

# Fulbrook Middle School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 109658               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Central Bedfordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 337344               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 23–24 June 2010      |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mary Davis           |

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 of pupils on the school roll</b> | 372   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Lindsay Smith                                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Stephen Cardwell                                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 22 November 2006                                  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Weathercock Lane<br>Woburn Sands<br>Milton Keynes |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01908 582022                                      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01908 281732                                      |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | fulbrook@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk                 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 9–13            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 23–24 June 2010 |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons and all 19 teachers, and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies and development planning; the analysis of examination results and data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; governors' minutes; pupils' work and 113 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- why pupils with special educational learning needs and/or disabilities appear to make less progress than other pupils
- the consistency of the quality of teaching
- how well pupils know their targets and how to reach them, and the consistency of the quality of marking
- how well pupils understand aspects of life in multicultural Britain and global issues.

## Information about the school

Fulbrook Middle School is a smaller than average school of its type. At the end of Key Stage 2, a significant minority of pupils leave for secondary schools in Milton Keynes and a smaller number join the school for Key Stage 3. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and most of these join the school for a short time only. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and the percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The school has National Healthy Schools status and the International Award at intermediate level.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Fulbrook Middle school provides a good quality of education and has made considerable improvement since its last inspection. Many of the aspects of its work are now outstanding, including pupils' outcomes in achievement and personal development. These improvements result from the drive and ambition of the senior leaders, supported by an extremely strong governing body who, together, have a clearly identified focus on further development.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school and in their ability to achieve well. Typical of remarks made by pupils are: 'We are like a big family that helps to make you feel good.' 'I feel part of something special.' 'I feel that I can succeed by coming here.' They feel safe as a result of the outstanding care they receive and say that incidents of bullying are very rare and that 'there are loads of people' they can go to for help. Pupils show great care for each other and especially for the most vulnerable. Pupils are articulate and confident young people. They contribute impressively to the running of the school through the school council, who have, for example, helped raise funds for outside shelters where all can eat their lunch. Pupils also enthusiastically take leadership roles, such as organising sports days and other events for lower school pupils. Many pupils take part in the wealth of sporting activities provided and enjoy the teamwork opportunities these offer. They have a clear understanding of how to stay healthy and say they value the nutritious food provided by the school kitchens. Attendance is high. Pupils consistently reach high standards of attainment, both at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. In the latter key stage, the curriculum enables them to take accelerated courses where they reach standards by the end of Year 8 that are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 9. Their high levels of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), together with their confidence in relating to others, are excellent preparation for their future economic well-being. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, particularly their social skills and their understanding of right and wrong. They have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour in lessons and are indignant when their learning is, on rare occasions, disrupted by the restless behaviour of a few. Overall, behaviour is good and pupils display a positive attitude towards their learning and have high aspirations for the future.

Over a third of the lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding, resulting in all pupils making rapid progress in these classes. Although most other teaching seen was good, in some lessons there is insufficient focus on the individual needs of all pupils by, for example, ensuring they are fully involved in paired or group activities. Pupils with special educational learning needs and/or disabilities, identified as under-achieving at

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Key Stage 2 in 2009, are now making good progress as a result of the extra support they receive, particularly that of learning support assistants in their lessons. The most vulnerable are extremely well cared for, ensuring their inclusion in all class activities.

Pupils say they receive high-quality oral feedback in lessons so that they know their targets and how to reach them. The quality of written marking, however, is inconsistent, so that pupils do not always know how well they are progressing towards their targets or what they need to do to improve. Some targets are phrased in language that is too complex and, as a result, not all pupils fully understand them

The good curriculum provides exciting opportunities for cross-curricular tasks that embed basic skills in all subjects. A key strength is the excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that have a very high take-up. The strong links with lower and upper schools not only ensure a continuity of learning, but also provide outstanding support for pupils as they move between schools. Year 4 pupils were joining Year 5 lessons during the inspection and were fully involved in all activities as a result of the support of their 'buddies'.

