

Middlestone Moor Primary School

Rock Road, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 7DA

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across year groups and subjects, and this contributes to unevenness in pupils' current progress in key stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not consistently pitch work at a level that enables pupils to make consistently good progress or that provides them with sufficient opportunities to work at a greater depth of understanding.
- Outcomes remain variable for all pupils and for groups of pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of pupils' writing is mixed across year groups, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' reading and understanding skills, and their skills and understanding in subjects such as history and geography, are not consistently developed.
- Leaders and governors have not used the pupil premium effectively enough to improve attendance and to erode differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers rapidly enough.
- Although leaders closely monitor many aspects of performance, they and governors have an over-generous view of the school's overall effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and her team have established a distinctive ethos where pupils are consistently polite, considerate and supportive of one another. Leaders and teachers are developing many positive learning attributes in pupils.
- Leaders are building greater challenge into teaching to meet the heightened demands of the national curriculum. This contributed to much better outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2017.
- Effective planning, teaching and assessment has enabled pupils to make good and consistently improving progress in the early years.
- Leaders provide valuable opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of their rights and responsibilities and of the needs of others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, by:
 - increasing the proportions of pupils achieving expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined at key stage 2
 - implementing new strategies in mathematics to enable pupils to apply problem-solving skills and make stronger progress across all year groups
 - improving the quality of writing of boys and disadvantaged pupils by developing their accuracy and ability to write in a range of styles
 - enhancing reading skills by developing pupils' inference and deduction skills and their abilities to respond to more challenging texts
 - building upon recent success at key stage 1 in increasing the proportion of pupils working at a greater depth of understanding across the school, particularly the most able pupils.
- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - fortifying the curriculum so that pupils can develop appropriate subject-specific knowledge and skills in science, geography and history
 - reviewing the effect of strategies to support disadvantaged pupils and their families to diminish differences in their attendance and outcomes from those of their peers
 - tracking the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more closely to support more consistent progress
 - embedding initiatives to improve teaching and learning and develop pupils' learning behaviours, with a deeper focus upon their effect in the classroom.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' ambitions for pupils' success have not been reflected in pupils' outcomes over time, which still require improvement. Variations in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have contributed to variable outcomes between phases and subjects.
- Leaders and governors have not used pupil premium funding effectively enough to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils or to diminish differences in outcomes between them and other pupils. Only 11% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2017, while their attendance remained in the lowest 10%.
- Leaders have established a distinctive ethos where pupils show very high levels of courtesy and consideration. Pupils have a clear awareness of their rights and responsibilities and show consideration of the needs of others. Leaders equip pupils with a strong sense of values that prepares them very well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have monitored many aspects of school performance closely and do have an accurate view of areas to address as part of their improvement plan. Pupils' work at key stages 1 and 2 was externally moderated in 2017 and standards found to be accurate. However, leaders' assessment of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes over time has been over generous.
- The headteacher and subject leaders are working closely with school improvement partners to address a number of areas for improvement. A new mathematics scheme is contributing to improving teaching and increasing challenge to address recent underperformance at key stage 2, although this is not consistent across all year groups.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a thorough performance management system through which teacher performance is regularly reviewed. This has contributed to developments in teaching and learning, but it has not secured consistent improvements in pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and teachers have used additional funding to work closely with external partners to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has contributed to effective support in areas such as pupils' speech and language development and their gross motor or movement skills. However, overall progress for these pupils is still variable and leaders do not always have an incisive view of their progress.
- Leaders are using assessment-tracking systems to provide teachers, leaders and governors with termly reviews of pupils' progress. Increasing moderation is assisting teachers in developing a more accurate awareness of standards, although some variance remains between phases.
- Leaders have maintained a consistent focus on improving provision in the early years, which has led to consistent improvements in pupils' outcomes over a three-year period.
- Leaders provide a rich curriculum and cohesive assembly programme that greatly enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop social

responsibility through charity and fund-raising activities.

- Leaders have used additional funding to support pupils' engagement in sport to increase participation in a wider variety of sports and physical activity, including dance, gymnastics, basketball and judo. Pupils have had access to specialist coaching in a range of sports to further develop their skills and experience.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides breadth and balance and the opportunity to pursue other subjects through themed topics. On occasions, pupils do not explore subject-specific content and skills in science, history and geography in sufficient depth.

