

# Middle Street Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114369
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	338347
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Marshall

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

---

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Wardle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Aldous
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Middle Street Brighton East Sussex BN1 1AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 323184
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 724769
<b>Email address</b>	head@middlestreet.brighton-hove.sch.uk

---

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching and support staff, parents, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs, minutes of governors' meetings and 41 parental questionnaires.

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

- The school's use of assessment information to help raise the level of achievement of the current pupils.
- The impact of the school's provision on pupils' personal development.
- How the revised curriculum promotes outcomes for pupils, particularly in developing their awareness of others from contrasting backgrounds.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels including governors.

## Information about the school

This primary school with a nursery is larger than average. It serves Brighton town centre and the surrounding area. All children who enter in Reception have had some pre-school education and half have attended the school's own Nursery. The school serves a mixed area and the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is above average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; most have behavioural or social difficulties. A significant number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties join the school other than at the usual times. The school has many awards reflecting its commitment to promote pupils basic skills, the arts, safety and healthy living.

**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

Middle Street is a good school. It has a number of considerable strengths. The pastoral support, guidance and care provided for every child is outstanding, and as a result by the time pupils leave the school, they are mature and very thoughtful young adults, who make an excellent contribution to the school and the local community. One parent summed up the views of many by writing, 'Middle Street is an excellent school where children are supported and encouraged'. The school provides the children with an excellent start in life. The standards of teaching are very good and the children are being equipped well with life skills.

This very positive reputation in the community, and the good pupil outcomes, are due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and aspirations for the school. They have a burning ambition to turn what they know to be a good school into an outstanding one. Accurate self-evaluation has led to continual improvement, for example the raising of attendance rates. In addition, the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been enhanced since the last inspection. Older pupils with literacy difficulties are now making much better progress in writing. Given the school's track record of improvements and innovations in some areas and detailed self-analysis, the school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

Over the last year, the staff have sought to provide an innovative and exciting approach to their whole-school curriculum, to inspire pupils to learn. This method, known as 'The Learning Journey', is based on an exceptionally well defined and detailed analysis, of what skills pupils need and how best they can be acquired. The drive and determination of the headteacher and senior leaders has ensured that within this, relatively new approach to planning, teaching and learning are good. Although there is some outstanding teaching and learning in some classes, the quality is not yet found consistently throughout the school. There is more still to do to ensure that pupils in all years are provided with activities that consistently challenge them. Although pupils have targets and feedback, not all clearly understand what they need to do to improve.

From an average starting point, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with levels in English, mathematics and science that are generally higher than the national averages. Senior leaders have a wealth of information about individual performance of pupils, and this is now in a format that can be easily used by teachers to fine-tune their planning to accelerate learning further.

A very supportive atmosphere for learning exists that ensures pupils make good progress, thoroughly enjoy their learning and achieve well. All involved acknowledge the

**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

role of the outstanding teaching assistants in supporting pupils in the school. There are inspiring displays of pupils' work everywhere that show just how successful the school is being in its aim to raise fully pupils' achievement in all aspects of their learning. The pupils' good attendance and the happy faces in many lessons and around the school are also a testament to how successful this approach is being. The school successfully instils in the pupils a strong spiritual, social and moral understanding that accounts for their outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to school.

The school does much to promote their place in the local community and works effectively with many local nurseries and playgroups, and local businesses. Its recent audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of the school's context. While these links with the local community are excellent, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse Britain are not developed sufficiently well.

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

- Ensure this year coming that all teaching is as good as the best by:
- making sure all lessons have clear aims
- ensuring that teachers consistently set precise learning targets
- giving pupils clear guidance during lessons and through marking of their work so they know how to improve.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse Great Britain and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
- instigating the findings of their recent careful analysis
- implementing their plans to link with schools in other localities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. All groups of pupils, including the most able and those whose circumstances have made them most vulnerable, make good progress. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. Effective organisation and careful assessments enable pupils to make good progress immediately. Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally above average and the more able pupils do especially well. Much of the pupils' success in reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson where the teacher very skilfully drew pupils' attention to what they would find on their outing the next day by making them listen carefully to each other's responses. The school's own monitoring confirms inspection findings that although there are many strengths, outcomes are good rather than outstanding. There are still aspects of learning, although planned for carefully in the new curriculum, which have yet to become embedded in order to reach the outcomes aimed for. For example, the organisation of the provision for mathematical development has been replanned after the slight dip in standards in the Year 6 national tests this year.

**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

The provision for vulnerable pupils, or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is excellent and leads to these pupils making outstanding progress. Pupils benefit from tailored individual or small group sessions that successfully help to plug the gaps in their writing skills. Activities that involve them using all of their senses to learn letter sounds and clusters of sounds aid their confidence in writing for different purposes. This has a positive effect on their learning in all other subjects.

Pupils who arrive part-way through a school term quickly settle down and this enables them to seamlessly continue their learning. The school is equally successful in ensuring pupils who arrive without speaking English receive the right sort of help so they make good progress in developing speaking and comprehension skills.

Another reason that pupils make good progress overall and achieve well is because attendance has improved. The standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their interest in learning, prepare them exceptionally well for their transition to the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>2</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: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<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.

