

Middleton Primary School

Middleton, South Bretton, Peterborough, PE3 9XJ

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good teaching helps all pupils, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, to make good progress over time in English and mathematics.
- From below-average starting points, almost all pupils reach standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- Progress for those in the specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because the support they receive helps them to develop the skills they need.
- Pupils' behaviour in school is good. They show positive attitudes to learning in lessons.
- Pupils say they are happy to come to school and feel safe and well looked after. Attendance has much improved since the previous inspection and is now above average.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who find learning difficult are supported particularly well.
- Leaders, including the governing body, are ambitious for the school and supported by all staff. They work together well to improve teaching and to raise pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. More able pupils, in particular, do not always make the best possible progress in some lessons because the work that teachers set for pupils is not demanding enough.
- Although teachers' marking of pupils' work shows them what they have done well, it does not always provide pupils with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills by responding to teacher's comments in their workbooks.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 12 teachers, and two assemblies. One of the lessons was jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of pupils supported by the Sensory Service.
- Short visits to observe the teaching of reading were made. Activities related to the teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were also observed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. In addition, the lead inspector talked with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break and lunch times.
- The school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, notes from meetings of the governing body and records of pupils' behaviour were reviewed. Inspectors also looked at the work pupils were doing in their books, and at records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and 14 replies to the staff questionnaires. The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Hughes

Additional Inspector

Christine Murrell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Middleton Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A well above-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. One in every four pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- A well above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is above average.
- A well above-average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school hosts a specially resourced provision for up to 15 pupils with hearing impairment and other learning difficulties. The Sensory Service supports pupils from Peterborough and other neighbouring local authorities. There are currently 12 pupils in this provision.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times of the year is well above that normally found.
- Breakfast for pupils is available from 8.30am each school day.
- No alternative or off-site provision is used by the school.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- South Bretton Preschool operates on the school site. It is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and thereby raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that all teachers:
 - set more demanding work for those pupils who are more able
 - use time more effectively in all parts of lessons in order to increase opportunities for pupils to work on their own
 - provide pupils with clear and precise information about what they need to do to improve their work
 - give pupils more time to respond to teachers' marking of their work so that they can practise and improve their skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age. This is particularly the case in personal, social and emotional development and in communication and language. They make good progress, especially in personal development during their Reception Year. By the time they enter Year 1, although children's skills remain largely below average, they are closer to national averages.
- Attainment has improved steadily over the past three years and, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. Pupils' mathematics, in particular, is improving because teachers provide them with regular opportunities to practise and use their calculation skills to solve problems. All pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress during their time in the school. Nevertheless, there is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils, especially those that are more able, make as much progress as they could in all lessons.
- Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is below the national average. However, it is improving strongly because children are taught phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) systematically. The teaching of specific reading skills continues throughout the school. The most effective sessions are conducted at a brisk pace and involve an interesting variety of tasks. In the Reception classes, for example, children enthusiastically mixed 'magic potions' to make a spell, by sounding out letters and blending them together to make a word.
- The school welcomes pupils who arrive partway through their primary education and those who are unable to speak English. They are invited to attend 'taster' sessions and paired up with a 'buddy'. This helps them form new friendships and learn the school's routines. Assessments of pupils' skills are made at an early stage to ensure they get the help they need. Leaders contact parents and carers early to check that their children are settling in. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress.
- Funding received by the school to support pupils eligible for free school meals has mainly been used to provide pupils with one-to-one tuition and extra support in lessons. It has also provided access to the additional activities the school has to offer. In 2012, Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was, on average about a term ahead of similar pupils nationally, and about six weeks behind in writing. Of the pupils currently in the school, most are about a term ahead of their classmates in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching ensures that all pupils make good progress and achieve well over time. Adults promote a positive atmosphere for learning and activities are varied and interesting. Throughout the inspection, good relationships were evident. Pupils were regularly praised, encouraged and their achievements celebrated.
- Support for all pupils who need extra help, including those supported by the Sensory Service, is good and often outstanding. Adults are highly skilled in providing additional explanations in words, pictures and diagrams. They use British Sign Language and Sign Supported English to ensure the pupils with hearing impairment access similar opportunities to others in the class. They frequently ask questions to check pupils' understanding and break learning down into small, achievable steps. Adults make learning tasks practical which helps to maintain pupils'