Governance of the school

- Governors promote the school's distinctive ethos and show a sustained commitment to the wider school community. They have challenged leaders over recent differences between predicted and actual outcomes. They have worked with leaders to check standards, including the quality of work in pupils' books.
- Governors have established appropriate committee structures to review key aspects of performance and safety, including online safety. They regularly visit the school and talk to pupils about their perceptions of school life, including their safety and welfare.
- Although governors have reviewed aspects of the impact of additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, they have not focused closely enough on its effect upon the progress and attendance of these pupils. Governors have accepted views of the school's effectiveness which have been too generous.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors take their responsibilities for pupils' safety very seriously. They carry out appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of adults working on site. Leaders pursue concerns over pupils' welfare carefully and record this diligently. Safeguarding training is up to date and effective personal, social and health education supports pupils' safety and welfare.
- Pupils feel safe and happy in school, and their parents and carers agree. In conversation and through questionnaires, parents expressed considerable appreciation for the care and welfare that teachers provide. Pupils believe that bullying is extremely rare and that staff act effectively on the rare occasions bullying does occur.
- Leaders actively promote pupils' welfare and safety. They have taken action to raise pupils' awareness of safeguarding issues, including the provision of special assemblies led by staff from the NSPCC. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe online and how to avoid the threats posed by strangers. The school's distinctive work to raise pupils' awareness of their rights and responsibilities supports their wider personal welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between phases and subjects and contributes to varying rates of progress across subjects and for different groups of pupils.
- Although leaders are introducing new schemes of work to improve teaching in mathematics, these changes have not led to consistently effective practice across the school. Where teaching is most effective, teachers are developing pupils' fluency and providing regular opportunities to solve problems. However, on other occasions, teaching does not challenge pupils as thoroughly, as they are given fewer opportunities to work at greater depth. As a result, pupils' progress remains uneven.
- Teachers provide pupils with non-negotiable expectations of presentation and accuracy to support their writing. They also provide effective models of different styles of writing to support pupils in writing in a range of genres. There is evidence that many of the girls respond well to these approaches and produce writing of an impressive standard. However, too many of the boys, and too many disadvantaged pupils, make less progress, as these strategies have less of an impact on the accuracy and quality of their writing.
- Teachers and teaching assistants effectively model sounds and develop pupils' abilities to recognise the links between letters and sounds. During the inspection, there was evidence seen of effective phonics teaching taking place in the Reception class. These approaches contributed to improving outcomes in the phonics screening check in 2017 for the vast majority of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read across key stages 1 and 2. While some pupils, particularly girls, emerged as fluent, expressive readers, standards did vary between pupils. Teaching does not consistently develop pupils' reading comprehension and inference and deduction skills across all year groups.
- Teachers consistently develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning across the school. Leaders are developing pupils' awareness of their learning attributes and skills, and this is beginning to support improving progress and learning in a number of year groups.
- Teachers regularly review their teaching and complete impact statements to review the effects of their teaching. They are keen to participate in professional development opportunities. This has contributed to significant improvements in outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2017. New approaches are beginning to address weaker progress in mathematics, although the effect is not consistent across all classes.
- Teaching provides pupils with interesting opportunities to explore science, history and geography through inventive topic work, although pupils do not consistently access subject-specific knowledge and skills in sufficient depth in these subjects.
- Teachers regularly set homework which pupils feel supports their learning. The vast majority of teachers provide feedback in line with the school's policy. Teachers provide timely verbal feedback, although variance remains in how this feedback supports pupils' progress.
- Leaders and teachers work well with external partners to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These partnerships are supporting pupils in areas such as the development of their speech and language and motor skills. While

pupils benefit from interventions and small-group work, their overall progress is still uneven.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have established an ethos of care and consideration that runs through all aspects of school life.
- In promoting rights and responsibilities, leaders have developed pupils' awareness of their own welfare and of the needs of others. Through regular meetings in family groups, pupils develop an understanding of the needs of pupils in other year groups.
- The vast majority of parents value the support their children receive and appreciate the commitment of all staff to children's welfare. One parent described the views of many parents and carers in writing: 'The school is warming and friendly on arrival. The staff are approachable at all times and happy to talk about questions or concerns you may have.'
- Pupils develop a sense of social responsibility through a range of charity work and community activities. Pupils' physical welfare is promoted through access to a range of sports and through purposeful opportunities to engage in physical activity on the school site.
- Pupils believe that bullying is rare and they are confident that, if it did occur, teachers and other adults would address their concerns effectively.
- Pupils are able to discuss the actions that the school has taken to help them keep safe. They have a good awareness of how to keep safe online and how to avoid the threats posed by strangers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils often display exemplary behaviour. They routinely hold doors open for one another and adults. Pupils are confident and articulate, frequently welcoming visitors to classrooms and discussing aspects of their learning.
- Pupils show a pride in their school, their appearance and in their exceptional school environment. Their accomplishments in learning and their key values are proudly displayed on walls and corridors. Pupils were keen to talk to inspectors at breaktimes about their achievements and share their enthusiasm for many aspects of school life.
- Teachers encourage positive approaches to learning and are developing pupils' awareness of key learning skills and attributes. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning, and the rare instances of misbehaviour are addressed. Pupils enjoy their learning and work well, and low-level disruption is rare. On some occasions, these behaviours are not fully developed, as pupils are not as clear on the steps they can take to work at greater depth.