The headteacher and his senior leaders work as a strong and well-balanced team who are passionate about taking the school to even greater heights. Self-evaluation, as a result of careful monitoring of all the school's work, has resulted in the school's strengths and weaknesses being clearly and accurately identified, together with appropriate action to address the latter. The leadership team has identified the need to share outstanding practice in teaching more effectively to improve further its quality across the school. As a result of pupils' much improved personal and academic outcomes and the increasing proportion of excellent teaching, the school displays an outstanding capacity to go even further forward, while sustaining the current areas of excellent practice.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use existing outstanding practice to raise the consistency of good or better teaching to 100% by July 2011 by:
  - ensuring that all teachers plan activities and resources that are closely matched to all pupils' individual needs
- Improve the consistency of feedback, including marking, to ensure that all pupils understand their targets, how well they are doing and how to improve.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils join the school in Year 5, having usually attained standards close to those expected nationally by the end of Year 4, although performance fluctuates from year to year. By the time they leave the school in Year 8, they reach high standards as a result of the consistently good teaching they receive. Quick action is taken to support pupils identified as underachieving, for example by sessions with a learning mentor and one to one additional tuition. Attainment in the national tests by the end of Key Stage 2 was

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high in 2009. Learning and progress in lessons is good overall and in the best lessons is outstanding for all groups of pupils. The achievement of those who speak English as an additional language and the very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with the majority.

Learning is supported by good behaviour and a desire to do well. Pupils feel secure and say that they are well informed about internet safety and about the dangers of drugs and smoking, through personal social and health education. They enjoy being part of a caring community that extends to the locality, by, for example, growing fruit and vegetables with the help of the allotments' association. They help to influence school policy by undertaking learning reviews, making perceptive comments about the way they are taught and by contributing to the interview process of new teachers. They also raise funds for national and international charities and have an active eco-committee. Pupils are provided with many opportunities for reflection and to form their own views on issues that face them. They understand and are highly respectful of other cultures and beliefs, but have less experience of life in multicultural Britain. This is currently being effectively addressed by the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 1        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 1        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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## How effective is the provision?

Pupils say that the best teachers inspire them to learn well. These teachers make lessons fun and easy to understand. For example, pupils were able to visualise the vast distances between planets and the sun by measuring them out on the school field to a scale devised by themselves. In most lessons, they are helped to build on their prior knowledge and to practise key skills. They identify with historical and literary figures in various situations by using role play to bring the past alive and make these situations relevant to the present day. Assessment is used well to support learning in lessons and in the best lessons pupils have a clear understanding of what is required to reach the highest standards of attainment.

Excellent local partnerships enliven the curriculum. Many visits and visitors help to improve and excite learning. The termly 'super learning' days are high spots, offering memorable opportunities such as the reduce, reuse, recycle project and the day working with a professional artist. The specialist teaching in design and technology and art are very strong and result in inspirational displays around the school.

There are rigorous procedures in place to monitor the academic and pastoral progress of pupils. Form tutors are closely involved in this and know their pupils well, and teach the personal, social and health education course. Vulnerable pupils are extremely well cared for, by, for example, exceptional multi-agency links. Key staff in the inclusion department are always on hand to support pupils and their families. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, many at an early stage, often join the school for short periods. They are well supported and quickly integrated into class lessons.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team inspire and motivate staff to continue to strive to improve their practice. This has resulted in a very strong sense of purpose among adults and pupils and a culture of wanting the school to succeed. As a result, pupils have a high level of self-belief. Middle leaders drive and help secure improvement, including sharing responsibility for developing literacy skills across the curriculum, but they are not yet fully involved in the monitoring of teaching to ensure that good practice is shared. Governors are committed to ensuring that they too have a high level of expertise by undertaking training to enable them to have a full understanding of all aspects of the

