

Lincroft Middle School

Station Road, Oakley, Bedfordshire MK43 7RE

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They take effective action to address any areas of concern. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress across most subjects and exceptional progress in English.
- Governors are committed to the success of the school. Their support and challenge to senior and middle leaders bring about improved outcomes.
- Pupils behave well, both in lessons and at less structured times. They take pride in their school and willingly keep the school environment in pristine condition.
- The attendance of all groups of pupils continues to improve. As a result, attendance overall is above national averages.
- Teachers are skilled at planning learning activities that meet the needs of most pupils.
- Recently introduced careers guidance is effective. Year 8 pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points across a range of subjects from the start of Year 5 to the end of Year 8.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for. The pupils make good progress personally and academically.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. School leaders have created a culture of tolerance and respect for others.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' reading develops well over time. Pupils read widely and for pleasure.
- The headteacher ensures that there is a strong culture of safeguarding and that issues of child protection are managed diligently. Staff are appropriately trained and record concerns in line with the school policy.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science in every year group. Leaders track their progress carefully in these subjects. However, their progress in most other curriculum areas is not yet as strong.
- Although the most able pupils achieve in line with other pupils nationally, they are capable of achieving more. Staff do not insist that they work to their full capabilities sufficiently.
- Governors have not ensured that the website includes all the relevant and statutory information required.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement further by:
 - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress across the curriculum to the progress they make in English, mathematics and science
 - providing hard enough work so that more of the most able pupils consistently reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Ensure that the website is consistently up to date and includes the relevant statutory information.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection in 2012, when the school was awarded an outstanding judgement, published information has indicated that progress at key stage 2 has been below that found nationally. Inspection evidence confirms that the school provides a good standard of education and that pupils make strong progress from their starting points in Year 5.
- The headteacher, ably supported by other members of the leadership team, has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders identify key areas to improve and implement suitable and effective actions.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English, mathematics and science is rigorous. Leaders evaluate the impact of actions regularly and this has resulted in a significant improvement in outcomes for pupils.
- All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire are proud to work at this school, and most of them agree that leaders meet their professional development needs well.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding to identify and take action to remove the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils in English, mathematics and science is effective. The successful use of a range of strategies, such as one-to-one mentoring and focused time on homework, means that the attainment of pupils in these subjects is now similar to that of other pupils nationally. The impact of this work in other subjects is not yet as strong and disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Leaders make good use of literacy and numeracy catch-up funding. More than two thirds of pupils who were below the level expected for their age in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 were at or above the level expected for their age at the end of Year 7.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Additional funding is used effectively. For example, teaching assistants are given extensive and specific training to help pupils in lessons. They question well and provide suitable resources to help pupils understand what they have to do. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their individual needs are met.
- Additional funding to enhance pupils' experience of physical education and sport is used well and teachers' skills are developed effectively. Leaders evaluate the impact of this funding on the participation of pupils in sport, which has increased. For example, pupils who cannot physically participate in lessons for any reason are now involved in umpiring tennis and analysing the playing of others. Participation in sport is high with around 70% of pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 taking part in extra-curricular sports.
- Leaders have implemented a diverse programme of extra-curricular activities, allowing pupils to explore different opportunities. Clubs take place before and after school and include activities such as yoga and gymnastics. There are a range of house competitions and plenty of opportunities to be involved in sports, poetry, the arts and

trips or visits.

- Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that the school is well led and managed, and they would recommend the school to others.
- Leaders have successfully prepared the school community to change from a middle school to a secondary school. They have worked closely within the trust to prepare teachers appropriately for key stage 4 teaching.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and gives them the opportunity to achieve well. Pupils develop an understanding of a wide range of topics across a broad range of subjects. They are well prepared for transition to Year 9 within the federation of schools because leaders have adopted a shared approach to subject content across the federation.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is effective. During assemblies, form time and specific activity weeks, such as arts and culture week, leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of life in modern Britain. In humanities, adults explore pupils' views of stereotypes and pupils develop a sense of tolerance and acceptance of others.

Governance

- Governance is conducted by a local governing body and by a trust board. The local governing body monitors the work of the school well, overseeing all aspects of leaders' work and holding them to account for the performance of the school.
- The local governing body has a secure knowledge of the strengths of the school. It understands the published information about pupils' performance and minutes of meetings show that governors receive regular updates and ask relevant questions. They ensure that the standard of education is good and that appropriate improvements are made.
- The trust board works at a strategic level across several schools, focusing mainly on academic standards and financial performance. It provides useful training and development to the school's staff as the school moves to become a secondary school.
- Governors have not checked the website well enough to ensure that the required statutory information is relevant and up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher takes a personal lead on safeguarding matters and is well supported by other leaders. Leaders are rigorous in following up concerns with external agencies and put pupils at the heart of their work. As a result of leaders' diligence, persistence, care and understanding, pupils are kept safe.
- All required information is in place to show that leaders and governors check the suitability of any staff who work in the school. Staff have received training on their 'Prevent' duty and leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date with any changes in statutory requirements.

