

Middleton Community Primary School

Middleton, Saxmundham, IP17 3NW

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress in mathematics has been weak over the last two years.
- Until recently, staff long term illness has meant that children in the early years and pupils in Key Stage 1 have not achieved as well as they could, particularly in mathematics.
- Improvements set in place by leaders have not ensured good achievement or teaching over a sustained period.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils' attitudes towards learning are not yet leading to good progress.
- Children's skills with number are not well developed in the early years. The outdoor area has not been used effectively to help children improve their understanding of number.
- Teachers responsible for subjects such as literacy and numeracy are not fully involved in checking on the learning and supporting their colleagues.
- Teachers' marking and feedback have not always helped pupils to improve their learning enough, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' mathematics work in Key Stage 1 is sometimes poorly presented and inaccurate.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, have started to make changes so that, this year, achievement is rising because teaching has improved significantly.
- This year, all groups of pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite and friendly towards visitors.
- The school strongly promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective links with pre-schools and secondary schools ensure that pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- The school has effective systems for safeguarding. Pupils say they are kept safe and are well looked after. Parents agree that this is a happy, safe and welcoming school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all three classes. All the observations were made jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- The inspector heard pupils read, and looked at pupils' writing and mathematics work from each year group, much of this with the head of school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. He also looked at information on individual pupils' progress, anonymised records of teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.
- The inspector met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. He also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the 27 responses to the online Parent View survey. Written comments from three parents and ten members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Middleton is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Children in Reception attend full time.
- The school has been federated with Peasenhall Primary School for eight years; on 1 April 2015 it federated with two other schools, Yoxford Primary School and Bramfield Primary School. The federation shares an executive headteacher (referred to as the headteacher in this report) and governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, the school takes pupils in Year 6. The roll has increased by nearly a half. A head of school was appointed in September 2014, and the executive headteacher who had been supporting the school took on the formal role when the federation was complete. A special educational needs coordinator for the federation schools was appointed in April 2015. Two of the three teachers have been on long-term sickness absence; one returned in time for the inspection.
- School leaders have been supported by an executive headteacher from another federation in Suffolk since 1 April 2015.
- An external review of governance has been commissioned as part of the federation response to other inspections.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- In 2014, there were not enough pupils in Year 6 for the school to be measured against the government's floor standards. These set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in mathematics, particularly in the early years and at Key Stage 1, in order to ensure that the progress made by pupils continues to improve and matches that in reading and writing, by teachers:
 - having high expectations of pupils' work so that it is well presented and accurate
 - giving children in the early years more opportunities to use and apply their skills with numbers, especially in the outdoor area
 - ensuring that marking and feedback consistently helps pupils to better understand the most effective ways of solving problems, and reflects the good practice found in writing
 - ensuring that pupils always have a positive attitude towards learning in order to improve their progress
- Enhance the contribution made by subject leaders to supporting how the school improves, particularly in literacy and numeracy, by sharing the best practice across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leadership requires improvement because leaders' actions have resulted in weak progress in mathematics over the last two years. Nevertheless, leaders have recruited effective staff and raised ambitions so that the school is quickly improving. Although teaching is improving strongly and leading to faster rates of progress, including in mathematics this year, this has not been sustained for an extended period.
- There is a positive climate for learning as leaders promote better learning habits amongst the pupils, although this has not yet resulted in consistently positive attitudes. Leaders have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, this has not always been the case, so pupils' progress is not yet good.
- Leaders set high expectations of staff, and there are comprehensive systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and reward teaching that results in sustained good progress. Support is provided to help staff meet their targets. As a result, morale is high among the staff.
- In a small school, all teachers carry a wide range of responsibilities. During the period of staff sickness, these roles were not carried out effectively, particularly in literacy and numeracy. There were too few checks on learning and too little support offered to others. Teachers from within the federation are now providing this support. For example, the teacher responsible for children with learning needs carries out regular checks so that these pupils do not fall behind.
- The school now provides a curriculum which is broad and balanced. Pupils' learning in English and mathematics has improved through better teaching. There is also a strong emphasis on creativity, and many pupils opt to learn to play an instrument and join the school orchestra, often performing in the local community. One parent wrote about 'the wonderful music concert' in Halesworth. Older pupils experience outdoor learning at the 'forest school' at Peasenhall Primary School. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Despite its rural location, pupils learn about the local traditions of Suffolk, such as taking part in the 'East Feast' project which involves pupils in learning about locally produced healthy food. The Year 3 and 4 class took pride in producing its own elderberry cordial and finding out about healthy cereal bars. Pupils also learn about the importance of democracy and other important values, such as co-operation, through assemblies and religious education.
- Teaching assistants provide well-targeted work in small groups, which has helped pupils supported through the pupil premium to make better progress this year. Funds are used to provide additional teaching support as well as support for their social and emotional development. This is part of the school's firm commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling all forms of discrimination.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sports premium to pay for specialist teaching. As a result, pupils experience a wider range of sports. Pupils benefit from using sports facilities in the other federation schools, where they join other pupils for their physical education lessons. Pupils also take part in extra-curricular sports and health-related activities. Teachers are also more confident about teaching physical education because of what they learn from the specialist teaching.
- The school has well-established links with pre-schools and local secondary schools. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils visited the secondary school of their choice to gain some familiarity with the staff. These effective arrangements for transition reflect the good partnership between the schools and help pupils to be increasingly well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The local authority has provided intensive and wide ranging support, including advice to the governors on staffing matters, training for teachers and support for the headteacher from another local headteacher. This concerted support has enabled leaders to have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve teaching and raise standards.
- The school has robust systems for checking on the suitability of staff. Safeguarding arrangements meet all the necessary requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Until recently, governors have not held an accurate view of the school’s performance. Since the federation, governors have reorganised their committees and responsibilities. They have effectively used first-hand evidence of the school’s performance and the quality of teaching, for example, by examining pupils’ books, to hold leaders more to account. For example, recent checks on the quality of teachers’ marking, made by leaders and governors, resulted in changes being made to make this more consistent.
- Governors have played a significant part in staff changes, appointing a head of school from September 2014, a new executive headteacher who takes up post in September 2015, and enabling staff from the federation schools to share their expertise. This has had a positive impact, particularly on aspects of the provision in the early years.
- Newly appointed governors with experience of governance in successful schools have helped the governing body to have a close oversight of teachers’ pay awards. None have been made, as the school emerges from a time of significant staffing difficulties.
- Governors now understand information about pupils’ attainment and progress and how important it is to use caution in making comparisons with national performance data when cohorts are small. This has not always been the case.
- Governors have a good understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and its positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They help to ensure that funds are used wisely so that these pupils play a full role in the life of the school.
- Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those with regard to safeguarding. The appointment of a teacher to oversee safeguarding across the four schools helps to ensure consistently good practice. The newly constituted governing body is reviewing all policies so that they reflect current good practice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, are not always ready to learn and some get distracted too easily. Sometimes this results in careless and untidy work, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school; for example, in assemblies, where they are eager to take part, volunteer thoughts and prayers, and join in role plays. Pupils play well together, are polite and respectful to each other and to visitors, and show kindness and consideration to others. Teachers have helped pupils to reflect on the consequences of their actions, so that pupils are more responsible when making decisions, and this contributes to the warm and harmonious environment.
- The school has invested considerable time in promoting the correct learning habits, so that pupils, especially at Key Stage 2, are now more ready to learn. Pupils respond well to the rewards given out each Friday to those who best display these attitudes. This is beginning to have a good impact on their learning.
- Pupils take on extra responsibilities around the school. Some join the school council to help with fundraising, others are part of the eco-council, helping the school to promote healthy and environmentally friendly ways of working. This helps them to play an active and full part in the life of the school.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree that the school keeps them safe.
- Pupils, acting as ‘Road safety officers’, take responsibility for leading others in safety measures; for example, posting ‘20 is plenty’ signs around the school for drivers who go too fast. They have a good understanding of how to use the internet safely, only contacting friends known to them and reporting to adults anything which concerns them.

