

Middlezoy Primary School

Middlezoy, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 0NZ

Inspection dates

6–7 December 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils are not making the good progress across key stage 2 that has been made in the past, or the progress of which they are capable.
- Over time, pupils currently in key stage 2 have not made secure progress in writing and mathematics. They are not being taught the skills which will enable them to reach the higher standards.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge in mathematics and this impedes pupils' progress, particularly for the most able. Tasks do not deepen pupils' mathematical thinking.
- Teachers often do not check and extend pupils' understanding before allowing them to begin their tasks. As a result, learning slows when pupils do not understand what to do and are waiting for help.
- Teachers with subject responsibility are not yet improving the quality of teaching across the whole school.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching are over-inflated. When making checks on teaching, leaders do not take sufficient account of the work in pupils' books as a source of evidence of their progress.
- Teachers of pupils in key stage 2 do not always ensure that their pupils take pride in their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive principal has helped leaders to gain a clear picture of the effectiveness of the school. As a result, the plans for improving achievement are well founded.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Almost all reach a good level of development and some exceed this.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Pupils develop phonics skills quickly in Year 1 and this supports the good standards of reading and writing they achieve across key stage 1.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are keen readers. Their progress in reading is strengthening.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. All staff know the pupils well and are vigilant in securing pupils' safety.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by leaders:
 - swiftly implementing the current plans so that improvements to teaching are brought about quickly
 - gaining a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching through taking greater account of the progress of pupils, as seen in their work
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they have a positive impact on the quality of teaching in their subject.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' achievement is strengthened by teachers:
 - setting work in mathematics which is engaging, appropriately challenging and develops pupils' mathematical reasoning
 - ensuring that pupils better understand the learning intentions before they begin their tasks
 - building pupils' expressive language skills and use of accurate punctuation in writing so that more of the most able pupils are able to reach the greater depth expected for their age.
- Support improvements to pupils' personal development by all teachers having the same high expectations of pupils' presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the school has improved recently, but still requires further improvement.
- The school has undergone significant changes over the past few years. There have been changes to leadership, which include the headteacher being appointed to her role earlier this year. Teachers have moved to new roles within the school very recently. These changes are too recent and have not had time to impact positively on the weaker aspects of the school's work.
- The school improvement plan is relatively new and, although robust, has not been implemented fully, particularly with regard to improving the progress pupils make across key stage 2.
- The school has a too generous view of the overall quality of teaching. This is because leaders do not sufficiently take account of the impact of teaching on pupils' work or the progress they are making. However, the headteacher is skilled at guiding teachers in how to improve their practice and sourcing good professional development opportunities for staff.
- The pupil premium funding is sensibly allocated and the few disadvantaged pupils in the school have individual plans to accelerate their progress. As with progress generally in the school, this is more consistently achieved in the early years and key stage 1 than across key stage 2.
- Recent changes have meant that across both the federation and the trust, middle leaders' roles are still being defined and developed. As a result, the impact of middle leadership on the quality of teaching is not consistently good. Where leadership roles are established, for example in the early years and in the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, this has strengthened these aspects of the school's work.
- The executive principal of the multi-academy trust has given the school good support in gaining a more accurate picture of what is going well and where further improvements are needed.
- Recent improvements to the analysis of pupils' progress mean that leaders are now checking if actions in the plan are improving outcomes for all pupils. They can now more readily respond in order to intervene if pupils are falling behind.
- The school is a harmonious community and staff work well together and have confidence in the headteacher's leadership. Parents are very positive about the influence of the school on their children's welfare and progress. The headteacher ensures that the school takes its place in community events and contributes to village life.
- Increasingly, leaders and teachers are benefiting from working across the trust and developing consistent systems which support the effective management of a small school. For example, the very effective work of the SEN coordinator is supporting improvements in the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that it is appropriately balanced for the

mixed-age classes. Pupils are given broad experiences which enrich their time in school. For example, all of key stage 2 pupils take part in residential visits. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn Latin and are proud of the new skills they are acquiring. Pupils' overall experience of the school contributes well to their spiritual, moral and social development. Leaders have rightly planned to extend pupils' cultural awareness. Leaders promote British values well. For example, pupils experience democracy through elections in school and older pupils have extended their understanding through a visit to the Houses of Parliament.

- The school is a strongly inclusive community where all pupils are respected and valued as individuals. The school promotes equality of opportunity but, until the progress of all groups of pupils is equally strong, there is more work needed to bring this to fruition.
- The additional funding for physical education and sport is spent thoughtfully and pupils particularly benefit from opportunities to take part in sporting activities with other local schools.

