

Middleton Church of England Primary Academy

School Road, Middleton, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 1SA

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils in Year 6 reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Despite significant improvements in pupils' behaviour, occasionally learning is disrupted by a small minority of pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are sometimes not as positive as they should be and they waste time for learning.
- Some subject leadership is not developed. As a result, not all leaders are contributing to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Teaching is not consistently good. In some classes and subjects the needs of pupils of different abilities, especially the most able pupils, are not met.
- The high expectations of some teachers in English and mathematics are not consistent for all teachers and subjects.
- Subjects other than English and mathematics are sometimes not taught in sufficient depth. Pupils are not practising basic skills in literacy and numeracy through other subjects routinely.

The school has the following strengths

- New leadership, supported well by trustees, is effective. Leaders have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching by checking the quality of teaching and holding staff to account for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have created a coherent staff team who work well together and are ambitious for the school's further improvement.
- Early years provision has improved significantly. Children currently in the early years have got off to a good start in their learning.
- The majority of pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning and revisit them.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum so that pupils learn all subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and events.
- Leaders are working effectively with parents and carers so that their confidence in the school has increased.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes so that the majority of pupils reach the standard expected of them by the end of Year 6, by:
 - ensuring that leaders continue to check rigorously the impact teaching has on accelerating progress and raising pupils' attainment, and holding teachers to account for the standards achieved
 - developing the role that middle leaders play in securing improved outcomes in their subjects
 - reviewing and improving curriculum plans for subjects other than English and mathematics to improve the depth to which these subjects are taught
 - developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills through the full range of subjects.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are more consistently given tasks which challenge and extend them so that more pupils exceed the expected standard for their age
 - teachers consistently provide pupils with work in subjects such as science and history which is suitably pitched for pupils of different abilities and taught in sufficient depth to enable them to make good progress
 - pupils are more consistently focused during lessons so that learning time is better used.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - further strategies for managing the behaviour of a small minority of pupils are developed so that they do not disturb the learning of others
 - pupils understand and have confidence in the school's approach to managing behaviour
 - plans to improve pupils' attitudes to learning are implemented and effective.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection in October 2016, when inspectors judged the school to require special measures, the school has had a large turnover of staff, including leaders. The current executive headteacher took up her post in October 2017. She has swiftly established stability and provides calm and purposeful leadership for the school. She has created a cohesive and committed staff team who work well together.
- Leaders have ensured that the majority of pupils currently in the school are making strong progress. Standards in most year groups are rising. However, due to the previous weaknesses in teaching, pupils' attainment remains low. Leaders and trustees are acutely aware of the need to continue to improve teaching and learning so that pupils leave Middleton achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders are accurate in identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Plans for improvement are well-structured and monitored carefully. Leaders' checks on teaching and learning are thorough and clearly identify what teachers need to do to further improve their teaching. Leaders have eradicated the previous inadequate teaching identified at the time of the last inspection. They recognise that some aspects of teaching require further improvement and are tenacious in following up weaknesses so that teaching continues to improve.
- Leaders ensure that funding provided to support pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively. For example, they identified that some pupils needed emotional support and so provided nurture groups and play therapy. Support for both these groups of pupils is largely effective and the majority of these pupils make good progress.
- Leaders and trustees provide good support for the professional development of staff. The partnership between Middleton and another local school is benefiting staff professional development in both schools. Training and support is proving effective in developing the role of middle leaders. However, some middle leaders are yet to prove effective in improving teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Leaders have significantly improved behaviour across the school since the previous inspection judged behaviour to be inadequate, but leaders recognise that it is not yet good. The majority of pupils behave well, respond to teachers' directions and show respect for adults in school. Programmes are in place to increase the motivation and self-esteem of a few pupils. These have not been delivered for long enough to show any discernible impact.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Leaders bring in visitors and take pupils on trips to widen their experiences and prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy learning about different faiths, learning together in class and beyond and talking about moral issues in personal, social and health education. Extra-curricular events such as clubs, sporting competitions and residential trips are used well to develop pupils' personal development.

- Leaders ensure that funding to promote physical activity through the sports premium is used effectively. Coaches play a large role in developing pupils' sports skills as well as improving pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes. New equipment has been bought, using sports premium funding and supported by the newly-founded 'Friends of Middleton' parent group. Some pupils take part in the 'daily mile' with staff to improve their fitness. Keeping fit and healthy has a high profile in school.
- Leaders have carefully reviewed the wider curriculum to ensure that pupils receive a more balanced education. As a result, teachers now teach the full curriculum, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. However, leaders acknowledge that in some subjects the quality of the curriculum is not as good as it should be. Plans are in place to address this over the coming year.

