

# Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School

Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0EJ

**Inspection dates** 3–4 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is good school

- It has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher and the governing body are closely checking how well things are working and supporting staff to improve.
- The quality of teaching is usually good and is sometimes outstanding.
- By the end of Year 8, pupils have reached standards that are high in reading and writing and particularly high in mathematics.
- Progress is rapid in Years 6, 7 and 8.
- Assemblies very effectively prepare pupils for the day.
- The range of subjects and courses is well planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities receive interesting and engaging educational experiences.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and increase their literacy and writing skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.
- The supportive and caring school environment ensures that pupils feel very safe. They enjoy school and have a positive approach to learning.
- The school works well with parents.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently good or better in all year groups, so not all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, especially in Year 5.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs and ability.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding do less well than others in mathematics.
- Pupils do not always get clear opportunities to respond to the guidance they are given in marking.
- Despite recent improvements, attendance is still below national averages.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 24 lessons across all four year groups. Seven of the lessons were seen together with members of the school’s senior management team.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies and the school’s breakfast club and heard a number of pupils read during the ‘Everyone Reads in Class’ session.
- The inspection team held meetings with two groups of pupils, three members of the governing body, senior leaders, and the heads of year and some subject leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of policies, including those for safeguarding and for managing the performance of staff. They also looked at the information kept by the school on the quality of teaching and learning, and the records of standards reached by pupils and their progress. The school’s improvement plans and its judgements on its own performance were also studied.
- There were 30 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 38 questionnaires completed by the staff. Inspectors also received written comments from parents.

## Inspection team

Gillian Scobie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stuart Gray

Additional Inspector

Brenda Watson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average middle school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is in line with national averages, but the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is in line with national averages. This funding is received for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for children in the care of the local authority and for children with a parent in the armed services. There are none of the last group in this school.
- The school organises a breakfast club for its pupils.
- None of the school's pupils are educated in other schools or units.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.

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

- Improve pupils' progress, particularly that of lower attaining pupils in Year 5, by ensuring that all pupils have the right level of challenge in lessons and fully understand the task they must do.
- Make sure that pupil premium funding is used to help eligible pupils to make faster progress in mathematics.
- Make sure that teachers give pupils regular opportunities to respond to the marking and next-step guidance after key pieces of work.
- Improve attendance levels so that they are consistently average or better for all groups of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils start school in Year 5 with below-average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 8, pupils are now achieving high standards in mathematics, reading and writing. In the current Year 8, attainment in reading and writing is approximately a year ahead of expected levels in English and four terms ahead in mathematics.
- Achievement is not outstanding because progress is not consistently rapid across all year groups, and the rapid progress made by the Year 8 pupils has not been sustained long enough to be a clear pattern. Their achievement is a marked improvement since 2012.
- Good levels of individual help and guidance ensure that most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils supported by school action do not do consistently as well as other groups and the school is now focusing further resources on these pupils in order to improve their overall achievement.
- The school uses the Year 7 catch up funds it receives from the government to ensure that all pupils make the best progress they can as they move through Years 7 and 8.
- Pupils love reading and read widely. The introduction of a regular reading session each morning has improved achievement in reading across the school. All pupils are now making at least the progress they should, except for some of those in Year 5, whose progress is sometimes slower.
- Progress is comparatively slow in Year 5, especially for lower attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. At the end of the year, attainment is still below national averages, particularly in reading and writing. However, by the end of Year 6, progress has accelerated and standards are in line with national averages.
- In 2012, in Year 6, which is the year group for which national comparisons is available, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were around two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and nearly a year behind in English. The progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding has improved since 2012, and well-targeted support has closed the gap between these pupils and their classmates in reading and writing. However, the gap has widened in mathematics because, although the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium has improved, it has not accelerated as much as for the rest of the school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection due to careful monitoring by the school leaders and, as a result, most of the teaching in the school is good or better.
- Teachers build positive and supportive relationships with pupils, and these foster high levels of engagement and commitment. As a result, pupils become confident learners who are willing to take risks and try new things.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils are set challenging work with exciting learning activities that are engaging and stimulating. Pupils are often asked to think about how they are learning as well as what they are learning, and this helps them to deepen their knowledge and develop

useful skills.

