

# Middlewich Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131727
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	381394
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Hewlett

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jackie Thorp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandie La Porta
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Park Road Middlewich CW10 9BS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 738880
<b>Fax number</b>	01606 737979
<b>Email address</b>	admin@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



© Crown copyright 2011

---

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed 10 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and talked with pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined 122 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and pupils.

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

- Whether recent initiatives to raise standards have been effective in raising attainment.
- The quality of teaching to establish whether it is good enough to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Whether the school is justified in stating that the school has strengths in the pupils' contribution to the school and community and in its partnership work.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are White British. A below-average percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages including those learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An average percentage of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with twice the average having a statement of special educational needs. The school offers specialist provision for pupils with hearing impairment. These pupils are on the school's roll and spend most of their time in mainstream classes.

The school has achieved permanent Eco School Status and had its Inclusion Quality Mark renewed in 2010. The school provides before- and after-school care in an independently run provision which is inspected separately.

**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 where pupils achieve well academically and grow in self-confidence. This is because, as one pupil commented, 'All the adults really care about us and how well we are doing. They just want the best for us.' Good-quality, determined leadership from the headteacher has effectively tackled a legacy of underachievement and focused on the right priorities. As a result, attainment in English and mathematics continues to improve. Parents and carers comment positively on how happy their children are in school because of the good levels of care, guidance and support they receive.

Most children begin school with skills which are broadly typical for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above average, which represents good progress and achievement from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances, make similarly good rates of progress. Provision for pupils with hearing impairment is good and they achieve well. Although most pupils make good progress, there is scope for more pupils to reach the higher levels for their age in both English and mathematics.

Strong features of the school are its excellent partnership work and pupils' contributions to the school and the wider community. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, their behaviour is good and they have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They say they feel very safe and that any concerns they may have will be taken seriously. Pupils have an influential voice in the school and have excellent opportunities to share their views. For example, their newsletter, 'Middlewich Kid's Monthly', is 'planned, written and produced by us on our own', explained one pupil. Teaching is good and underpins pupils' good enjoyment of learning. It supports the good curriculum. However, in some satisfactory lessons the pace of learning is too slow and opportunities are sometimes missed to provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils. This helps to explain why fewer pupils are doing really well. Attendance levels are above average and punctuality is good.

Strong leadership by the headteacher, well supported by other leaders and an effective governing body, has been key to the improvement in pupils' achievement. School self-evaluation is accurate and identifies where improvements need to be made. For example, it has identified that while children in the Early Years

Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress, opportunities to explore and investigate when learning outside are sometimes constrained by the layout of the buildings. The school has rigorously tackled past underperformance and can show how changes are having a positive impact. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics further by:
  - ensuring that the pace of pupils' learning remains brisk
  - increasing the challenge provided for more-able pupils in order to accelerate their progress.
  
- Enhance the provision and improve children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - providing a wider range of opportunities for children to explore and investigate when learning outdoors.

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

<b>2</b>
----------

Pupils say they enjoy lessons because teachers make them fun. Enjoyment and good progress in lessons were frequently seen during the inspection. 'Teachers make our learning exciting and keep us interested', was a comment that summed up pupils' views. Behaviour was good in all lessons observed and this contributed to the good progress that pupils made. Concentration levels are good and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.

Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a wide range of strategies to raise attainment and improve progress which are proving to be successful. Approaches being taken to improve pupils' writing and mathematics were having a positive impact on their progress in lessons. Most pupils make good progress, but in a few classes, the progress of more-able pupils is slower because they are not given enough challenge.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show considerable interest in their learning and the world around them. They show that they value others and respect and understand those who hold beliefs different from their own. As rightly judged by the school, pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's success through the important roles they play in school and outside. There are many examples of hearing pupils giving signing support to their hearing-impaired classmates. Pupils played a key role in designing recent building improvements, they take on numerous responsibilities around the school and have a strong voice in decision making. Pupils effectively adopt a healthy lifestyle. From an early age, pupils know how to eat healthily and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in fitness activities. Pupils' good basic skills, their good progress and their good personal development ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Pupils' progress is good because teaching is good and teachers focus on the right priorities. A positive feature of all lessons is the very good relationships staff have with their pupils, which ensure pupils are motivated and engaged. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quickly and successfully. Activities are generally well pitched to meet the needs of all pupils. However, work set is not always challenging enough to extend learning for the more able pupils. This results in some pupils finding the tasks too easy, which limits the progress they can make. For example, more-able pupils in a lower Key Stage 2 class enjoyed finding the solutions to a science challenge but found the 'follow up' activity undemanding. The best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, explanations are clear and teachers' subject knowledge is good. The marking of pupils' work is consistently good and explains to pupils precisely how they can improve their work. The work of teaching assistants is of good quality. Assistants are deployed effectively and have a positive impact on pupils' progress. This is particularly evident with pupils with hearing impairment. They are valued members of their classes and play an influential role in creating this inclusive community.

