

Inspection of a good school: Middleton Cheney Primary Academy

Main Road, Middleton Cheney, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 2PD

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

Middleton Cheney Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

As pupils arrive in the morning, teachers on the playground greet them with smiles. Many pupils say that they enjoy and want to come to this school. They are eager and excited to learn new things. As one parent described it, 'teachers have lit a fire for learning inside the hearts of pupils'.

Every pupil in this school is taught about their 'Hand Network'. Pupils identify trusted adults inside and outside the school that they can talk to if they have a problem or concern. This helps pupils feel safe and happy.

The staff at this school care deeply for the pupils. Pupils are developed to also become nurturing and caring individuals. The older pupils at the school see it as their responsibility to look after younger pupils.

Pupils are confident that teachers will deal with bullying straight away, if it was to occur. Behaviour in and around the school is of a high standard and pupils are able to learn.

There are high expectations of what pupils can achieve academically. In lessons, teachers plan for and expect pupils to demonstrate the school values, such as 'independence' and 'challenge'.

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

Leaders have revised the curriculum. Subject coordinators are in place for each subject. They have identified important knowledge in each of the subjects. The knowledge is taught in a logical order, which enables pupils to remember it and apply it to more complex ideas in many subjects. For example, in Year 1 pupils learn to add single digit numbers and compare numbers. In Year 2, this is developed further as pupils add bigger numbers using coins. In Year 6, pupils confidently use mathematical terminology, such as integer, and can use the knowledge they have previously learned to multiply decimal numbers.

The curriculum is new in some foundation subjects. In these subjects, teachers do not always understand the importance of some knowledge and how it helps pupils to understand more complex ideas they will encounter later. Teachers do not always put enough emphasis on the most important knowledge in some lessons, in these subjects. As a result, some pupils do not remember the knowledge well enough and struggle to apply it when they encounter more complex concepts.

Leaders have ensured that children learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year. In the early years, staff focus on developing children's early communication and language. Children enjoy listening to carefully chosen books. These books help them recite and act out what they have heard. Teachers regularly assess pupils' phonics knowledge. When pupils fall behind teachers give focused support in a 'step out' session. This helps them catch up quickly. Both developing a love for reading and teaching phonics every day helps pupils become fluent readers at this school. In key stage 2, pupils continue to develop a love for reading. They read every day and enjoy listening to class novels, such as 'Cosmic'.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have individual learning plans. These plans state how teachers should adapt their teaching to help pupils learn the intended curriculum. As a result, many pupils with SEND achieve as well as all pupils.

Children in the early years enjoy planned 'busy bug' activities. These are adult-led sessions that help pupils learn and develop. Carefully designed 'real world play' allows pupils to share and take turns. Pupils build their fine motor skills, by using play equipment which builds their grip strength.

The planned curriculum allows pupils to learn about relationships and online safety. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Many pupils can recall the assemblies that have helped them understand what British values are. Pupils on the school council are on a mission to make the school even better. Sports leaders deliver activities, such as 'Disney Dance Off' for the younger pupils. Many pupils enjoy attending clubs, such as the badminton club and the 'Friday Mile'. The curriculum goes beyond academic subjects and aids pupils' wider development.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They say that leaders engage with them. Leaders are also considerate of staff well-being and workload. Staff value the training that leaders have put in place for them. This is helping them teach the curriculum.

The trustees and governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders. Trustees, governors and leaders are not complacent. They know that this is a good school, but they are still determined to improve it further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding leaders have trained the staff on how to identify pupils that might need help. Staff are aware of the exact procedure to follow if they spot a concern.

Safeguarding leaders have a detailed understanding of all cases and concerns that are being managed. Where appropriate, they work in partnership with external agencies to protect children at risk.

In partnership with the local secondary school, leaders have created the 'Risk Aware' local group. This includes representatives from the neighbourhood watch scheme, the local police, the parish council and the other schools within the MAT. This group helps leaders identify emerging contextual safeguarding issues that may impact on pupils at the school, so that they can better help keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have only recently identified the most important knowledge in some of the foundation subjects. In these subjects, teachers do not always teach this knowledge explicitly enough, because they are unaware of its importance. As a result, some pupils cannot recall it and are unable to build upon this knowledge later. Leaders must ensure that all teachers know and teach the most important knowledge in foundation subjects across all year groups, including the early years.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Middleton Cheney Community Primary School, to be good on 5-6 May 2011.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	139866
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10199621
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	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claudia Wade
Headteacher	Theresa Hillier
Website	www.mcpa.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and a new chair of governors.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the lead inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. The inspector considered how well safeguarding leaders act on

concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. The inspector talked to pupils, staff, governors and trustees about safe working practices.

- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans, the school improvement plan, external reviews of safeguarding and minutes from full governors' board meetings.
- The lead inspector met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and the leader responsible for the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses and responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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