**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

In many lessons, pupils make good progress and sometimes learning is excellent. On these occasions pupils are highly involved in learning and totally engrossed in the activities. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 6, pupils delighted in working on their Australia topic around the book 'Walkabout'. The pupils discussed their drama presentations at a very deep level. Their enjoyment and thoughtful consideration of each other's opinions and good attempts to record their ideas were impressive. The resulting dramatic responses from all were an excellent result of the planning and expectations of the teacher. However, in other classes, occasionally, the teacher's use of questions to open the discussion for the pupils was too drawn out, and although the planning is excellent pupils are not always enabled to begin the tasks as quickly as required.

The range of opportunities that pupils are given, through the curriculum, known as the 'Learning Journey', is outstanding. At all times, pupils are encouraged to be independent and are highly motivated. Pupils know they have to work hard to be given this independence, and they do. Not only do standards in English, mathematics and science generally reach an above average standard by the time they leave the school, pupils are also given excellent opportunities in all other subjects. The excellence of the displays through the school is testament to the consistently good progress being achieved in art and design, and has led to the school's Artsmark Gold award. One boy described the computer suite as 'like Aladdin's cave' and the description is apt. As a result, pupils' achievement in information and communication technology is good. Music is also a strength of the school and pupils are given many opportunities to develop their musical talents. The standard of singing witnessed during the inspection was impressive, and reflected the enthusiasm and skill demonstrated by the part-time teacher in a lesson observed with a Year 4 class. Despite this excellent curriculum, pupils' progress slows occasionally as not all teachers harness this innovative planning to the same degree. The school recognises that there is some way to go in order to make sure all lessons are as good as the best.

The impact of the school's outstanding support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' consistently high standards of behaviour and social skills. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe is outstanding. They are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community through, for example, being playground buddies after training, and school councillors.

If there is one aspect of the school's outstanding care for individual pupils that is particularly notable it is the work of the learning mentors, and their teaching assistants. The zeal, patience and understanding they show to vulnerable pupils results in them achieving very well and is an inspiration to all others in the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<p><b>The quality of teaching</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's leadership is excellent, and with the complementary skills of the very experienced deputy headteacher, they make an impressive team. All staff follow their lead and teamwork is an aspect stressed by all in the school. One way in which everyone follows the headteacher's exemplary lead is to relate extremely effectively with all pupils, parents and the local community. Partnerships are outstanding. Management at all levels is good and strongly committed to the continuing professional development of staff. This is reflected in their desire to improve the consistency of teaching, recognising that assessment routines related to the new curriculum need to be 'fine-tuned'. There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is very effective. The school improvement plan provides very clear guidance on relevant issues for raising standards and takes into consideration support and initiatives from all sources. The governing body is fully involved in this process and they bring a wide range of skills to bear as they act as critical friends, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

The school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously. It values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these to ensure all are treated fairly. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained in child protection routines. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand its links to provide a national perspective is well understood by the school.

*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: 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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>



<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The very youngest children, who join the school's own nursery with broadly typical levels of skills for their age, get off to a flying start in their education. By the time children move to the Reception class, their levels of attainment are often better than expected at this age. In the Reception Year, children make good progress and, by the time they move to Year 1, almost all children attain the goals expected at this age, except for those in their language and literacy development. As one parent wrote, 'Just two weeks into Reception class, my son is completely settled, inspired, excited to come to school. He has learned letters each day and is now almost reading!! Amazing!'

The provision in the Nursery is particularly effective in developing high levels of children's independence in learning, confidence and creativity because of more advantageous staffing levels. The staff are skilled in providing a wide range of high-quality activities, both indoors and out, that challenge the children to make choices and to investigate, and are highly adept at picking up on and developing spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, in the Nursery the task of giving out book bags at the end of the morning, after an excellent story about hiccups, developed into a sounds game and reinforcement of everything the children had learned during the session. In the Reception class, staff are similarly skilled in providing activities that excite and interest the children.

Common features of the Early Years Foundation Stage classes are the outstanding emphasis placed on ensuring children's welfare and the high-quality relationships that are evident between all staff and children. Consequently, the children feel very secure and enjoy their learning. The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage overall is the result of the clear direction provided by the leadership, who have been instrumental in the excellent development of provision in the Nursery.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**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

## **Views of parents and carers**

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that the headteacher leads and manages the school very well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children make good progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. A small number of parental criticisms were offered constructively. There were no particular trends in the very few negative comments received by inspectors.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Middle Street 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	83	6	15	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	78	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	39	23	56	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	44	22	54	1	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	56	17	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	56	15	37	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	59	14	34	1	2	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)	17	42	20	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	46	19	46	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	42	20	49	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	44	20	49	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	66	12	29	0	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	68	12	29	1	2	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.**



8 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Middle Street Primary School, Brighton, BN1 1AL

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us ' it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you all make good progress in your learning.
- You behave extremely well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- You all have very good ideas on how to make things better and the teachers always listen to what you want.
- You have a good understanding of how to live healthily.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school extremely well.

Even in good schools there are some things that can be made better, and we have asked your teachers to make sure that no matter which class you are in the teachers make sure you are all given work that will help you make the best progress you can, and you are always clear about how you can improve. We have also asked your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places that are different from where you live.

Yours faithfully

David Marshall

Lead Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**