- English lessons across the school are usually well matched to pupils' needs, and good use is made of paired and group work to help pupils learn together. The teaching of reading and writing is steadily improving. Pupils are encouraged to write accurately and at length.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together to help and guide pupils who may be having difficulty and, as a result, most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enjoy their lessons and take pride in their work.
- In mathematics, most lessons are planned carefully to build effectively on what pupils already know and to extend their understanding. This is particularly true in the teaching of mathematics in Years 7 and 8, where imaginative teaching helps pupils to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts and their ability to apply them to new problems and situations. However, in Year 5, teachers are sometimes overambitious and, occasionally, not all pupils are able to fully understand the task or how to use key concepts effectively.
- The quality of marking is consistently good across the school and so pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to make further progress in their lessons. However, teachers do not always plan enough opportunities for pupils to respond to the guidance they are given.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding**

- There has been an outstanding improvement in the management of behaviour since the last inspection and this has been commented on positively by parents and staff alike.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the high expectations of good behaviour set by the school through its well-developed approach to 'values education'. They are always courteous to staff and each other and will automatically offer to help each other should the need arise.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary.
- Pupils feel safe at school, and this is fully endorsed by the parents and staff in their responses to the questionnaires. Pupils say that they have a high level of confidence in the staff and are able to talk to them if they have any concerns. Pupils know about the different types of bullying but insist that incidents are relatively rare and, when they do happen, they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Looking at health and safety risks in potentially dangerous environments like the science laboratory or the design and technology workshop are often important features of lessons in those areas.
- Assemblies are used very effectively to prepare the pupils for each new school day and to help them adhere to the values of respect and sharing that are central to the ethos of the school. Music and singing often play an important role, and there is an impressive moment of tranquillity to allow pupils and staff to think about the day ahead.
- Attendance is improving steadily, although it continues to be below average. A number of robust procedures recently put in place are having a positive effect and attendance has been significantly better in the last six weeks than in the similar period last year. The recent addition

of a breakfast club ensures that some pupils are better prepared at the start of the school day.

## **The leadership and management** is good

- All leaders and managers, including the governors, are ambitious for continuing improvement across the school and demonstrate consistently high expectations of teaching and learning. As a result of leaders' accurate monitoring and well-targeted support, standards have risen in reading writing and mathematics.
- The school knows itself well and evaluates its work and performance with honest objectivity. Realistic practical targets are being set to move the school forward and, as a result, the school is improving.
- The school has worked successfully to foster the pupils' love of reading through the planned introduction of well-chosen books. This has helped to improve literacy and support pupils' learning across all the subjects.
- The school curriculum is carefully monitored to ensure that pupils receive a wealth of opportunities, including a number of clubs and societies that foster their interests in the wider world. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is particularly well supported.
- Since the last inspection, the school has worked closely with the local authority to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the management of behaviour. There has been a measurable improvement in both aspects, driven by the headteacher and governing body.
- The school works well with parents through the parent forum, and parents and carers are able to attend literacy and numeracy classes in Years 5 and 6 with their children. This has greatly improved the progress of some individual pupils and helped families to learn together.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet the government's statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body contains a good range of skills and experience and is able to make a strong contribution to improving the school. Governors place strong emphasis on the effective use of professional development based on the needs of the staff and use performance management systems well to support and reward good work and improvement. They take the initiative and respond quickly and effectively to the changing needs of the school. For example, they were a driving force in the increased monitoring of attendance that has led to recent improvements.
  - They have recently completed focused training on how to better interpret progress records and, as a result, are consistently challenging leaders effectively. The governing body monitors school finances and checks the use made of funds, including Year 7 catch up funding and the pupil premium, to improve standards. It recognises the latter as an area for further improvement, especially in mathematics. The governing body plays an active role in the life of the school through regular visits to classrooms and focused reports from managers about changes and progress across subjects and year groups. Governors know the school well, and know that teaching is now good.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109694
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401070

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	329
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Law
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mandy Reddick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01767 314562
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