

Durrington Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125952
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340877
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ged Harbinson
Headteacher	Alison Cornell
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
School address	Salvington Road Worthing West Sussex BN13 2JD
Telephone number	01903 260 761
Fax number	01903 691714
Email address	head@durringtonmiddle.w-sussex.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Seventy per cent of the inspection looked at learning. The inspectors visited 20 teachers in 20 lessons. They saw assemblies and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, minutes of governors' meetings and school policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documentation, teachers' planning and samples of work. The views of parents in the 119 Ofsted parent and carer questionnaires returned were considered, together with those completed by 93 pupils and 33 members of staff.

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

- initiatives and strategies for improving the attainment of pupils through the raising of expectations, especially for boys in English and of lower attaining girls in mathematics and science
- monitoring of teaching and subject leadership upon the overall quality of teaching and learning across the school
- the school's strategies to promote community cohesion
- shared, collaborative leadership upon standards at the middle school.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds and nearly all speak English as their home language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school shares its headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors with the adjoining Durrington First School. A Children and Families Centre lies within the schools' grounds that is not managed by the governing body. The school houses a Special Support Centre (SSC) for nine pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. An above average number of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than at the beginning or end of the academic year. The majority of the pupils transfer to the local high school at the end of Year 7.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Improvements in provision and leadership over the last few years have successfully raised pupils' achievement and this has resulted in rising attainment which is now average by the time pupils leave the school.

The headteacher is fully committed to school improvement and the raising of attainment. She works effectively with the senior leadership team and governors to ensure the school continually evaluates its performance in order to develop a clear idea of what it needs to do to improve. This has been an important factor in the school's successful drive to improve achievement and attainment in recent years. The school can clearly demonstrate that the shared leadership with the adjacent first school has resulted in improved pupil achievement, effective school-wide systems and the more consistent quality of teaching. It is an indication of the school's satisfactory capacity to improve in the future. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and the school is striving to ensure that it is routinely good or outstanding. The provision of academic guidance for pupils is inconsistent and pupils are often left unsure about what they have to do to improve. This is particularly evident during some lessons as higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged through the use of complex questions and tasks and the injection of a brisker pace.

Pupils are well cared for and the level of pastoral support they are provided with is good and contributes effectively to their well-being. This is especially true for the most vulnerable pupils, especially those pupils from the Special Support Centre, and the school seems to go that 'extra mile' to ensure this group of pupils is very well cared for and fully involved in all aspects of school life. The level of academic support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and ensures that these pupils make similar or better progress when compared to their peers.

Pupils say they enjoy school and that they are made to feel valued as individuals. They fully understand the need to make sensible and healthy choices and have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and staying safe. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their roles as school counsellors and how they are expected to take on other responsibilities in the school, such as in assemblies and during school open days. Opportunities for pupils to develop a realistic understanding of the multicultural nature of modern society are limited as pupils do not have regular opportunities to visit other schools or settings in the United Kingdom which display a greater ethnic diversity.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching so that all pupils consistently make good progress across the school by:
 - quickening the pace of learning in lessons
 - ensuring that lessons challenge and encourage all pupils in their learning, especially higher attaining pupils
 - using assessment to inform pupils, especially the more able, of what they need to do to improve and to set challenging targets.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society by developing links with other settings that display a greater ethnic diversity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and list literacy and numeracy among their favourite subjects. Older pupils say they enjoy lessons, especially when teachers use interactive whiteboards, information and communication technology (ICT) and drama to enhance learning. Pupils in Year 7 are justly proud of their writing and art work, especially their appreciation of Second World War poetry in English and 'Pointillism' in art. In a Year 4 class, pupils responded with typical enthusiasm towards a lesson which linked skills in English to their geography project on mountains. Year 5 pupils relished the opportunity to speak German and in Year 6 worked well together during problem-solving activities in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made similar or better progress to other pupils because of the effective level of support they received. This was particularly apparent for the small number of pupils from the Special Support Centre who are integrated well into mainstream classrooms. Pupils express their feelings well and they are clearly happy to be supported across the school.

Pupils enter Year 4 with average levels of attainment. Most pupils make expected progress as they move through the school. However, higher attaining pupils make slower progress as a result of the lack of challenge they receive and there is an inconsistent approach to the provision of written and oral academic guidance. Many pupils are unclear about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. As a result, achievement is satisfactory and pupils' attainment is average by the time they leave the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a particular strength and is reflected in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, their awareness of the needs of others and in their clear understanding of the importance of adopting safe practices and healthy lifestyles. However, although pupils' understanding of local culture is good, they display only a slight understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society and this affects one aspect of their appreciation of the importance of community cohesion. Even so, the extent to which pupils contribute to the school and to the wider community is satisfactory. Pupils talk about the responsibilities they are given and how the school council enables them to have a voice in school affairs.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and ensure pupils develop good attitudes towards learning. The school is beginning to implement whole-school procedures to assess and track pupils' progress. However, the quality of academic guidance and support varies throughout the school. In some classes, tasks are often matched to pupils' abilities and offer a realistic level of challenge; as a result, pupils enjoy working hard and get a real thrill when they complete their work successfully. However, this is still an inconsistent feature and pupils do not benefit from high quality oral and written feedback to inform them about how to improve. This is particularly apparent for higher attaining pupils for whom there is insufficient challenge. Teaching assistants and teachers work effectively together as a team in order to ensure that pupils needing help with their learning are provided with support to make similar progress to all other pupils. Interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils from the Special Support Centre are well focused and managed which results in good progress for many.