- Pupils know what bullying means and understand the consequences of their actions. They are friendly and sensitive, and go out of their way to show respect towards each other. Pupils say that everyone is treated the same in the school and that they readily accept pupils who are different from themselves. As one pupil said, 'We are all different', whilst another asserted 'Don't judge a book by its cover.'
- The school has become increasingly popular and has grown in size. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their improving attendance, which is above the national average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been strong enough over time to promote good enough progress, particularly in mathematics. Recent changes in staffing has helped teaching to improve significantly in recent months, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 have not had the same positive experiences as those in Key Stage 2. Pupils' work in books is sometimes untidy, some work is left uncorrected and some pupils show little pride in how they present their mathematics work.
- Marking and feedback are effective in Key Stage 2. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, guidance is given about what the pupils should do next to improve their learning, and many pupils respond to this guidance and so make good progress. However, this is much stronger when teachers mark written work than in mathematics, and not as consistent in Key Stage 1. Pupils are not always helped to find ways of working out problems.
- Effective teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is leading to more pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 1, and improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar in later years. Pupils are given regular opportunities to read for enjoyment, sometimes with their parents at 'reading cafes'. They apply their skills well when they encounter new or unfamiliar words or phrases.
- Writing is taught effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils' books show that pupils write with confidence in different styles. Pupils in Year 5 and 6, for example, planned interesting essays ready to write a comparison between different types of mobile device. They demonstrated an excellent awareness of how to use these devices sensibly and with maturity. Good questioning by the teacher and well-targeted prompts helped pupils decide on how to organise their essays.
- The school has had a strong focus this year on teaching mathematics. Pupils regularly use their reasoning skills to explore investigations, and this is helping to engage their interests and raise their achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class tried out different ways to identify number patterns, and were able to come up with hypotheses and predictions. It was clear why one said 'I enjoy maths a lot.'
- Effective questioning in the Year 5 and 6 class helped pupils investigate how to work out fractions and shapes. Pupils took on specific roles as they worked in groups of three, 'spying' on their peers, leading the group or offering expert advice as the 'mathe-magician'. As they discovered the properties of fractions, which seemed to be different to what they knew about whole numbers, one said, 'it's completely different to what you normally think.' Excellent support from the teacher helped the pupils to build resilience and many made outstanding progress in their mathematics skills.
- Teachers now plan work which is challenging and captures the pupils' interests. As a result, all groups of pupils including the most able, are set work which is at the right level of difficulty.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was around the national average in reading, writing