The school's curriculum is good. It provides a wealth of well-organised opportunities to promote pupils' personal development and well-being and is well adapted to meet the needs of different group of pupils. The 'Happy Hands Signing Choir' is an excellent example of this, with its members 'signing' to pop music. It is open to all pupils within Key Stage 2 as well as staff, and performs both in school and within the wider community. Good cross-curricular links are made between subjects and information and communication technology (ICT) is regularly used within the classroom as pupils research their topics. Visitors and visits to a wide range of localities play an excellent part in enriching the imaginative curriculum for pupils. In developing a cross-curricular approach the school is increasingly successful in threading English, mathematics and ICT into other subjects.

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

Transition arrangements, at all stages, are organised sensitively so pupils feel confident about moving forward with their learning. The vast majority of parents and carers say that the school is very caring and supervises pupils well to ensure their safety. Inspection findings confirm that care, guidance and support are good. Staff know pupils as individuals and provide impressive support that is tailored to their specific needs. The school’s commitment to encouraging good attendance is successful, resulting in good levels being maintained and pupils arriving punctually.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's drive for improvement is supported by all staff. She has worked with enthusiasm and determination to ensure pupils' progress is accelerating and their attainment is rising. Good monitoring systems are ironing out inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Other leaders share the headteacher's vision for making the school even better. This is an inclusive school that works effectively to promote equal opportunity and to tackle discrimination by, for example, rigorously evaluating and monitoring the performance of all pupils. This is apparent in the effective support for different groups of pupils, such as the additional interventions for those pupils with hearing impairment. Nonetheless, the school is aware of the need to challenge the more able pupils and is taking the right measures to remedy the situation.

Partnership working is excellent. The headteacher takes a leading role in developing links with other schools, agencies and support services. As a result, intervention and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is of high quality and improves their learning.

The governing body brings a wide range of expertise; it supports and challenges with enthusiasm and commitment. It ensures child protection and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The curriculum, through its topics and themes, provides valuable opportunities to remind pupils of their role in keeping themselves safe. The school has developed strong links within the local community and internationally through work with schools in Kenya. It also provides good opportunities for pupils to explore the diverse cultures that characterise contemporary Britain. The school has good relationships with parents and carers, who appreciate the care the school provides for their children. It gives good value for money.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly because of the good care, the effective partnership with parents and carers and sensitive induction processes. Children are well-behaved and mix well, working and playing together sensibly as they learn to share. For example, while a group of children was picking up small objects with tweezers, they made sure all their friends were given a turn. They also improved their manipulative and language skills as they described the shape, colour and size of each object. Adults talk constantly to children to encourage their language development. They intervene when appropriate to help children to learn new words, to extend their vocabulary and to increase their knowledge. Children are well taught and good use is made of assessment in helping identify what they need to learn next. Teachers' good planning ensures that there is a good balance between indoor and outdoor learning and adult-led and child-initiated activities, which promotes good learning. The current layout of the outdoor area means that, on occasions, there is insufficient room for all children to explore and investigate throughout the day. Nevertheless, most children make good progress towards the early learning goals and reach the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1. Collaborative working with other agencies at this early stage ensures that children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well, enabling them to make good progress. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and has introduced a varied curriculum that has imaginative play and children's interests at its heart. Children's welfare and progress are carefully monitored and all aspects of safeguarding are in place.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of those who responded are highly satisfied with the school. This feedback reflects the information gathered by the school from its own surveys. Typically, parents and carers comment very positively about the quality of care and the leadership of the school. Many positive comments were also received about how



supportive the school is and how much their children enjoyed school. Within the small number of negative comments received there was no underlying pattern. In their questionnaire responses, a few parents and carers signalled concerns over how the school manages unacceptable behaviour and how it helps them to support their children's learning. During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised the school's procedures with regard to these two areas. Discussions were also held with pupils. Inspectors' conclusions are contained in the body of this report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Middlewich 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	62	43	35	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	71	58	48	39	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	47	50	41	9	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	44	50	41	9	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	49	57	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	48	50	41	10	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	48	56	46	2	2	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)	59	48	43	35	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	48	50	41	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	32	61	50	9	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	39	55	45	9	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	45	52	43	5	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	56	45	37	6	5	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



22 September 2011

Dear Children

### **Inspection of Middlewich Primary School, Middlewich, CW10 9BS**

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit. You were eager to talk to us and tell us how much you like your school. This helped us to find out about the school and how well it is doing.

Your school is providing you with a good education. You told us you feel very safe when you are in school. We saw that you enjoy learning and were very impressed by the excellent contribution that you make to your school and to your local community; for example, by the way in which you took responsibility for looking after younger children and your thoughtful contributions to the Middlewich Remembrance Day service. Both your school and your local community are very proud of you. You behave well and know a great deal about staying healthy. You try your best in all the things that you do. This is helping you to make good progress in your learning. All the adults take good care of you. They all want the best for you.

Teachers work hard to find things that interest you and help you to learn. We have asked the school to improve two things. Firstly, we want to see you all getting even better results in English and mathematics. We are asking your teachers to make some improvements in lessons to make sure some of the tasks you are given are even harder. Secondly, we want younger children to have more opportunities to learn and investigate outdoors.

You can all help by continuing to try hard with all your work.

Best wishes in the future!

Yours sincerely

Michael Hewlett  
Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**