

Middleton Cheney Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121846
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359097
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Scarlett
Headteacher	Philip Percival
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed 13 teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and children, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 162 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- How effectively the school is improving writing and spelling.
- How successful senior staff and governors have been in increasing the proportion of good teaching, particularly in literacy lessons.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in Great Britain.
- How effectively information and communication technology (ICT) is being used to support and enhance pupils' learning in lessons.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. Numbers have fallen slightly since the previous inspection because of changes in the population. About 15% of pupils travel by choice from Banbury and neighbouring villages. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. No hot meals are provided at the school. The accommodation has been extended and the Victorian part of the school has been refurbished over the past two 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved well since the previous inspection. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked effectively as a team to increase the proportion of good teaching. During the inspection, nine of the lessons seen were judged to be good and four outstanding. As a result of this consistently good teaching, attainment has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Strategies to correct weaknesses in writing and spelling such as grouping pupils by ability for literacy lessons have been successful and attainment in English is almost as high as it is in mathematics. In two of the past three years, pupils' performance has been significantly above average at Year 2 and Year 6. The school is now judged to be a good school and staff have the ambition to move it on and make it outstanding.

Every parent and carer who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that their children enjoy school. This is reflected in pupils' excellent attendance which has been sustained over the past three years. Behaviour in lessons is invariably good and on some occasions it is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, too few pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding about cultural diversity in Great Britain. Staff are developing links with schools where the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are much higher than at Middleton Cheney and good international links are already established through work with UNICEF, including with countries in Africa.

Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, and they make good progress. This is due to the well-managed provision and detailed planning which provides exciting learning opportunities both indoors and outside. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) in the Reception classes to enhance children's learning. They enter Year 1 with above average attainment and because of the consistently good quality of teaching and learning, they continue to make good progress as they move through the school. However, there are not enough computers in the Key Stage 1 and 2 classrooms for pupils to use to support their learning. A scrutiny of completed work shows that some teachers make use of modern technology much more than others. This inconsistency is linked to the shortage of resources. Most pupils demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to use computers, developed in school when working in the computer suite and at home when using their own computers.

The good quality of teaching, learning and the good curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy school and attainment is maintained at significantly above average. The setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 have proved to be particularly effective in raising attainment.

Senior staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The team approach with all members of staff is tuned in to meet the individual needs of pupils. This helps to ensure

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that there is good capacity for sustained improvement in all aspects of the school. The governing body and all staff are fully and regularly involved in helping to evaluate outcomes and provision. This ensures that self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve resources for ICT and ensure these are used more effectively to support and enhance learning in lessons.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding about cultural diversity in Great Britain.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the overwhelming majority of lessons, pupils' achievement is good. All are keen to answer questions and their concentration rarely wavers. Most take great care to produce neat work.

The majority of pupils make good progress in each year group as they move through the school. Attainment is significantly above average in English and mathematics by Years 2 and 6. More pupils reach above average attainment in mathematics than in English but the gap is closing rapidly as strategies to improve writing take effect. It is also partly due to the boost in Year 6 where there are three ability sets rather than two in other Key Stage 2 year groups. Assessment data clearly shows that the vast majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Staff training and their developing expertise together with the support of outside agencies ensure that the very small proportion of pupils with disabilities and very specific learning needs are well supported so that they also make good progress.

The spacious and recently refurbished accommodation provides an attractive learning environment for staff and pupils. Attendance is high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment and pride in their school. Most have a good understanding of staying fit and healthy, and a good awareness of keeping themselves and others safe. They have a good sense of responsibility, both to their school and the wider community. Excellent relationships between pupils and with their teachers, and their positive attitudes to learning equip pupils well for the future. Representatives from each year group enjoy and value their roles as school councillors. Lessons in personal development together with assemblies successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. However, pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity because insufficient opportunities are provided for them to learn about different cultures and faiths.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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 effective because teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress termly and use this information to plan appropriate work for them in lessons. This ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Pupils are set tasks which interest and challenge them although they are unable to make full use of the computers because of the limited number in classrooms. In four lessons where teaching was outstanding, imaginative and inspirational teaching ensured that pupils concentrated fully and made excellent progress. An element of competition was introduced successfully in one literacy session. When writing about the best description of chocolate, pupils were inspired by smelling and sampling chocolates from a large tin; 'The centre tingles tantalisingly on the tongue' and the 'smell of a heavenly flower' were two noteworthy examples.

Very occasionally, where teaching and learning are less effective, introductions are too long. Inevitably, some pupils are able to keep up easily whilst others struggle. Marking is thorough and usually provides pupils with clear guidance on how to further improve their work.

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy skills and attainment is rising as a result. The range of topics for each year is constantly reviewed and refreshed. It draws effectively on pupils' learning from different subjects through a creative approach. The promotion of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship through the curriculum is a strength, ensuring pupils maintain positive attitudes and their

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good behaviour. The curriculum is enhanced well by visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs, which are popular. There is a strong emphasis on sporting activities, and the netball team qualified for the county finals during the inspection. Pupils enjoy learning to speak French and German and this helps to prepare them for developing their knowledge of these languages in their next schools.