and mathematics in 2014. However, the progress pupils have made in mathematics by the end of Year 6 was weak in the previous two years.

- Children join the school with skills typical for their age. They are, however, sometimes lower in reading and writing and in their awareness of the wider world. Few reached a good level of development in 2013 but this improved significantly so that most children reached a good level in 2014 and 2015.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' learning slows when they do not take enough care with their work, particularly in mathematics. However, in the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2014, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard was above the national average. This was a significant improvement on the previous year.
- The current Year 6 pupils have made rapid progress since September 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, because of historic weaker teaching, they still have much to catch up and are not on track to reach the standards expected of them. Information provided by the school and the work found in pupils' books show that all groups of pupils are making better progress this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to their peers, often from lower starting points. Their individual learning needs are quickly assessed so that they are given well-targeted support. They also benefit from working in mixed-age classes and often learn more quickly by working closely with their older classmates.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, across the school, disadvantaged pupils now make good progress from their different starting points. They are included in all school activities, so they have very positive attitudes towards school. Good support provided by teaching assistants, often in small groups, ensures that their progress is similar to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment at the higher levels at the end of Year 6 was lower in mathematics than reading and writing. However, information provided by the school shows that gaps in attainment have closed. The most able pupils are now making good and sometimes rapid progress throughout the school. Pupils are given regular opportunities to explore number patterns and develop their reasoning skills, especially in Key Stage 2, and this is leading to high levels of attainment.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children of Reception age are taught alongside pupils from Key Stage 1 for part of the day. This helps them settle quickly and follow the lead of the older pupils' behaviour. Consequently, their behaviour is good. They are also now well prepared for the next stage of their education, which was not always the case previously.
- Provision in the early years has been hampered by staff changes brought about by long term sickness. Over time, this has led to teaching being of inconsistent quality. However, effective support from experienced staff from a federation school has helped build staff confidence, so that teaching and leadership are more secure. This is evident in the improving outcomes for the children.
- Children's progress towards reaching the early learning goals is improving. However, their achievement requires further improvement because, over time, this has not always been the case and not enough children in the past have reached a good level of development.
- Children enjoy using the outdoor area and the extensive equipment available to help them with their physical development. For example, children explored road safety routines as they made circuits around the area on different small vehicles. They used road signs, and created their own zebra crossing and hazard signs. This helped them to keep safe in their play. The school places a high value on keeping children safe in this friendly environment. However, the outdoor area is not used so effectively to help children develop their awareness of numbers and patterns.

- The school has established effective links with the local pre-schools. Children and families regularly visit or are visited. The recently introduced 'parent and toddler' group also contributes significantly to the smooth transition.

- The school maintains detailed records of children's achievements. Parents are regularly involved in supporting their child's education. However, the records do not include regular contributions of what parents observe. The school recognises this deficiency and the new online system that is currently being used will enable parents to contribute more frequently so that the school has better information about each child's development.

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	124600
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	461563

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nancy Main
Headteacher	Cathryn Benefer
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2012
Telephone number	01728 648251
Fax number	01728 648292
Email address	office@middleton.suffolk.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone [0300 123 4234](tel:03001234234), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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 and 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 assesses 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](tel:03001234234), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational 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 St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: [0300 123 4234](tel:03001234234)
Textphone: [0161 618 8524](tel:01616188524)
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015