Governance

- Governance is increasingly effective, particularly now that leaders and governors share a clear picture of where the school needs to improve. Governors have a full understanding of the priorities in the school development plan and recognise the need to implement these quickly.
- Governors are reflective and realistic about what has been achieved so far. For example, they recognise that the school's priority to develop the early years provision has been effective. Equally, however, they acknowledge that there is still more work to do to improve pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.
- Stronger systems for tracking pupils' progress have enabled governors to keep themselves well informed. Governors make frequent visits to the school to gather evidence about pupils' learning. The minutes of governors' meetings show that they are confident to both challenge and support leaders. For example, they questioned why the outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were so disappointing and have recognised and supported the school's efforts to build pupils' aspirations and confidence.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's policies are thorough and identify possible risks and the steps the school takes to overcome these. Staff training is regular and rigorous. Leaders pass on to the relevant services any concerns that they may have that a pupil is at risk of harm.
- The systems for recruiting staff and checking on other adults working with children are well managed. Records are carefully kept and the checks made when visitors enter the school are rigorous.
- The site is safe and the movement of pupils between the two sites runs to well-practised routines. Staff understand how to raise concerns if the leader for safeguarding is not on site. Governors make regular visits to check on safeguarding procedures.

- Parents feel that their children are safe in school. Those who left comments on Parent View referred to the family atmosphere and the good knowledge that staff have of the children as being particularly positive aspects of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not all teaching develops pupils' skills in writing and mathematics securely across key stage 2. The progress that pupils have made over time has not been consistently good.
- In mathematics, teachers do not give pupils clear guidance on how to solve problems or to reason through investigations systematically. Too little is asked of the most able pupils in particular. The tasks that they are given do not encourage them to develop their mathematical thinking.
- Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have understood the work they have to do before pupils begin their tasks. Teachers question pupils but too often accept that the correct answer from one pupil means teaching can move on. Consequently, some pupils lose time for learning because they have not understood the teaching. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' workbooks where, in some cases, little work has been completed.
- In key stage 2, teachers recognise that pupils' vocabulary for writing is limited and use a 'word of the day' approach to developing this. However, this is not building pupils' expressive skills in writing sufficiently quickly for them to demonstrate that they can write in the depth expected for their age. Pupils do not adapt their writing style to take account of the audience and purpose of their writing.
- The teaching of punctuation skills is not currently overcoming pupils' basic errors. In their recent writing, pupils do not show that they understand how to structure writing into paragraphs. Teachers are giving pupils regular practice in spelling, however, and this aspect of pupils' writing is improving.
- The teaching of reading engages the pupils well in key stage 2. Pupils are able to make good choices about what to read and about how to review their reading. They do this confidently and independently and this is developing pupils' comprehension skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils in key stage 1. Good classroom organisation means that no time is lost in changing from one subject to another. Pupils are challenged to complete work and held to account for accuracy and presentation. The very strong teaching of phonics is helping pupils to read and write confidently.
- Skills of calculation are well taught and pupils in Year 2 are being helped to read problems carefully so that they can choose the right calculation method to find their answer. Teachers recognise that pupils need regular practice in this skill to reach the higher standard at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given good support. The leader for this aspect of the school's work has put in place high-quality professional development for all staff so that they have a greater understanding of pupils' possible barriers to learning. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are confident in supporting pupils in their learning.
- The teaching of history is inspiring pupils. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic

about the Roman topic, where they were taught skills of design and technology to make their Roman shields ready for a battle. Equally, pupils enjoy sport and physical education. They are taught skills systematically and given opportunities to apply them in well-organised games.

- Pupils are regularly given opportunities to carry out investigations in science and the older pupils are learning to display their findings in tables and graphs. Consequently, outcomes in science are stronger than in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Leaders have identified that, in the past, some pupils' lack of confidence and resilience as learners has slowed their progress. Pupils are being encouraged and rewarded for the effort they make, but in some situations pupils do not complete work or settle to work as quickly as they should.
- The quality of pupils' work in books varies. In some classes, pupils present their work carefully, but at times in other classes, teachers accept careless work too readily. As a result, pupils do not improve their presentation or show pride in their work.
- Pupils value the support they have to keep themselves safe, such as learning about road safety and 'stranger danger'. They said that they know how to keep themselves safe online but, rightly, the school has prioritised this aspect of safety on the school development plan.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club have a safe and positive start to the day.
- Older pupils happily take on roles of responsibility, such as for 'wake and shake' early morning exercise and acting as play leaders for the younger pupils. The older pupils were enthusiastic about the opportunity during the inspection to represent the school at the cathedral carol service.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They play well together and when given chances to work together, they do so fairly and sensibly. Pupils show respect to adults and are courteous to visitors.
- Pupils say that other pupils mostly behave well in lessons. In those lessons seen, pupils listened to the teacher and most tried hard with their tasks.
- Pupils understand the school rules and believe that they are fair. If pupils misbehave and lose a privilege then, as one pupil said, 'Actions bring consequences'.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and all believe that this does not happen at the school. They trust all the staff that work with them and would happily seek support if they had a problem. Parents agree that behaviour is good and they also share the pupils' confidence that, should problems arise, they would be quickly addressed.
- If pupils are absent from school, leaders are vigilant in ensuring that they are safe. They work with external agencies to follow up concerns about attendance.

