

# Inspection of a good school: Middlestown Primary Academy

Cross Road, Middlestown, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4QE

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Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

## Outcome

Middlestown Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very well mannered and enjoy helping others. They greet other pupils and adults warmly. Holding doors open for each other and adults is the norm for pupils. They are proud of their school and are eager to make newcomers feel welcome.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard. Pupils live up to this. They are enthusiastic learners who are interested in the topics they study. They achieve well and are ready for each stage of their education.

Leaders work hard to develop pupils' sense of community. For example, pupils can work with elderly people and Alzheimer's sufferers from their village during special events. This supports pupils' social skills and broadens their views. Pupils also learn about important issues, such as homelessness and racism. They have mature, balanced opinions and have empathy for others. They also play an active role in the school. For example, school councillors, eco councillors and digital leaders all make a positive difference to the school.

Staff support each other very well. They say that the school is 'a lovely place to be'. They set a wonderful example of strong teamwork. This rubs off on pupils, who work well together and care for one another.

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

Leaders have made sure that teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. Leaders and teachers have created a curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge systematically. They have thought carefully about the topics and themes they want pupils to learn. For example, pupils learn about local historical events and people. The Battle of Wakefield and artist Dame Barbara Hepworth are a focus of history lessons.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. Pupils are keen readers. They especially enjoy the books their teachers read to them. These are often linked to their learning in other subjects. For example, reading 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' has supported Year 6

pupils' understanding of the Second World War.

Leaders, teachers and pupils all understand which knowledge is the most important to remember. Teachers revisit this knowledge to check pupils can recall it. However, sometimes leaders' guidance about what to teach is not detailed enough. On occasion, this means that pupils' learning goes off on unnecessary tangents.

Teachers get pupils to think deeply about their subjects. Pupils are used to explaining their thinking and reasoning. At times, the most able pupils complete work which is too easy before moving on to more complex activities. Leaders are already working on improving this.

Phonics teaching is effective for most pupils. Teachers build pupils' knowledge in small steps. Pupils become fluent readers. Teachers spot the pupils who are finding reading difficult. They give these pupils extra support. Despite this, some pupils do not have enough practice reading sounds and words. Also, the books struggling readers use to practise phonics are too hard. Pupils do not know the sounds in the books, so they try to guess what the words say. This means that a small number of younger pupils spend too long struggling before they become fluent in reading.

The early years curriculum is also effective. Leaders have planned the curriculum so that children will be ready for Year 1. Children practise their growing knowledge in a range of fun activities. The tasks for them to choose from are enticing and engaging. Children concentrate for long periods and become independent, confident learners. During the inspection, children delighted in using props, actions and books to sing 'There were ten in the bed'. Along with other benefits, they were revising their knowledge of numbers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Adult support and practical equipment are often used to make learning easier to understand. This means that pupils can learn alongside their peers. Leaders have made sure that the work for pupils with SEND is demanding. Pupils have time to revisit and remember crucial knowledge.

Leaders are passionate about offering pupils rich experiences outside of lessons. Pupils enjoy going to clubs, for example to learn Makaton or to do baking, crafts or sports. Leaders and staff have also picked 100 important experiences for pupils to have during their time at the school. These include watching a play and building a sandcastle. Pupils regularly raise funds for charities. They understand the difference helping others can make.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about how to stay safe in a range of contexts. Assemblies and lessons on topics such as fireworks, road, sun and internet safety support their understanding. There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils trust staff to help them with any issues they may have. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They appreciate the 'worry

box' and time with the learning mentor as ways of getting support if they need it.

Staff are well trained about safeguarding matters. They understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They pass on any concerns they have appropriately, including to external agencies where necessary. Vulnerable pupils are well supported.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Most pupils at the school have a smooth journey to becoming fluent readers. However, support for a significant minority of pupils who struggle with reading needs to be better. The extra sessions pupils have should give them lots of opportunities to practise sounding out and blending. These sessions should be precisely focused on consolidating pupils' existing knowledge and systematically filling the gaps in their knowledge. Additionally, the books pupils use to practise their early reading must be matched tightly to their phonics knowledge.
- The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It matches the scope and ambition of the national curriculum. However, the guidance leaders give to teachers telling them what to teach and when to teach it needs to be more detailed in places. This is particularly important for teachers who are new to the profession. Developing this guidance will enable leaders to hold teachers to account more effectively.

## **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, Sitlington Middlestown Junior and Infant School, to be good on 24–25 March 2015.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143810
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110702
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John Leam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hannah Young (Head of Academy)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://middlestown.wakefield.sch.uk">middlestown.wakefield.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Accord Multi Academy Trust in December 2016. The Executive Primary Principal works at this school and another primary school in the trust.
- The school has a nursery for children from the age of three, as well as a breakfast club and after-school childcare for pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the Executive Primary Principal, the Head of Academy, senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. I also spoke with the chief executive officer for the trust, two trustees and members of the Academy Education Committee, including the chair of governors. I took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes

and lunchtimes. I gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussion. I considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

- I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. I also evaluated information about safeguarding and pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- I took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 18 free-text responses.
- I looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In doing so, I visited every class and reviewed pupils' work. I spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to them read. I also met with teachers.

### **Inspection team**

Karine Hendley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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