

Middleton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131719
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	341203
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob McKeown HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hilary Keegan
Headteacher	Mrs Kathy McDermott
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed twelve teachers teaching a total of fifteen lessons across all the classes. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and teachers' planning, and scrutinised several key documents including those related to safeguarding, raising attainment, development planning, progress tracking and analysis, leadership team monitoring and governing body meetings. They also scrutinised questionnaires completed by 45 parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- how successful the school has been in raising attainment and improving rates of progress after last year's dip in Year 6
- whether teaching is sufficiently differentiated to ensure that all groups and individuals are challenged and supported well and make suitable progress; and whether teachers' assessments and pupils' learning targets are used effectively to inform planning and help pupils improve their work
- the quality of the curriculum and whether it meets the needs of all individuals and groups of pupils
- pupils' attendance and the school's approach to improving it
- the influence and effectiveness of all leaders on monitoring and evaluating provision and tackling underachievement.

Information about the school

Middleton is a larger-than-average-sized community primary school. It serves an area of higher-than-average unemployment and social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds; about 30% are from Black and minority ethnic families. A small minority of pupils are at the early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is much higher than is typical for this size of school. The school provides specialist provision for fourteen pupils with hearing impairment, who come from Peterborough and neighbouring local authorities. The local authority sensory support service is based at the school. A pre-school playgroup, which is managed independently, is accommodated in part of the school building and is subject to a separate inspection. The school holds the local authority Inclusion Charter Mark award. The Headteacher has led the school for nine years.

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 well organised and friendly school, which currently provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Senior leaders have had to manage unprecedented and unavoidable discontinuity in staffing in the last twelve months, which, for a time, slowed down the drive for sustained improvement and had an adverse effect on pupils' achievement. Despite this, the school has maintained its strong sense of community and good quality care and support for its pupils. Parents and carers are positive about what the school provides for their children and most pupils say they enjoy school and are pleased with what it has to offer them.

Pupils' achievement, learning and progress are satisfactory and improving quickly, as a result of successful action taken to strengthen the quality of teaching. There remains some variability in the amount of progress made by pupils in different year groups and leaders acknowledge that accelerating progress particularly in mathematics and in writing remains a priority. Pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities made good progress and achieve well. This is because they receive precisely targeted support in lessons and in individual and small group sessions, from an excellent team of support assistants. Pupils who join the school speaking little or no English make good progress.

Several aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Pupils believe rightly that their school is a safe place. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and pupils from all backgrounds get on well together; this exemplifies the school's very strong approach to tackling discrimination and promoting equality. The school council is proud of its role as advocates for pupils' views and it makes a positive contribution towards many school developments. Attendance is average, although levels of persistent absence among a very small minority of pupils are too high.

Teaching has improved well this year. In a large majority of the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good and occasionally outstanding. There remains a minority of teaching that is satisfactory and leaders recognise that a higher proportion needs to be good or better to ensure that learning and progress are good in all classes. Support from local authority consultants and the introduction of sharply focussed pupil progress meetings have strengthened assessment, although there remains some inconsistency in marking and in the way teachers involve pupils in evaluating the success of their learning in lessons. There are good plans to strengthen the satisfactory curriculum by increasing opportunities for creativity and linking learning more effectively across subjects. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in improving transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils in Year 1 are enjoying more exciting and practical learning activities, which this term includes having a pirate ship in their classroom.

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Together the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear direction and manage the school well. Their resilience, drive and commitment have enabled them to steer the school through a very challenging period. Support for vulnerable pupils is excellent and the leadership and management of provision for pupils with additional needs are very good. The school is also well served by a strong team of premises and administrative staff. The governing body gives the school effective support and key governors have a good knowledge of how well the school is doing. Collectively with the senior leadership team and other key leaders, they provide the school with a secure capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress particularly in mathematics and in writing by:
 - meeting the challenging end of year targets set for pupils' attainment and progress in all year groups
 - helping teachers use their assessments to set meaningful learning targets to ensure the next steps for learning are precise for all pupils
- Further strengthen the overall quality of teaching to meet the school's target for the proportion of consistently good or better lessons by:
 - increasing the proportion of good teaching to over 80%
 - sharing models of good and outstanding practice in teaching and assessment
 - improving consistency and precision in teachers' assessments and marking
- Reduce levels of absence and meet the local authority target for attendance by:
 - sharpening the approach to analysing patterns of absence
 - working closely with parents and carers to lower the incidences of unauthorised absence and avert the likelihood of persistent absence.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Evidence from observing lessons, from teachers' assessments and from looking at books indicates that overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Learning and progress are better this year than last because the quality of teaching is better. Results at the end of Year 6 in 2009 were low; pupils made too little progress from their starting points and missed their targets by a significant margin. The school has taken action to improve attainment and accelerate progress and this has been successful in most year groups, particularly in reading. Progress in writing is also better this year because of a stronger emphasis on the effective teaching and assessment of writing. Nevertheless, there are still pockets of underachievement in writing and in mathematics. Regular discussions

