

Scissett Middle School

Wakefield Road, Scissett, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD8 9JX

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The vast majority of teaching across the school is good or outstanding. As a result, from below expected starting points, pupils achieve well to reach standards that are above expectations at the end of Year 8.
- Over time, pupils have made exceptionally good progress in mathematics.
- The additional support provided for pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium is helping them to catch up with the standards reached by other pupils.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted at every opportunity.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils show respect towards each other and their teachers. They speak with enthusiasm about the wide range of activities the school provides and comment on how well they are cared for by their teachers.
- Teachers and pupils benefit from the opportunities that arise through the strong partnerships the school has cultivated with a variety of schools and other organisations.
- The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership. Since her appointment, impressive improvements have been made to the quality of leadership across the school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are continuing to improve rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still a small proportion of teaching that requires improvement.
- Until 2013, pupils' progress in English was not as strong as in mathematics. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is not consistently good and varies from year to year.
- The quality of teachers' written marking and feedback is inconsistent across and within subjects.
- Teachers do not always plan work that provides enough challenge for every individual pupil in their class.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 24 lessons and parts of lessons were observed by inspectors. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to 33 staff questionnaires. They considered information from previous school surveys carried out with parents and pupils, letters received from parents by the inspection team and the responses of 117 parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They observed pupils moving around inside and outside school and at different times in the day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school improvement plan, minutes from governing body meetings, and reviews of the school's work undertaken by external agencies.

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Dunne	Additional Inspector
Robert Birtwell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a middle school, deemed secondary, educating children between the ages of 10 (Year 6) and 13 (Year 8).
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from armed services families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action and also at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Scissett Middle School admits pupils into Year 6 from nine local primary schools.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that is consistently good and more is outstanding, in order to raise standards even higher and further accelerate the progress made by all pupils in English and pupils with special educational needs in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use pupils' progress data effectively to plan suitably challenging activities that stretch and challenge all pupils to achieve more
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is of consistently high quality, within and across subjects, that written comments provide advice to pupils on how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to act on such advice

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is not yet outstanding because over time the rate of progress that pupils have made in English has not been as strong as it has in mathematics.
- The school's own, externally validated data, shows that pupils enter the school in Year 6 with attainment that is broadly in line with expectations for their age in reading and below in writing and mathematics. By the time they get to the end of Year 6, their attainment is in line with expectations in all three subjects. This shows that they make expected progress in reading and good progress in writing and in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- From the start of Year 7, the rate of progress pupils make in English has improved over the last three years and is now good. This means that pupils' attainment in English is above expectations by the time they reach the end of Year 8. Over time in mathematics, progress has been very good and pupils reach levels of attainment that are above expectations by the end of Year 8.
- Pupils make at least expected progress in all other subjects and good progress in art, music, physical education and sport, French and information and communication technology.
- Different groups of pupils achieve equally well. In any year, where there is a difference in achievement for any particular group, school leaders identify and take swift action to address it.
- The attainment gaps between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers are closing rapidly, as a result of the intensive and wide-ranging support put in place to help these pupils to make good progress. In 2013, the gaps between the attainment of such pupils and their peers narrowed to less than one term in both English and mathematics. The school's data shows that the gaps for pupils currently in the school are closing year on year.
- The progress of the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies from year to year and is stronger in Years 7 and 8 than it is in Year 6. This is because by the time they start Year 7, the school has a good awareness of what is the most appropriate and effective support for these pupils. They have special support in Years 7 and 8 and, over the three-year period since the previous inspection, they have made progress in line with their peers.
- The extensive range of additional support and intervention that is provided to different groups of pupils is effective in helping all pupils make good progress during their time at Scissett Middle School. Equal opportunities are extremely well promoted.
- Literacy is well promoted across all areas of the curriculum and the school is focused on further developing pupils' enjoyment in reading by increasingly engaging parents in reading with their children. Key words are displayed in all lessons. Pupils develop strong skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling and are encouraged to read at every opportunity.
- Plans for the use of the additional funding (Year 7 catch-up) provided to support those pupils who are not attaining at age-related expectations for numeracy and literacy at the start of Year 7 are in place. However, it is too early to judge the effect this is having as it has only just started.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because, although there is some that is outstanding and a large proportion that is good, there is still some teaching that requires improvement. This means that there are still some lessons where pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers have high expectations of all groups of pupils, particularly in fostering excellent attitudes to their learning so that for the most part it moves on quickly.
- In outstanding lessons, teachers' excellent questioning is effective in probing pupils' understanding and helping them to develop their thinking. Teachers model learning accurately and focus activities precisely towards individual pupils in order to maximise their learning. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and

cross-curricular themes are well developed. During the inspection, particularly good examples of this were seen in English, art and music.