- Overall rates of attendance are in line with those seen nationally, as the majority of pupils enjoy school life and value their learning. Improvements are becoming apparent in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Rates of absence and persistent absence are beginning to reduce, although disadvantaged pupils remain much more likely to be absent than their peers.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because current pupils do not make strong progress across a range of subjects and differences exist between year groups and among different groups.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 was below that seen nationally. In 2017 this figure fell further, with only 38% of girls achieving this standard and 11% of disadvantaged pupils. This has limited the preparedness of some pupils for their secondary education.
- Pupils' progress at key stage 2 remains variable. Improvements in reading and writing in 2017 were offset by weaker progress in mathematics, particularly for girls and disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have responded to the heightened demands of the new national curriculum with more demanding curriculum content at key stage 1 and new teaching approaches in mathematics. This contributed to much stronger outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2017, with the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard and greater depth above those seen nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently strong progress. Differences in their attainment and progress persist across subjects and phases and have not diminished rapidly enough.
- Standards of writing are variable across the school. Through an extensive review of books, there were signs that many girls were writing with stylistic maturity and technical accuracy. However, in many cases, boys' writing and that of disadvantaged pupils are more mixed. They do not respond as adeptly to the non-negotiable expectations of teachers, and both their accuracy and ability to write in a range of genres are less effective.
- Pupils' current progress in reading is improving, and outcomes in the 2017 phonics screening check show an increase, with 85% achieving the required standard. Elsewhere, progress in reading is more variable. Many of the girls demonstrated fluency and perception in their reading, but these were less evident with some of the boys. Pupils are not given consistent opportunities to develop their inference and deduction skills in greater depth.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is mixed. Well-tailored support is enabling pupils to develop key skills that are promoting their independence. However, the overall picture is more variable, with pupils' progress weaker in writing and mathematics in particular year groups.

- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make varying progress, as they are not given consistent opportunities to work at greater depth.
- Although pupils are given opportunities to explore aspects of science, history and geography through engaging topics, they do not develop subject-specific knowledge and skills in these subjects in sufficient depth.
- Outcomes in the early years are good and improving, and, in 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development rose for the third successive year to a level that is in line with that seen nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- Outcomes in the early years have shown consistent improvement over the past three years. As a result of thorough planning and effective teaching, children make good progress and achieve levels of development in line with those seen nationally. Teaching is well resourced and promotes effective engagement by children in their indoor and outdoor learning.
- The early years leader oversees effective transition between the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils are arriving in Reception with increasing self-confidence and stronger verbal skills, and this is contributing to improving rates of progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants model sounds effectively and encourage children to use specific terms to build their understanding of letters and sounds. In a Reception session, a teacher modelled sounds with clarity and expression and successfully encouraged children to identify sounds in their own names and segment and blend words.
- Teachers plan learning thoroughly and encourage pupils to reflect upon their learning. A teaching assistant talked with children to encourage them to think about how they would make dinosaurs. The children independently brought pencils to draft out their plans before they began making their dinosaurs.
- Children demonstrate positive learning behaviours from an early stage. They share resources and support one another in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants promote the development of writing from the earliest opportunity. Children are keen to write and demonstrate their mark-making skills.
- Teachers monitor children's progress closely and record this accurately. Children's work and progress is captured through a wide variety of tasks and activities. This work shows that children make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate picture of children's abilities and learning needs and pitch activities in a manner that enables children to make good progress.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. The ethos of care and support that defines much of the school's work extends to the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	131886
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10032080

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	N Davies
Headteacher	H Wilson
Telephone number	01388816351
Website	www.middlestonemoor.durham.sch.uk/
Email address	middlestonemoor@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	9 to 10 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its review of the use of pupil premium funding for the 2016/17 academic year or its plan for the use of this funding for 2017/18.
- Middlestone Moor is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, the Rights Respecting School Award and the Royal Horticultural Society Five Star Gardening School Award.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons, covering all classes. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied inspectors on some of these observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. The lead inspector met four members of the governing body and met two education development partners from the local authority. He also talked to a group of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Inspectors talked to parents on arrival at the school on day 2 of the inspection.
- Inspectors examined the quality of work in a wide range of books. They discussed pupils' work and their learning with them in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and information relating to pupils' achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 66 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 36 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also took into account 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Knowles	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lofthouse	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Ralph	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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