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with teachers in progress meetings and a sharper focus on tracking pupils' attainment are enabling leaders to quickly identify and remedy the weaknesses. Targeted interventions, for example, mathematics classes for Year 6 held in the Easter holidays, have helped boost pupils' attainment. The many individual and group programmes taught by teachers and support staff are helping pupils who have fallen behind to catch up and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. The school's assessment data show that a majority of pupils this year, including those in Year 6, are on track to meet or exceed their end of year targets.

Parents and carers and pupils believe that the school helps to keep pupils safe and healthy. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and pupils feel listened to and able to discuss, with staff or with their friends, any issues they may have. A calm and warm atmosphere permeates the school building. Pupils have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle in relation to their age. They know what foods they should eat regularly to stay healthy and also what to eat in moderation. The school provides a school lunch that is designed to provide an appropriately balanced meal so that pupils are able to choose a diet that is both nutritious and enjoyable. Older pupils take on additional responsibility willingly such as working to provide a 'helping hand' at lunchtime. The active school council seeks the views of other pupils regularly, organises charity fundraising events and is currently involved in school garden and community cohesion projects. Pupils know the school expects them to attend regularly and get to school on time. They appreciate the termly attendance awards they receive. School assemblies and lessons in personal, social and health education make very positive contributions to pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development.

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	2
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	2

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Good improvements have been made this year in strengthening the quality of teaching and this has laid the foundation for further improvements in learning and progress. High expectations, very effective support from teaching assistants and good attitudes and behaviour were observed in almost all the lessons seen. Where teaching was most effective, detailed lesson plans matched pupils' learning needs precisely, resources were used well to support learning and pupils engaged in practical activities to aid their understanding. Teachers used interactive whiteboards well to stimulate pupils' interest and focus their teaching. Assessment of learning is also good in a majority of lessons, with teachers asking questions to test understanding and keep track of and intervene in what pupils are doing. Involving pupils in assessing their own learning is not as well established. The marking seen in writing books adopted a similar approach but did not always give pupils enough feedback on how they might improve their work. There remains a minority of teaching that is less than good. Inspectors observed lessons in which the pace of learning was too slow, pupils spent too long listening to the teacher and where opportunities to stimulate learning through practical activities and by using computer technology were missed.

The school provides a satisfactory and improving curriculum. Provision for more vulnerable pupils is good because the school provides a wide variety of intervention strategies and uses comprehensive monitoring arrangements to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately adjusted to meet their needs. A number of recent improvements have also been introduced to provide additional challenges for pupils with high levels of ability. The school organises a suitable range of after school activities which are enjoyed by 80% of pupils at some point during the year. There is scope for improving the opportunities that pupils have to use computers in their classrooms and for maintaining a balanced programme of activities for pupils in Year 6. Staff show high levels of care for pupils' personal welfare and the school provides a safe and secure learning environment for all who attend. Transition arrangements for coming into Reception and going out to secondary school are good. There are excellent links established with local support and welfare agencies to provide good support for those pupils facing challenging circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2

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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?

Senior leaders know the school very well and have an accurate view of its strengths and what requires improvement. Morale and teamwork among staff are good and there is a shared commitment to securing high quality provision for every pupil. Challenging targets are set to improve pupils' attainment and leaders keep a very close scrutiny on the progress of individuals and year groups. The decision to engage the support of local authority consultants and draw up a raising attainment plan has helped to improve the consistency and quality of teaching and sharpen approaches to assessment. Regular monitoring of lessons is serving to tackle weaker elements in teaching. There are strong contributions made by other key leaders, for example in organising and evaluating provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those pupils who have a hearing impairment. The contribution made by other middle leaders, many of whom are new to their positions, is less strong.

