead inspector