Consequently, the very few pupils who miss school without a good reason have improved their attendance this year. The rate of attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils in key stage 2 requires improvement. Numbers vary from year to year, but generally groups of pupils are very small. Nonetheless, at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils had not built on the good basic skills they had acquired in key stage 1 to make good progress in reading or mathematics. They were not well prepared to move to the next stage of their education in secondary school.
- Over their time in key stage 2, the progress of current pupils has been variable and not all have made good progress in writing and mathematics. Although the current assessments and targets set for the pupils are optimistic, their current standard of work shows that they have key gaps in their skills and knowledge. The variability of progress applies also to disadvantaged pupils and those who are most able.
- In mathematics, pupils are not demonstrating that they have the reasoning skills to tackle problems systematically or explain their thinking. This limits their opportunity to attain at the higher standard of which some are capable.
- In writing in key stage 2, pupils' current work does not show that they can use punctuation accurately or consistently well. They do not express themselves sufficiently clearly or use the more formal tone of language usually required for writing.
- Pupils currently in key stage 2 are keen readers and can discuss their reading with their teacher and write about key features of their books. Recent assessments show that they are on track to make the progress expected from their different starting points at the end of key stage 1.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics in Year 1 and almost all reach the expected standard for their age in 2017. The current Year 1 pupils are confident in using advanced phonic patterns, differentiating, for example, between the words 'dolphin' and 'fin' in a sentence they wrote independently.
- Pupils go on to make good progress in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. Pupils currently have skills in arithmetic at least at the expected level for their age. They are beginning to apply these skills in problem solving, but the development of the wider acquisition of mathematical skills needs further improvement, as it does for key stage 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. Under the strong guidance of the leader, teachers and teaching assistants support these pupils well in class.

Early years provision

Good

- The leader of the early years is knowledgeable about how children develop and learn in the Reception class. As a result, she provides good leadership and plans learning experiences which challenge and interest the children and secures their good progress. In recent years, almost all children have reached at least a good level of development and therefore have been well prepared to begin their work in Year 1.
- In most years, there are only a small group of children in the Reception class and, consequently, their skills and knowledge when they start school vary widely. The teacher quickly assesses what each child knows and can do and plans to foster their individual development across the year. Those children who start with skills above those usually found make particularly good progress and reach standards which exceed a good level of development.
- Those children who begin their schooling having SEN and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. The teacher works closely with families and external agencies to ensure that these children have their individual needs well met.
- The staff who teach the Reception children work very well together and teaching assistants are skilled at closely assessing what children are learning. All staff teach phonics skills well and, as a result, children already know, and are beginning to write, a range of letter sounds.
- The teacher ensures that the Reception children are given opportunities to explore and play in ways which engage their interest and develop their speaking and listening skills. For example, the children enjoyed dressing up and acting out the 'Grand Old Duke of York'.
- Children behave well and listen to instructions when working in a group. This helps to keep them safe. Staff are vigilant in ensuring children's welfare, and relationships between children and staff are very positive.
- Parents are very happy with the good start that their children make in the Reception class. One parent, reflecting the opinion of others, said, 'My child has learned a lot in a short time and we are kept well informed of his progress.'

School details

Unique reference number	141795
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10042723

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ros Fanshawe
Headteacher	Jill Quine
Telephone number	01823 698465
Website	www.middlezoyandotheryschools.co.uk
Email address	office@middlezoy.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school had too few pupils who took part in the 2017 key stage 2 tests to make comparisons with the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Middlezoy Primary School has been federated with Othery Village School since 2009. The headteacher is headteacher of both these schools. Both schools share the same governing body. In 2015, the school converted to become an academy and is part of The Levels Academy Trust, a four-school multi-academy trust which was formed at that time. The executive principal is the chief education officer of the trust.

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Children join the school in the mixed Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught with those of the same age at Othery Village School. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 from both schools are taught on the Middlezoy Primary School site.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school operates a breakfast club that is managed by the governors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes, including the Year 3 and 4 class which is based in the federated school. Most of these observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal of the trust and other leaders in school. The inspector met with two governors and held a telephone conversation with an officer of the local authority.
- The inspector talked with a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. The inspector heard a number of pupils read.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress. The inspector also checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information.
- The 26 responses to Parent View were taken into account and also the views of the nine members of staff who completed the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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