The school communicates effectively with parents and carers through newsletters, text messages and the school's website. Governors conduct a survey of parents' and carers' views annually. The school has a community cohesion working party, which represents a cross section of the community. A comprehensive audit covering all stands of community cohesion has been undertaken and this information has been used to develop detailed action plans for improvement. The impact of this work is such that pupils from different backgrounds get on extremely well with one another. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that pupils and staff are safe. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and all staff have received up to date training. There are good systems in place to evaluate the school's performance including asking individual governors to keep an eye on school development priorities. Governors have recently set up a programme for tracking the progress of a group of pupils to enable them to evaluate how well the school serves pupils' individual needs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When children start school in Reception, their skills and aptitudes are below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile assessments show that, last year, children made good progress and entered Year 1 at broadly expected levels of development, although there were some weaknesses in boys' language and communication skills. This represented a good improvement on the outcomes recorded in the previous year. Positive links with the pre-school playgroup that uses the school accommodation next to the Reception base are helping to improve achievement across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Well-trained and knowledgeable staff provide a stimulating learning environment for children. They plan a full range of activities that meet their needs, including for those children from homes where English is not the first language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Learning takes place in the well-equipped indoor class bases and in the outdoor area. There is a good balance between activities that are predominantly led by adults and those in which children can be independent and decide for themselves what they wish to do. Regular assessments of children's achievements are made and recorded. These are used productively to inform teachers' planning, and are shared with parents and carers who are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning.

Children are cared for well and their behaviour is good and managed successfully by staff. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and children are provided with a safe, secure environment in which to learn. Provision and outcomes for children are regularly monitored by senior leaders to ensure the quality is maintained. A link governor meets with staff to keep other governors informed about progress towards meeting development targets.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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Views of parents and carers

In a relatively small return of questionnaires, a very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at school. Almost all parents and carers believe that the school keeps their children safe. Most agree that they are well informed about the progress made by their children and that the school helps them to support their children's learning. A very small number indicated that they were less happy with transition arrangements and with their children's progress. A few questionnaires had comments written by parents and carers about their view of the school's effectiveness. These did not reveal any consistent pattern of disagreement or relate to safeguarding. Leaders were made aware of the issues that were raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Middleton Primary 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	42	23	51	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	49	22	49	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	40	24	53	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	36	23	51	5	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	33	26	58	4	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	42	22	49	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	33	27	60	2	4	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)	14	31	22	49	5	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	38	25	56	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	33	23	51	4	9	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	24	27	60	4	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	33	22	49	4	9	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	42	20	44	4	9	1	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). 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"> ■ 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.



Thursday 29 April 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Middleton Primary School, Peterborough, PE3 9XJ

Thank you for your help with the inspection and for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. Please thank your parents and carers for completing the questionnaires about their views of the school. Thank you also to the children who completed their questionnaires. They were very helpful and told us that most of you enjoy school, believe it helps to keep you healthy and feel safe when you are there.

We think your school is giving you a satisfactory education. There are several things which are good but also some things that need improving. Your headteacher and all the staff and governors care for you very well and want you to be successful. We saw many of you learning successfully in lessons and enjoying the activities your teachers prepare for you. We know they do their best for you and provide you with lots of help and support when you need it. We were pleased to see that you all get on well together and thought that your behaviour was good; having helping hands on the playground is a great idea. We enjoyed talking to the school council about how they contribute their views on improving things for everyone, such as contributing to the ideas for the school garden and local community project. We liked their idea of having questionnaires to find out about your thoughts. We know that many of you are pleased to get attendance certificates at the end of each term because you come to school on time every day.

At the end of the inspection, we asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to keep working on some improvements to help you do better, particularly in writing and mathematics. We also asked your teachers to make sure all your lessons are good ones and to help you know exactly what you need to do next to improve your work. We would like to see some of you taking fewer days away from school so that more of you can receive awards for good attendance. You can help the adults by being in school every day, trying hard and always doing your best.

You have much to look forward to in the rest of the year; We hope you enjoy it.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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