Governance of the school

- The school's interim board and trustees work closely with school leaders. They are very knowledgeable about the school, where improvements have been made and where more needs to be done. Minutes of meetings show that the board and trustees provide good support for leaders but also are rigorous in holding leaders to account. For example, they ask challenging questions about steps taken to improve attendance and the about progress of different groups.
- The board and trustees check that funding is used effectively. They know, for example, how funds for disadvantaged pupils are spent and that this is effective. They work with leaders to analyse the impact of spending on the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The academy trust provides a raft of support through training, moderation activities to check pupils' outcomes and by providing personnel who visit the school very regularly to carry out monitoring tasks and verify improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all staff know and understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. A strong safeguarding culture is evident throughout the school. They provide regular and thorough training for staff. This is effective. Concerns forms show that staff know what to look for that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders follow up concerns rigorously and ensure that they liaise with external agencies to take action when needed. The team who lead on safeguarding meet together regularly to review all concerns and follow up action taken to ensure that nothing gets missed. Leaders work closely with parents so that parents understand actions that have been taken.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school, although some remain concerned about the behaviour of a small number of pupils. Pupils told the inspector that there is always an adult to speak to if they are worried. Parents spoken to during the inspection agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils know about how to keep themselves safe online because this is taught to them regularly. Information is provided for parents about online safety. Leaders recognise that this is an area that needs to be revisited.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils of all abilities. Some most-able pupils, in mathematics in particular, do not make as much progress as they are capable of making because they are given work which does not extend their thinking.
- Learning time in some lessons is not maximised. Sometimes teachers allow pupils to work too slowly or to talk when they should be listening. As a result, pupils do not achieve as much in some lessons as they should or miss some of the learning being explained by the teacher.
- In subjects such as science, history and geography pupils are not deepening their knowledge and understanding through carefully planned tasks matched to their abilities. In science, for example, pupils carry out few investigations and are sometimes not expected to consider what these have shown about scientific concepts.
- Teachers do not consistently develop pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics through the wider curriculum. For example, when pupils write in subjects other than English, some teachers do not reinforce the skills being taught in English such as punctuation and spelling. Opportunities for developing pupils' mathematical understanding through the wider curriculum are better used in early years and key stage 1 than in older age groups.
- Learning in art and design is strong and pupils are developing their capacity to use different materials such as paint and charcoal and collage techniques to create different effects, drawing on the work from well-known artists.
- Teachers use assessment information increasingly well in writing and mathematics to identify gaps in learning and plan additional teaching to address these. For example, teachers use 'cold' and 'hot' tasks to pinpoint what pupils already know and what they need to know next. Assessment in other subjects is being developed so that teachers have a more precise understanding of where individual pupils need to make better progress.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use this to identify and address pupils' misconceptions and errors.
- Adults enjoy good relationships with pupils. Most pupils are keen to please their teachers and value positive feedback when they receive it.
- Teachers and additional adults work together well to ensure that pupils' welfare is well catered for. Additional adults provide sensitive support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They ask questions and explain concepts so that these pupils make progress in their learning.
- Phonics teaching is effective and pupils show that they can apply their learning in reading and writing.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Personal development and welfare requires improvement because pupils do not have consistently positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, pupils are sometimes not focused on learning. They daydream or chat instead of working.
- Some pupils' books show a lack of care and pride; their work, at times, is poorly presented. However, this is not the case for the majority of pupils.
- Most pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they feel safe in school and enjoy spending time with their friends. They know what bullying is and say that it is infrequent. Pupils told the inspector that on the occasions when it occurs, adults help to resolve matters.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are well used. Pupils write their own prayers and reflect on how they can help each other. Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop their social skills. For example, pupils give each other compliments which are recorded in a class book. Pupils take part in partner and group work and develop their skills in listening to each other and speaking clearly. Pupils' cultural understanding is less well developed because the curriculum provides limited opportunities for pupils to learn and understand about people from different cultures.
- Adults know the pupils well and good care is taken to help pupils who suffer upset or have problems outside of school. Pastoral support is well planned, for example nurture groups and breakfast clubs are used to help pupils have a positive start to school. A parent support adviser works with parents, running classes to help parents understand better how to help their children at home and at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the time of previous inspection. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour are mostly managed well. This is evidenced by the decreasing number of behaviour incidents recorded by the school. Staff know the school's procedures for dealing with challenging behaviour and carry these out consistently. However, occasionally learning is disrupted by poor behaviour and some pupils are not sure how new behaviour strategies work. They remain concerned that their learning time is sometimes lost because adults are dealing with misbehaviour.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are mostly trouble free. Staff are highly visible and interact with pupils to encourage positive play. Music is provided for pupils to enjoy, sing along to and dance to. Sports coaches play organised games with pupils daily. Even so, sometimes conflicts do occur. Staff intervene swiftly to ensure matters are resolved.