interests. As a result, they make good progress.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults provide interesting opportunities for children which foster their curiosity and develop their basic skills, especially in writing. They interact well with children as they play and this helps them, including those new to English, to develop language skills well. Adults use information and communication technology well to catch children's interest and motivate them.
- The best learning happens when lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and when teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour. They plan interesting activities that captivate pupils' imagination and inspire them to write. Teachers regularly ask pupils to share their ideas with each other through 'talk partners' and this helps to clarify their thinking. For example, in Year 6, pupils made rapid progress by helping each other to think of more interesting words and phrases to add to their writing in order to improve it.
- In the main, teachers ensure that they plan activities that are at just the right level of difficulty to make pupils think carefully and which moves learning forward at a good rate. In some lessons, the work that teachers set for more-able pupils is not challenging enough. At times, they quickly finish activities and have little to do. Consequently, they do not make the best possible progress they could. Occasionally, teachers' lesson introductions are too long and this limits the time pupils have to work on their own and find things out for themselves.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is encouraging. Most write comments that tell pupils what they have done well. Although there are some good examples of teachers' marking, particularly in the Years 4 and 5 class, not all teachers indicate what pupils need to do next to improve, nor are they given sufficient time to respond to teachers' marking before the next lesson. Therefore, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their skills or learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. The vast majority are keen to learn. Occasionally, a few lose concentration, which slows their learning. Those pupils with specific behavioural difficulties are supported well. Over time, they make good gains in their personal and academic development. Systems for managing pupils' behaviour are consistently applied by staff across the school. Pupils' understand the system thoroughly. They say it is fair and helps pupils to behave well.
- Pupils say they feel safe. A few report incidents of bullying, predominantly name-calling, but are confident that staff will deal quickly with their concerns. Pupils in the Sensory Service say they are not bullied, but helped and looked after by others in the school. Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire and who spoke to inspectors, say that their children are happy to come to school, feel safe and are well cared for. A few stated that they were not aware of how the school deals with incidents of bullying where they do occur.
- The school works well with an extensive range of outside agencies to provide support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, so that they get the extra help and support they need. Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection because of close working with families. The school provides pupils with an opportunity to eat a nutritious breakfast before school starts.

The leadership and management are good

- A key strength of leadership is the drive and commitment of the headteacher and other senior leaders, supported well by all staff. Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has improved. The work of the Sensory Service is led and managed extremely well by the headteacher and by the experienced special educational needs co-ordinator. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are developing their skills and, as a result, the school has a good capacity to secure further improvement.
- The school has rigorous systems for checking how well pupils are doing to make sure none are discriminated against. Those who could do better are given extra support. Parents and carers are positive about the work of the school and the Sensory service in particular. One parent commented on how well her child had achieved and added, 'We could not have sent her to a better place'.
- The quality of teaching is improving because of the thorough systems in place to oversee it. Training for all staff is closely matched to the school's priorities. Staff are keen to work together and develop their skills by learning from the best teachers. Those new to teaching are supported well by more experienced colleagues. Teachers and other adults are well-trained so that they are able to help pupils who have specific learning needs achieve well.
- The way the school organises the teaching of different subjects promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills in learning about other subjects. At the time of the inspection, the school was celebrating World Book Day. Pupils and staff enjoyed dressing up as book characters and activities promoted pupils' enjoyment in a range of stories, both new and more traditional. Pupils enjoyed singing together in assembly and appreciated listening to music.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school in improving teaching and in developing the skills of its leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well organised. They make good use of their particular skills and expertise in helping the school to move forward. Governors have received appropriate training so they are better informed in making decisions about what happens in school. They know how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools nationally and that it has been improving steadily. Governors regularly question leaders about the performance of the school and that of staff, including the headteacher. They support the headteacher in ensuring that weak teaching is tackled and good teachers are rewarded. They understand the importance of linking teachers' pay and their impact on pupils' achievement. Governors visit school events and seek the views of parents and carers regularly. They keep a close check on the school's budget and make sure that money, including the pupil premium is spent in the best interests of the children. They know that these pupils are making good progress and keeping up with their classmates. Governors regularly review policies and ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	131719
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	402500

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Champness
Headteacher	Kathy McDermott
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2010
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