

Middleton Parish CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105821
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324278
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Steve Rigby

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	214
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Nick Feist
Headteacher	Mrs B Rogerson
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Springfield Road Middleton Manchester Lancashire M24 5DL

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This broadly average-sized school serves a mixed area in which there is some significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There have been a number of staffing changes since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. There is a Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school holds a number of national awards including the Healthy Schools, Extended Schools and an Activemark for promoting the physical education curriculum.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Middleton Parish is a good school. It enjoys the confidence of the overwhelming majority of its parents, who feel it provides a welcoming and supportive environment in which their children are safe and well cared for. Since the previous inspection a new leadership team has been established to ensure that staff have a greater ownership of the decisions made in school. Pupils' progress and attainment is now more closely monitored and work is well matched to their abilities. This has resulted in rising standards and in the overall better achievement of most pupils, including those who have significant barriers to their learning and require additional support.

Having entered the Early Years Foundation Stage with lower than expected skills, pupils' overall progress is good, resulting in broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in mathematics and reading reach expected levels, although standards in writing are weaker. Pupils do well in Key Stage 2. Science is a particular strength with standards regularly being above average. The school responded positively to lower than expected results in mathematics in 2007 by improving pupils' calculation and mental mathematics skills. Consequently, pupils are now working very securely in mathematics with an increasing number reaching the higher Level 5 in Year 6. In contrast, fewer of the more able pupils attain at this level in writing.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with most lessons being fully inclusive for all pupils. Staff regularly check on pupils' progress with teachers' marking directing pupils to their next steps in learning. In the best lessons the focus is quickly established and learning proceeds at a good pace. Lessons are challenging and enjoyable. This results in pupils being interested and willing to participate in question and answer sessions. There are, however, occasions when teaching is not as effective, particularly in stimulating pupils with enthusiasm and imagination to help them improve their writing and, as a result, pupils do not always persevere with their work until the task is completed.

There is a good curriculum. It is enriched through a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. It is particularly effective in promoting pupils' awareness of how to stay healthy and safe. This is a happy school in which any behavioural or emotional difficulties are managed positively. Pupils enjoy their time in school and what it has to offer. Behaviour in lessons and in the playgrounds is sensible. Pupils' attitudes and conduct towards staff and one another lead to good working relationships during lessons. Pupils express their opinions and feelings quite openly through their school council, which provides them with a voice in the decision-making processes of the school.

This is an improving school that is well led and managed and has worked to good effect to raise pupils' achievement. The hard-working headteacher, who is well supported by staff and governors, evaluates carefully what the school does. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation is accurate and matches the findings of the inspection in every area. The well-focused progress the school has made indicates that it has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age. Their skills are particularly weak in aspects of spoken language, personal development,

and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress and by the end of Reception their attainment in literacy and numeracy broadly matches that expected for their age. Their creative and physical development is better than expected, although aspects of their personal development, and knowledge and understanding of the world are still below those expected for their age. Welfare requirements are fully met.

Children are well cared for, kept safe and sensitively nurtured. They soon settle into the daily routines and engage in exploring and learning with happy smiling faces. Good provision is made to stimulate their curiosity through an exciting range of activities, inside and outside the classroom. Children are encouraged to make choices and take responsibility, which helps them to become independent learners. They behave well and work and play together harmoniously. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in helping children to acquire important literacy and numeracy skills. By grouping children according to their different needs, staff teach them at just the right level to move their learning on. Their responses are carefully observed, recorded and used to plan the next learning steps. Good leadership and management are evident in the way in which the quality of provision is checked and improved, for example by providing more opportunities for children to handle artefacts, observe life cycles and share their experiences. These approaches are helping to strengthen their understanding and develop their social skills. Parents are effectively involved in supporting their children's learning and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching stimulates pupils' enthusiasm for writing to improve standards by the end of Year 2 and increase the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 by the end of Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well overall considering their below average start points. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 are broadly average overall. Standards in science in Key Stage 2 have been above average over a number of years. This is largely because pupils have developed good investigation skills and enjoy the practical challenges provided. Raising standards in mathematics has been a major focus for the school. A number of recent innovations, supported by improved assessment, targeting and tracking procedures, have ensured a closer match of work to pupils' needs. This has resulted in a marked increase in the number of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6.

