

Inspection of a good school: Olney Middle School

Yardley Road, Olney, Buckinghamshire MK46 5DZ

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

Outcome

Olney Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told us that they like coming to school. They enjoy their lessons. Mathematics is a particular favourite because pupils feel confident that they are making progress. They know that their teachers have high expectations of them. Pupils also enjoy their themed learning. However, in some subjects, such as art, they do not feel the same high level of challenge.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, they listen carefully to their teachers and instructions. Pupils are keen to answer questions and explain their thinking. Around the school and at playtimes, pupils are respectful, kind and considerate. Pupils are guided well by the new school values known as CARING: cooperative, ambitious, resilience, integrity, neighbourly, gracious. For instance, pupils proudly shared the stickers they had been given for demonstrating the value of ambition.

Pupils are confident that they are safe around school. Even those pupils who had just started at the school said that they were not concerned about bullying. They had already identified trusted adults who they could speak to if they had any worries. Pupils were confident that they would be listened to and that any concerns would be acted on by staff.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school provides a good and improving quality of education. Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They think carefully about what pupils should learn in each subject, term-by-term, in order to achieve these aims. Together with the trust, leaders train and support teachers well to deliver these plans.

The termly plans for most subjects now make clear to teachers exactly what to teach pupils and in what order. This helps teachers to be sure that pupils know what they need before they can tackle more challenging work. In mathematics, this works really well. As a result, teaching is highly effective, and pupils are confident mathematicians. Pupils have a

secure understanding of place value and calculation skills, which they apply eagerly to solving problems of increasing complexity. In stronger subjects across the curriculum, such as geography, pupils' skills are developed well within themes. Lessons follow in a logical order.

In art, the impact of leadership is not so clearly seen. Pupils do not always make connections between current and previous learning. Therefore, pupils' long-term learning is not secure. They do not remember artists who they have studied or build skills in a range of artistic media. While pupils enjoy art, they do not feel stretched or challenged by their lessons. This hampers their ability to deepen and extend their learning.

Reading is taught well. Teachers ensure that pupils experience high-quality texts which are carefully linked to their learning in other areas. This helps pupils to engage with and enjoy stories. Pupils told us they love reading. They read regularly at home and school and are keen to use the school library to change their books. Pupils are building a broad vocabulary. This is supported well by the 'word ninjas', which celebrate the use of powerful words.

Pupils who join the school in Year 3 without secure skills in phonics are well supported by expert teaching which helps them to catch up quickly. Adults take special care to make sure that reading books are well chosen to support these pupils in using their skills to read words successfully.

Teachers understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adapt plans and lessons well so that pupils experience success. As a result, pupils with SEND are confident learners.

The school aims to ensure that all pupils experience a wide range of activities inside and outside school. For instance, the school council visited parliament to help them to understand the democratic process. Leaders' commitment to providing wider learning experiences means that all pupils leave school with the skills and confidence they need to move successfully on to secondary school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to help them to spot signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They know to report concerns, however small. Leaders monitor reports carefully. They make prompt referrals to other agencies when it is needed. Clear record-keeping supports this process well.

Staff keep a close eye on pupils they know to be vulnerable. They know these pupils well. This helps them to offer the right support to pupils and their families when it is needed to help keep pupils safe. Pupils regularly learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The improvements seen in many subjects are not matched in all areas of the curriculum. Some subjects are not as well planned and delivered as others. In these subjects, pupils' understanding is insecure. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are well implemented.
- Subject leadership is more established in English and mathematics than it is in other subjects. Senior leaders have plans to address this. They need to ensure that leadership in all subjects is effective in developing teaching and pupils' learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Olney Middle School, to be good on 28 November 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143263
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10111234
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	N/A
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard
Headteacher	Glenn Young
Website	www.olneymiddle.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Olney Middle School converted to become an academy in February 2017. This is the first inspection since that conversion.
- The school is part of the Inspiring Futures Through Learning trust. Staff work in close collaboration with other schools in the trust, including Olney Infant Academy, from where most pupils join the school in Year 3. Some members of staff, such as the special educational needs coordinator, work across both schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the headteacher, leaders, staff, and representatives from the trust and local governing board.
- The inspector looked closely at the provision for reading, mathematics and geography across the school. She visited a range lessons and looked at learning plans. The

inspector spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' learning and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspector spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. Records and documentation were considered along with the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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