

Scissett Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107765
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	356235
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	10–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	554
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Gedman
Headteacher	Mr Michael Moriarty
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty-nine lessons were observed taught by 27 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the monitoring of pupils' progress, the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also analysed 244 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and took account of questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils, especially lower ability pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress and achieve.
- How effectively teachers use assessment information to match tasks to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils.
- How effectively leaders and managers evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work and use the outcomes to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized middle school for pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also below average. Only a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The school has gained the following awards: Artsmark Gold; Sportsmark Gold; Healthy Schools Gold status; Investors in People; NAPTA Good Practice Award for the management and development of support staff; BECTA ICT Mark and the Financial Management Standard in Schools award.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. At the heart of its work is the excellent way in which it ensures that each pupil is treated equally and given equal opportunities to succeed. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved significantly in nearly all areas of its work because outstanding leadership and management ensure a sharp and unrelenting focus on improvement. Sophisticated procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the school give leaders and managers a highly accurate picture of the school's strengths and where it could do even better. No stone is left unturned in the pursuit of providing the best possible education for pupils through high-quality teaching and learning and a rich curriculum. As a result the school demonstrates outstanding capacity for improving even further.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. By the end of Year 8 attainment is well above age-related expectations. All aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. Pupils' enjoyment is plain for all to see. Their attendance rates are high. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times. They show outstanding levels of respect for each other and adults. Pupils' excellent command of basic skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT), allied to their high levels of confidence and inquisitiveness, mean that they are prepared exceptionally well for the next steps in their education.

Outstanding teaching provides all pupils with consistently high levels of challenge. Teaching takes meticulous account of assessment data to match tasks to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. The outstanding curriculum tailors provision closely to pupils' needs. For example, there is excellent provision for pupils who learn more slowly, from a team of highly-trained teaching assistants. There are also special classes for the most-able pupils. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in school because the care, guidance and support they receive are of the highest standard. Outstanding links with feeder schools ensure that new pupils settle seamlessly into Year 6.

Leaders and managers have forged outstandingly successful partnerships, including with parents and carers. Many changes to the membership of the governing body have caused some problems with continuity and stability. Consequently, the governing body has lost some of the rigour in carrying out its responsibilities. While members of the governing body have remained very supportive of the school, they accept the need to develop more robust procedures to evaluate its effectiveness and hold it more rigorously to account. Community cohesion is good. Pupils are extremely active in their local community and enjoy taking on responsibilities in school. However, their understanding of the diversity of cultures in modern day Britain is limited because they have few opportunities through visits or visitors to gain in-depth, first-hand knowledge and understanding.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that the governing body has sharper and more rigorous procedures for finding out how well the school is doing so that it can play a more active role in helping the school to improve even further.
- Make sure that pupils are given more first-hand opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In lessons, pupils respond very enthusiastically to the consistently high levels of challenge that teaching presents to them. They are extremely eager to contribute ideas individually, in pairs and in group work. They very confidently seek clarification when something is unclear. Pupils especially enjoy working things out for themselves. They take great pride in the presentation of their written work. Pupils' exemplary behaviour ensures that no time is wasted in lessons through any disruption to learning. Although attainment on entry to Year 6 varies, it is broadly average overall. By the end of Year 8, attainment is well above age-related expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve very well in relation to their starting points. In mathematics, attainment is exceptionally high. This demonstrates the excellent progress pupils make and their outstanding achievement and enjoyment.

Pupils say how exceptionally safe they feel in school; a view supported unanimously by parents and carers in the questionnaires returned. Pupils have excellent knowledge of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Participation rates in the rich variety of sporting enrichment activities are very high. Pupils enjoy taking on the wealth of opportunities for assuming responsibilities in school and in reaching out to the local community. The school council and enterprise group are involved in organising highly successful social events for pupils, parents and carers and the local community. During the inspection, pupils' deep pride in their school was evident in the mature and enthusiastic way they conducted prospective parents and carers on tours around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show excellent understanding of right and wrong through their mature and respectful behaviour. The cultural life of the school is exceptionally rich, especially in music and art. It attracts the enthusiastic participation of very large numbers of pupils.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently at least good, with much that is outstanding. Teachers prepare their lessons meticulously paying extremely close attention to the use of assessment data to make sure that what they expect pupils to do is appropriate to their needs and abilities. The level of challenge is consistently high. In one mathematics lesson, for example, Year 8 pupils were set the extremely challenging task of working in pairs to produce a seating plan for a given number of guests at an event using a variety of table shapes. Pupils devised algebraic equations with a very high level of sophistication to explain how they had arrived at their answers. Teachers are highly skilful at using ICT, especially electronic whiteboards, to add extra stimulus to their teaching. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the topic of tsunamis was made fascinating for pupils by the astute use of video footage to show how tsunamis are created and the devastation they can cause. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' capability to work independently. The use of questioning is exemplary in encouraging pupils to think deeply and explain their answers.