- Teachers plan work that is broadly matched to pupils' level of ability and, in the best lessons, they use information about individual pupils to ensure they are given activities and tasks that enable them to move their learning to the next level. In less effective lessons, this is not the case.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' understanding as lessons proceed were seen in good and outstanding lessons. Examples of good practice in teachers' written feedback to pupils, on work that has been marked, are evident in English, in some mathematics books and in some other subjects. However, the quality of teachers' marking varies across and within subjects. Not all teachers give pupils advice on how they can improve their work and, even when they do they do not always give pupils time to act on that advice during lessons.
- Teaching assistants are effective in providing support to pupils within and beyond classrooms. The additional support they provide to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, especially in Years 7 and 8, and pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, is effective in helping them to overcome challenges and make gains in their learning.
- Homework is well used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- There is a very positive and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, in all situations, and there are very positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about all aspects of their school. They told inspectors that they enjoy learning. They feel well cared for and supported by staff and they appreciate the wide range of additional opportunities made available to them both during and outside of normal school hours.
- Behaviour is consistently well managed by all staff and pupils have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them. This means that incidents of negative behaviour are rare and the school's records, by parents and staff, confirm this.
- Attendance has risen consistently over the past three years and is well above average. There have been no exclusions over the same period. This is because pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They collaborate very well together in pairs and small groups, discuss tasks and are sometimes able to accelerate each other's learning through this cooperative approach. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. The positive learning environment created by teachers and teaching assistants enhances pupils' learning because pupils are confident to share their ideas, respond to questions and to make mistakes.
- Pupils are encouraged to and enjoy taking on responsibilities. The 'pupil council' contributes to decisions about what resources to purchase and raises funds for a wide range of charities. Pupil council representatives also usefully discuss their ideas with pupils in another local middle school.
- There is a strong focus on encouraging pupils to eat healthily and to take part in sport outside the normal curriculum. The school has recently been awarded the Quality Mark for Physical Education and Sport because of its outstanding commitment to physical education and sport. A large proportion of pupils are involved in extra-curricular sport.
- Pupils say that bullying very rarely happens, when it does staff take it seriously and that action to deal with it is swift and effective.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know where to go for help. They have been well taught to recognise bullying behaviour and the dangers of the internet. Pupils were able to explain about cyber bullying and homophobic bullying.
- Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school's provision and almost all of the 117 responses to Parent View were completely positive.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Since her appointment, and ably supported by senior leaders and the governing body, the headteacher who is highly ambitious for the school, has secured improvements in the quality of leadership, at all levels and all leaders are now relentless in their drive for improvement. This in turn, has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school's checks on how well it is doing are accurate. Leaders, including the governing body, know their school and the well-targeted improvement plans ensure that all staff are constantly focused on further improvement. This is a rapidly improving school in which pupils' progress targets are extremely challenging for both teachers and pupils and all, from the most to the least able pupil, are provided with additional support in order to increase their attainment to the next level.
- Leaders adopt a rigorous approach to ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate. External examiners and advanced skills teachers are employed to work with and moderate teachers' marking. This means that school leaders are confident about the rates of progress that pupils are making.
- Subject leaders play an increasingly full part in monitoring and checking the effectiveness of the areas for which they are responsible. They are skilled in analysing pupils' progress information, using it to make decisions about how to further improve teaching and to raise pupils' achievement even further, and they actively engage in sharing good practice and supporting each other in improving provision for pupils.
- Teachers' performance is routinely and robustly monitored by school leaders and increasingly challenging targets are being set. Targets are directly related to pupils' progress and, where appropriate, leadership responsibilities. These reviews help school leaders to identify actions that need to be taken to improve teaching. Training is provided for individuals to enable them to improve their teaching.
- The curriculum is a particular strength, especially in Year 6 where unusually, pupils of this age are taught by subject specialists. Enrichment days provide excellent opportunities for pupils to learn, or apply their learning, in a range of contexts, which includes a strong multicultural component.
- The additional Primary School Sports funding is used to supplement the school's existing and extensive collaborative work to promote pupils' participation in sport. Pupils of all ages are very positive about these opportunities and the vast majority are involved in sport outside their normal lessons.
- Activities, within both the normal and wider curriculum, serve to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. School leaders and governors rightly put as much emphasis on pupils' personal development as on their academic development. This means that pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher has successfully worked to develop strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations and other schools. As well as benefiting from expertise found elsewhere, the school's advice is sought by others. For example, the school is seen to have a particular expertise in developing middle leaders' skills.
- Safeguarding systems meet all national requirements. They are reviewed regularly because children's safety is a high priority.
- The local authority categorises this as a low risk school and so provides light-touch support. Positive relationships exist between the school and the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides high levels of support and challenge to senior leaders, keeping a close eye on the school's performance. Link governors regularly visit teachers and lessons in order to gain a greater understanding of how the school works. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and undertake regular and appropriate training. They contribute significantly to the school's own evaluation of its performance and the production of the school development plan. Governors use their knowledge to hold leaders to account for the performance of teachers and ensure that pay is linked to performance. The governing body

fulfils its statutory duties, including ensuring that safeguarding procedures comply with national requirements. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and seek to understand how effective spending impacts on raising the achievement of eligible pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107765
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	425974

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	556
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Lord
Headteacher	Helen Baxter
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2010
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