The school has developed a curriculum that is popular with pupils and links subjects

¹ 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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together well. A range of interesting visitors to the school and day and residential visits to places of interest, such as to Lodge Hill, France and Chichester Cathedral, help to increase pupils' understanding of the world in which they live. Pupils enjoy the modern foreign language programme which consists of Spanish, German and French lessons. The school's links with the local high school and college are used effectively to enhance learning, such as in the well-led physical education sessions. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good and ensures pupils are aware of the importance of keeping fit, healthy and safe. The school provides a diverse programme of enrichment activities for pupils, including a wide range of popular after-school clubs. Classroom displays and the school assembly on India reflect pupils' empathy and understanding of other cultures.

The school provides a good level of pastoral care and support for pupils and this is the basis for their good personal development. Parents value the supportive way the school looks after their children and pupils say they are confident there is always someone to approach if they have a problem. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle quickly into new routines.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides the school with a clear direction for improvement. She has worked well with staff and governors to ensure that the school has recovered effectively from a period of change to both the management of the school and to the teaching staff. There is good evidence of improvement, in terms of the levels of pupil achievement, the consistency of school-wide systems and the quality of teaching.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and supports the school well. Many individual governors are closely involved in school life and have a good idea of the school's strengths and those areas needing improvement. The governing body has far-reaching plans for both schools and it has managed the transition diligently and with a shared purpose. Policies for safeguarding children meet current government requirements and are reviewed regularly. All staff have received suitable training and are well qualified in safeguarding procedures. The school has developed a very realistic idea of which pupils are most at risk and gives priority to safeguarding their welfare.

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The school's work in promoting equal opportunities is satisfactory and there is no evidence of any discrimination. The progress made by all groups of pupils and the interventions they receive are monitored frequently and effectively, particularly the integration of the pupils from the Special Support Centre. The school has successfully built up effective links with the local community and works in partnership with other schools to promote learners' well-being. The shared leadership of the two schools has facilitated close links and the school has fostered very positive relationships with the Children and Families Centre and the local high school which have had a positive impact upon learning.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion and this is evident in the way pupils accept each other's differences. It is displayed in the effectiveness of the school's initiatives to engage parents and carers and in the way the school has successfully involved hard-to-reach families in their children's education through the use of social events and curriculum information sessions. However, the school has not developed pupils' appreciation of the value of cultural diversity in modern British society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of the parents who returned the questionnaires agreed that their children enjoyed school and that the school kept them safe and free from harm. One typical comment was: 'This is a very caring school. The school has been outstanding

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pastorally and academically.' Another stated that, 'The school is run very well and there is good communication between school and parents.' Several parents and carers commented favourably about how the school had improved in recent years. Many felt that the quality of teaching was now at least satisfactory. A small number of parents expressed individual concerns. For example, some were concerned about how the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour although the majority thought behaviour was good. A small proportion of parents felt that the school did not listen to their concerns. However, the majority of parents thought their views were taken into account by the school. Inspectors considered these comments and judged that pupils' behaviour was good and that parents were kept well informed. In addition, some parents are concerned about the rate of progress made by their children. Inspection evidence suggests that this is largely confined to the progress made by more able pupils and the school has been asked to take steps to address this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Durrington 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 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 369 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	49	55	46	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	56	48	40	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	37	64	54	8	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	35	59	50	15	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	50	42	57	48	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	36	64	54	6	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	26	77	65	9	8	1	1
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)	43	36	62	52	6	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	31	67	56	9	8	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	29	57	48	18	15	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	32	59	50	11	9	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	57	48	41	35	14	12	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	54	39	33	10	8	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Durrington Middle School, Worthing BN13 2JD

Thank you for such a warm and caring welcome to your school yesterday and for helping us during the inspection. We found that you are getting a satisfactory education. Most of you are clearly very happy and you are well supported by your teachers and other adults in the school.

Here are some of the strong features we found:

- The teachers plan and provide interesting lessons that enable most of you to enjoy learning.
- The behaviour and attitudes of most pupils are good.
- You clearly enjoy the wide range of clubs, school visits and other activities provided by the school.
- All adults in the school take good care of you by making sure that you are safe.
- It is clear that you know how to eat healthily and lead healthy lifestyles.

The school runs smoothly. We much enjoyed the very colourful displays. The headteacher, the staff and the governors know what the school needs to do to improve and how well it is doing. We have asked them to make the following improvements to help the school to become even better:

- Make more teaching as good as the best by quickening the pace of the lessons, and by making the lessons more challenging, especially for those of you capable of achieving the highest levels.
- Ensure that all of you have a good understanding of how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve, especially those of you who are capable of achieving the highest levels.
- Help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people in this country, including those of different cultural backgrounds than your own.

You can help make these things happen by continuing to care and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan

Lead Inspector

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