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school's work. Each aspect of the school's development plan is supported by a governor who is very influential in driving improvement. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the governors and staff at all levels, and policies and practice related to this and child protection are robust and of the highest quality. Issues related to safety are built into the curriculum so that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. There is a good parental support, for example through the active parent-teacher association and a variety of methods of communication ensure that parents and carers are kept informed. The pastoral needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well met as a result of the school's interaction with parents and carers. The strong partnerships with lower and upper schools are evident not only through the continuity of the curriculum but also in shared sporting events. The school knows all its groups of pupils well and analyses their attainment closely to ensure all make good progress - and most do so very well. The school's policies ensure that discrimination is detected and stamped out quickly and effectively. There is, however some disparity between the progress made by different groups of pupils in a small minority of lessons. Community cohesion, well monitored by the governors, is supported by a wealth of activities and links within the local community. The relative weakness of national and global links is being effectively addressed, including links with schools in India and Afghanistan and a multicultural inner city school, all of which are at an early stage of development. Pupils' current contribution to their school and the local community is exceptional.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>1</b> |

**Views of parents and carers**



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A minority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, most of whom indicated that they were happy with the way the school provides for their children's well-being, learning and progress. A few were unhappy with the progress their children were making. Inspectors found that pupils make good progress during their time in school. Some parents and carers said they value the quick response to any concerns, although a very few disagreed. Inspectors found engagement with parents and carers to be good. A very small minority expressed concerns about poor behaviour, although most commented that behaviour is managed well and inspectors agreed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fulbrook Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 372 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 54             | 48 | 52    | 46 | 4        | 4  | 3                 | 3 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 60             | 53 | 48    | 42 | 3        | 3  | 1                 | 1 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 41             | 36 | 62    | 55 | 8        | 7  | 2                 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 53             | 47 | 48    | 42 | 8        | 7  | 3                 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 50             | 44 | 52    | 46 | 8        | 7  | 2                 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 34             | 30 | 64    | 57 | 12       | 11 | 2                 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 35             | 31 | 69    | 61 | 7        | 6  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 56             | 50 | 51    | 46 | 2        | 2  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 48             | 42 | 52    | 46 | 10       | 9  | 2                 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 42             | 37 | 53    | 47 | 13       | 12 | 3                 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 35             | 31 | 59    | 52 | 12       | 11 | 5                 | 4 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 56             | 50 | 42    | 37 | 6        | 5  | 5                 | 4 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 57             | 50 | 46    | 41 | 6        | 5  | 2                 | 2 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.  |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

### Overall effectiveness of schools

|                      | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school       | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 51  | 45   | 0            | 4          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 41   | 42           | 10         |
| Secondary schools    | 8   | 34   | 44           | 14         |
| Sixth forms          | 10  | 37   | 50           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 32  | 38   | 25           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 12  | 43   | 31           | 14         |
| All schools          | 9   | 40   | 40           | 10         |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.  |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.   |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.   |
| Learning:                  | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.   |
| Overall effectiveness:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.  |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



25 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fulbrook Middle School, Milton Keynes, MK17 8NP

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school. We were particularly impressed by your mature comments and evident pride in your school. We agree that it is a good school, and these are our main findings.

Your attainment by the end of Year 8 is high compared with what is typical for pupils of this age across the whole country. You enjoy your learning and are making good progress.

You greatly value the relationships you have with your teachers and each other and the harmonious school community where everyone is valued. The contribution you make, particularly to the school community, is outstanding.

Your behaviour in lessons is good and your attendance is excellent.

Teaching is good and a large proportion is outstanding, enabling you to make good progress. Teachers provide a variety of tasks that are often fun and exciting. We think, however, that sometimes teachers don't provide work that is sufficiently matched to different abilities within the class. Although you value the oral feedback you receive about your work, we feel that sometimes teachers do not explain your targets using language that you are all able to understand

The curriculum is good, enabling you to reach high standards and it is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and the arts.

The excellent care you receive enables you to feel safe and well supported. You particularly value the fact that your teachers know you well and care about you as individuals.

The school's leaders are working unstintingly to ensure you are well cared for and that things continue to improve.

In order to take your learning to new heights, we have asked the school to ensure that all teachers plan work that meets each individual's needs, to improve the consistency of marking so that you know how to improve, and to make sure each one of you fully understands your targets. You can help by continuing to working hard to achieve your best.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis

Lead inspector

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