The outstanding curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of memorable experiences both in the classroom and in enrichment activities. Cross-curricular provision to enable pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is planned in detail, with excellent communication between subject areas. Strong curricular links with feeder schools, especially to promote pupils' better writing skills are in place and the results are evident in rapidly rising attainment in English. At the heart of the school's work lie outstanding care,

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guidance and support. Extremely respectful relationships ensure that pupils feel safe, valued and known as individuals. The school has excellent monitoring systems in place that are used to identify needs and promptly target well-organised support. As a result of highly effective relationships with other schools, excellent arrangements are also in place to ensure smooth transfer into and out of the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and managers in the school, provides the school with a crystal-clear vision for the school's success. The governing body is very supportive. However, some instability in its membership has led to some lack of rigour in evaluating how well the school is doing. A strong sense of teamwork is evident across the school in pursuit of excellence. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly and very rigorously, including seeking the views of pupils on how teaching can be improved. The professional development of staff, including support staff, is a priority for the school, and explains the significant rise in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Relationships with parents and carers are 'rock solid' with many commenting on their high regard for the leadership and management of the school.

Leaders promote equality of opportunity outstandingly well. This is demonstrated in the excellent achievement of all groups of pupils. The curriculum is expertly tailored to make sure every pupil achieves to his or her potential. Access for all pupils to enrichment activities is also exemplary. Although many pupils live in villages a considerable distance from the school, there are arrangements for free bus transport so that pupils are able to attend out-of-school activities at the end of the school day so that no pupil is denied the opportunity of joining in.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and visitors to the school. Relevant personnel receive regular training to update them on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Risk assessments are carried out on activities and the school buildings and grounds. However, some details in identifying and responding to risk are not fully recorded. The school takes care to identify and support students who may be at risk.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils work hard in school to create a very harmonious school community. Pupils are active in the local community and raise large sums of money for charities at home and abroad. The curriculum introduces pupils to world cultures and religions. However, opportunities for pupils to experience other cultures at first-hand through visits and visitors, for example, are rare.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a high response rate of questionnaires from parents and carers. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers expressed strong support for the school and confidence in the education it provides for their children. Many parents and carers took advantage of the opportunity to add their personal comments to the questionnaire. These were almost exclusively extremely supportive of the school. The questionnaires confirm that many parents and carers hold a similar opinion to inspectors that this is an outstanding school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Scissett 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 244 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 554 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	52	108	44	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	132	54	103	42	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	82	34	133	55	6	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	39	120	49	5	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	115	47	111	45	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	94	39	126	52	9	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	35	136	56	10	4	1	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)	103	42	120	49	3	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	92	38	130	53	6	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	42	119	49	5	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	35	129	53	4	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	146	60	94	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	140	57	92	38	3	1	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



13 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scissett Middle School, Huddersfield, HD8 9JX

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet you and see you at work and play.

You will be pleased to know that your school has been judged to be outstanding. It works very successfully to make sure you do as well as you possibly can. Your teachers and the support staff provide you with excellent teaching and outstanding support so that you enjoy your learning and make very rapid progress. Your contribution to making your school so successful is also huge. Your behaviour, your attendance and your levels of respect towards each other and the adults working with you are all truly outstanding – well done! It was so good to join you in some of your lessons and see the enthusiasm with which you go about your work.

In order to make your school even more effective, I am asking it to do two things.

- Make sure that the school's governors have sharper and more rigorous procedures for finding out how well the school is doing so that they can play a more active role in helping it to improve even further.
- Make sure that you are given more first-hand opportunities to develop your knowledge and understanding of different cultures and religions in the United Kingdom and abroad.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard and help your school go from strength to strength in the coming years.

I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall

Lead inspector

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