In English, pupils throughout the school make better progress in reading than in writing. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoyed contributing to whole-class discussions and talking with their partners. However, a number of pupils show a lack of application and interest when asked to write. This lack of enthusiasm to write is reflected in both Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and many of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 do not reach the higher level in this subject. This picture is starting to improve following intensive training for staff and a collective approach towards the teaching of writing. Pupils with a learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills because of the high quality care they receive from support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils' personal development and well-being is good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils show confidence and enjoyment in their learning, especially during practical activities. They have a strong sense of justice and fairness in their relationships and they work and play together harmoniously, learning how to be good future citizens.

Pupils disapprove of any form of bullying or racism and show a strong sense of duty towards helping others. They have a good understanding of their own culture, but are less clear about other cultures and the multicultural society in which they live. Pupils say, 'we always feel safe.' Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. They are alert to the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and well aware of the dangers of smoking, alcohol and the use of various types of drugs. Pupils enjoy school, particularly physical education and working with computers. Furthermore, they love the many additional activities provided, for example residential visits and after-school clubs. Pupils feel very much a part of their school. They express their views openly and take responsibility by working independently and understanding the consequences of their actions. These factors are helping to secure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes. A particular strength in teaching is the good quality relationships which impact positively on pupils' good personal development. Where teaching is good, teachers' explanations are clear. Pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn, are encouraged successfully to work at a good pace and give of their best. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to provide highly effective support for pupils. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well catered for with their pastoral and academic needs well met. Overall, the use of assessment is good in providing work that is usually well matched to pupils' different learning needs and to identify helpful targets for them to aim for. Teaching does not always fire pupils' enthusiasm to help them improve their writing and the more able pupils sometimes have to complete a writing task that is too easy for them before moving on to more challenging work. This limits their achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets requirements. Subjects are studied in depth, which enables pupils to enjoy learning and to achieve well overall. The impact of the curriculum is monitored and the school is succeeding in increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning by teaching subjects together as topics. Pupils particularly enjoy the additional visits and visitors designed to stimulate their interest. The curriculum is carefully applied to cater for the needs of those pupils who require additional learning support. There are several 'catch up' programmes to help pupils whose achievement requires boosting and this is helping to raise standards. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are recognised and adequately met through extension activities in lessons.

However, their progress and development are not as effectively nurtured as, for example, pupils who find learning more difficult. A good programme of personal, social and health education equips pupils with a sharp understanding of what it means to lead safe and healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' safety and well-being is assured by well-established procedures. The school meets all current requirements for safeguarding and risks are carefully assessed and well supervised both inside and outside school. The needs of the most vulnerable pupils are well understood and the headteacher and senior teaching assistant guide and support them extremely well. The school is quick to involve outside agencies, such as child councillors and support services who work closely with parents to minimise and often remove barriers to learning entirely. The school welfare officer plays a vital and highly effective part in ensuring that children are safeguarded from the moment they enter school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons and overseen by the school coordinator, which helps them to make good progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving as pupils become more involved in evaluating their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and focused on raising standards and achievement. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement, which is shared effectively with other staff through discussions and a well-conceived school development plan. The formation of small teams has also created a greater ownership of the school's management processes, particularly in checking on the quality of teaching, analysis of assessments and pupils' work to identify areas requiring improvement. This is why standards in mathematics, for example, are currently rising.

The school is an inclusive community. It has satisfactory procedures in place to address equality and diversity amongst its pupils. It regularly challenges any stereotyping and monitors the progress made by different groups of pupils, identifying correctly the need to raise attainment amongst the most able in writing. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory and is developing with numerous links with local, national and international institutions. These range from residential visits to France to nationally recognised awards for Healthy Schools and Activemark for developing the physical education curriculum. The school is an integral part of its local community and has a range of local visits and visitors who enrich the curriculum. The governors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and supportive of the headteacher. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and make a valuable contribution working alongside the school management team in guiding the school forward.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed meeting you, visiting your lessons and talking to you. The school councillors and pupils who met with us were keen to tell us many good things about your school. This letter is to tell you what we found.

You go to a good school. I was particularly pleased to see how the standard of your work was improving. Your headteacher leads your school well and your teachers provide you with interesting lessons so that you can do your best. Your behaviour in classrooms is good and I was pleased by the care and consideration you showed for others. You are very knowledgeable about keeping fit and staying healthy.

To help your school to get even better I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that the teaching helps you to have more enthusiasm for writing to improve your standards by the end of Year 2 and increase the number of pupils reaching Level 5 by the end of Year 6.

We know your teachers are eager to help you make these improvements and that you will help them.