Pupils feel valued as individuals and are confident that should an issue arise, staff will be there to support them. Staff have developed considerable expertise in dealing with unacceptable behaviour and meeting the needs of pupils with disabilities and those who are more vulnerable because of their circumstances. This includes developing tolerance and understanding in other pupils. High attendance is being maintained with the support of parents and carers and by applying rules rigorously, developed in conjunction with other local schools about term-time holidays. Good links with pre-school settings ensure a smooth transition into Reception for children. In their questionnaires, some pupils said that they would like more information and guidance on how well they are doing in school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been instrumental in creating an effective team with a shared vision on the need for continuous improvement to raise attainment. Staff and governors are all willingly involved in helping to monitor and evaluate the different aspects of school. The governing body has a wealth of expertise and is kept well informed about developments by subject leaders. Governors clearly know the school's strengths and where improvements still need to be made.

The regular assessment of pupils' attainment and close tracking of their progress ensures provision can be targeted to any pupils who are found not to be making the required progress. Tackling discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able, are uppermost in the minds of staff. Gaps between girls' and boys' attainment levels have almost closed by the time they leave in Year 6. The school has a good relationship with parents and carers, who appreciate the work that the school is doing for their children. Partnerships with other schools and other specialists are effective and make a major contribution to pupils' learning and their enjoyment of school.

The school has good arrangements for making sure that the pupils are safe. Safeguarding is at the heart of all that the school does, and all staff are checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff and governors regularly undertake training in this area. Thorough risk assessments are conducted carefully by staff before any visit or

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activity. The school has detailed action plans to develop community cohesion in school and internationally. Good links are well established with other countries worldwide but are only just being developed with schools where there is a higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. As a result, the pupils, who are predominantly White British, have only a limited understanding of other cultures and their faiths and customs. Resources, with the exception of those for ICT, are good. The school grounds, with the pond and natural areas, provide valuable additional sources of learning for pupils.

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
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Their experiences result in personal, social and emotional skills that are generally higher than those usually seen for children of this age. By the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1, most have made good progress and their attainment is above average in all areas of learning. Early writing skills are particularly well-taught with good opportunities provided for children to write letters in the sand outdoors and play with lettered stones to practise spelling.

Children develop good relationships with others and staff. They are able to maintain long periods of concentration on tasks that they have chosen to do themselves. Indoors, the classrooms provide attractive and well-resourced learning areas. Children particularly enjoyed making music in one session observed. The outdoor accommodation has been enlarged and has been rightly identified as an ongoing priority for development. Children thoroughly enjoy creative and physical activities outdoors such as buying and selling from the 'garden centre', counting out money for plants and trying to walk along planks and blocks without touching the ground. Indoors and out, children work or play independently for long periods and are supported closely by staff. Adult support and guidance ensures

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that children benefit from their learning experiences. All behave well and enjoy the wide range of activities provided for them. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of letter sounds and apply this knowledge when writing. Many show confidence with numbers when counting or solving problems which include addition and subtraction.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Staff work effectively as a team and are conscientious and caring. Assessment information is reliable and used to match tasks closely to the different abilities of children so that they can build successfully on what they already know.

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

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned their questionnaires clearly hold the school in high regard. Everyone agrees that their children enjoy school. In their comments, parents particularly appreciated the 'amazing teachers', who do wonders with their children. Inspection evidence endorses parents and carers' positive views. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about how much progress their children make and how well unacceptable behaviour is managed. These concerns were investigated by the inspectors. They found that progress is good throughout the school. Inspectors found that behaviour is consistently good and sometimes outstanding in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well, minimising any disruption to other pupils' learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Middleton Cheney Community 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 162 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 323 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	53	75	46	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	83	51	74	45	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	70	43	88	54	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	39	83	51	11	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	67	41	89	55	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	36	91	56	9	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	37	94	58	5	3	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)	61	37	89	55	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	34	90	55	10	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	28	90	55	12	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	32	98	60	8	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	29	104	64	8	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	46	83	51	3	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 May 2011

Dear pupils

Inspection of Middleton Cheney Community Primary School Banbury OX17 2PD

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for making us all feel so welcome. In our discussions, it was easy to see how proud you are of your school. We judged your school to be a good one because of your hard work and the good progress you make each year. Congratulations to you all for concentrating so well and working so hard in lessons. Your excellent attendance and good behaviour show how much you enjoy school and are making sure attainment in English and mathematics stays significantly above average.

There are two things in particular that we would like to see improved. Your school does not have as many resources for ICT as some schools and this means that those of you in Years 1 to 6 are unable to use equipment, such as computers, in your studies. We also found that not many of you know enough about other cultures and their religions. We have asked the staff and governors to concentrate their efforts on improving these two aspects.

The youngest children in Reception always try their best and just about everyone makes good progress before they move into Year 1. Your teachers plan lots of activities for you to enjoy and they are making good use of computers, cameras and the 'Beebots' to help you to learn. We particularly liked all the opportunities you have to practise and improve your writing skills both indoors and outside.

All of you are well cared for and supported by your teachers who work hard to make sure you enjoy school. You clearly do well in sporting activities. Well done to the netball team for reaching the finals. We hope that you continue to work hard and that you reach even higher standards.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock

Lead inspector

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