- Parents and staff agree that pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders ensure that pupils know how to avoid dangers in modern society. Pupils know where to seek help if they have concerns about themselves or others.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong across year groups and most subjects. Teachers plan learning effectively to follow a logical sequence, so that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop well over time.
- Teachers typically provide activities which structure pupils' work well. For example, in humanities, regular use is made of booklets, charts and tables which help pupils to develop their understanding. In science, pupils develop good practical skills and, in English, teachers demonstrate what good work looks like.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work well together. Teaching assistants have a clear understanding of teachers' plans and of the quality of work teachers expect from pupils. Together, they skilfully help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- Teaching usually interests pupils and, at its best, makes them very enthusiastic. In music and in drama, for example, pupils were gripped by the teaching.
- Teachers do not consistently expect the most able pupils to work as hard as they could. At times, adults do not expect pupils to demonstrate high-level thinking and produce the quality of work of which they are capable. Consequently, in most subjects, the most able pupils do not make accelerated progress in their learning.
- Parents and pupils have mixed views about the success of homework. The support leaders have put in place for pupils to complete homework has not yet led to it being fully effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Senior and middle leaders closely monitor the emotional as well as academic needs of pupils they have identified as vulnerable. They ensure that the pupils receive the precise support they need to overcome the individual difficulties they face.
- Pupils receive regular careers advice and guidance in tutor sessions, as part of a wider programme of activities including a careers fair, a careers week, external speakers and mentors. From a recent school survey, the proportion of pupils who have a clear idea about careers they might want to pursue has increased.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe, and can explain why they feel safe at school. Personal, social and health education covers areas such as sex and relationships, personal well-being, improving levels of confidence and an understanding of personal differences. Pupils understand what support is available to them and how

to access it.

- Pupils explain that instances of bullying, including cyber bullying, are effectively dealt with. Because leaders do not accept discrimination of any kind, they have been particularly successful in reducing instances of homophobic and racist bullying.
- Form tutors are effective in providing pupils with personal, social and health education. During form time, pupils are kept up to date with current affairs and learn about teamwork. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding because tutors introduce a theme of the week, such as arts culture or respect, while pupils share and celebrate personal successes.
- Leaders and teachers have not equipped the most able pupils with the skills to want to be highly effective learners. Pupils do not usually seek to carry out work of a higher standard, even if the work they have is too easy for them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils take pride in their school and set a good example for others. Some pupils are ambassadors for sports, performing arts or modern foreign languages, and help at local primary schools. Others are part of the school council or student leadership group. Some pupils asked to be put on a rota for litter picking to ensure that their school remains smart.
- Pupils are willing learners who behave well in and out of lessons. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly learning environment.
- Leaders take the well-being of pupils seriously. For example, although behaviour is already good, leaders have worked with parents, pupils and staff to make it better. This has led to instances of negative behaviour being clearly recorded and acted on.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to reduce the absence rates of disadvantaged pupils to bring these into line with those of other pupils nationally. Attendance rates overall are higher than national averages.
- Pupils listen well in class and respond promptly to requests from adults. Consequently, lessons proceed without interruption.
- Pupils spoken with during the inspection were articulate and positive about the school. Parents agree that their children are happy and well looked after.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science between arriving in Year 5 and completing key stage 2 in Year 6. This progress is then sustained or improved on until the end of Year 8.
- In some subject areas pupils make outstanding progress. In English, for example, some pupils produce work at the end of Year 8 which is more typically seen at the end of Year 9. In technology, drama and music, many pupils excel and achieve much more than their peers nationally.

- In most subjects, most pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress across all year groups. This is because their needs are well considered and adults routinely provide suitable resources and guidance.
- Pupils read widely and often. Pupils spoke to inspectors about books they are reading and about how the summer reading challenge ensures that they read suitably difficult texts.
- Leaders have put in place good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which means that their reading improves over time. Teachers and leaders support disadvantaged pupils well with their reading and, by the time they leave Year 8, their reading ability is close to that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have autism make good progress because their individual needs are well understood and well met through the school's specialist provision. Transitions into and out of the specialist provision are well managed, and pupils are integrated into mainstream lessons as appropriate, preparing them effectively for the next stage in their education or career.
- In English, mathematics and science, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and attain in line with other pupils nationally. However, this is not consistent across other subjects.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not make as much progress as they could, because teachers and leaders do not ensure that they are working at a high enough level.

School details

Unique reference number	136471
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10031417

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	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	852
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jacqueline Hepburn
Headteacher	Mark Duke
Telephone number	01234 822 147
Website	www.lincroftschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@lincroft.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about school contact details, exam and assessment results, the pupil premium, Year 7 numeracy and literacy, or the physical education and sport premium on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about annual reports and accounts, exclusion arrangements or equality objectives.
- Lincroft Middle School is a middle school deemed secondary, serving the village of Oakley. It is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school is in the process of converting into a secondary school with year groups 7 to 11. With the exception of pupils in the specialist provision, current pupils are in Years 5 to 8.

- The school is part of the Sharnbrook Academy Federation and the Pilgrim Learning Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average.
- The school has specialised provision for 28 pupils in Years 7 to 11 who have autism.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 47 lessons, sometimes accompanied by the school's senior leaders, to observe pupils' learning and progress. They also reviewed the work of a range of pupils in their books and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, three members of the local governing body and a representative from the academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in groups and individually across different age groups.
- Inspectors visited the school's provision for pupils who have autism.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and spending plans. They also looked at the school's behaviour and attendance records and its performance information.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors considered 129 responses to Parent View and 65 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andy Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Phillip Barr	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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