- Attendance has improved and for the current academic year attendance figures are broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who are regular non-attenders has decreased. This is because staff have worked closely with individual parents to identify any difficulties in getting pupils to school and to impress upon parents the importance of daily attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. By the end of Year 6 in 2016 and 2017 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was well below the national average and very few pupils exceeded the expected standard. This year, better teaching is having a positive impact on improving outcomes. Most pupils currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and so some are not making the progress that they are capable of.
- The attainment of some disadvantaged pupils, especially in Year 6, remains below that of other pupils nationally. However, most disadvantaged pupils are well supported and this support is enabling them to make good progress.
- Pupils make variable progress in subjects such as science and history because teaching is sometimes not sufficiently well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 has been, and continues to be, low. Many pupils have gaps in their learning due to poor teaching in the past. However, pupils' work and school assessments demonstrate that current Year 6 pupils are making good progress from their low starting points. They demonstrate increased confidence in reading and writing, and improving competence in arithmetic and solving mathematical problems.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 2 in 2017 who reached the expected standard in reading was in line with national averages, but well below in writing and mathematics. Current Year 2 pupils are making good progress and the school's assessment of the proportion reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018 shows a considerable improvement from the previous year. This is because teaching in Year 2 has improved.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics assessment, which was previously below that found nationally, has also risen this year. This is because phonics teaching is planned carefully and delivered well so that it meets pupils' needs. Pupils use their phonics well in their reading and writing.
- The well-planned support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities enables most of these pupils to achieve well from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was below that found nationally. Assessment information shows that the majority of pupils currently in the Reception Year have reached a good level of development. This is because the quality of teaching and learning in early years has improved. Children currently in the Reception Year have made a good start in their learning and are prepared well for learning in Year 1.
- Adults in the mixed Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class ensure that each year group has their needs well met. They vary the use of adults so that all pupils have a balance of teacher and teaching assistant time, as well as time to learn independently.
- The learning environment is attractive and well resourced. Staff provide a good range of well-planned tasks both indoors and outdoors to develop pupils' skills across all areas of learning. Activities such as making biscuits, involving measuring and counting, and writing about dinosaurs and growing, skilfully develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy while also developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Leaders have plans in place to further enhance the outside area so that this can be used more flexibly for learning tasks.
- Children in the early years enjoy opportunities to learn independently, with adults intervening to extend learning through talk and questioning. They also benefit from well-planned adult-led tasks, for example to develop their writing skills. Adults work with individuals and groups to carefully check what children know and need to learn next to make good progress.
- Children benefit from taking part in some whole-class activities with Years 1 and 2, learning from the older pupils and joining in when they are able. For example, during the inspection Year 1 and 2 pupils shared their independent writing and children in Reception listened carefully, picking up some of the vocabulary used by pupils. The teacher also used this as an opportunity to reinforce the children's phonic knowledge.
- Staff use assessment well to identify progress and plan in detail for children's next steps. Parents contribute to assessments so that there is a comprehensive picture of what children can do.
- Leaders provide events for parents to help them know how best to help their children at home, such as mathematics and English sessions to learn about phonics. Children are visited at home and in pre-school settings prior to joining the school and invited to sessions in the summer term. Parents told the inspector that because of this their children settle well into school.
- Children behave well in early years. They play sensibly together and share resources. Adults are consistent in reminding children how to look after resources, to tidy up after themselves and making behaviour expectations clear to children. Children show perseverance when playing independently.
- Disadvantaged children and children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported because adults are knowledgeable about children's needs and their individual barriers to learning. This is because the funding provided for these children is well used.

- Adults take care to ensure that children’s emotional needs are met as well as their academic needs. As a result, they are developing positive attitudes to learning in the early years and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils who are exceeding the early years goals in some areas of learning is also improving. However, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that most-able children are challenged regularly so that recent improvements are embedded.

School details

Unique reference number	141662
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10052746

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 sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jane Bourne
Executive headteacher	Rachel Greenhalgh
Telephone number	01553 840234
Website	www.middleton.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	head@middleton.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 October 2016

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust. It currently has an interim executive board responsible, with the trustees, for governance of the school.
- The school is in partnership with a neighbouring school with whom it shares an executive headteacher. The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum standards expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is a smaller school than is found on average nationally.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above that found nationally.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who are supported by an education, health and care plan, or statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in all classes. Most observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day and met with some pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The inspectors spoke with three members of the academy trust, one of whom is also a member of the interim executive board.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.
- The inspection began as a section 8 monitoring inspection for schools requiring special measures. The inspection subsequently converted to a section 5 inspection.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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

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.

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018