

Inspection of Middlezoy Primary School

Middlezoy, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 0NZ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are doing better as a result of current leaders' actions to bring about improvement. Pupils like attending this small, inclusive school. Staff get to know every pupil very well. Pupils are respectful, kind and look out for one another. They said that bullying happens rarely. Pupils meet leaders' high expectations of behaviour on both sites. At social times, pupils enjoy team games, get immersed in imaginative play and cooperate well. Pupils feel safe, nurtured and protected. This enables them to become confident and curious to learn.

Lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils work hard and try their best. However, in the past, a narrow and poorly designed curriculum left many pupils with considerable gaps in their knowledge. A sharp focus on raising the expectations of what pupils know and can do is paying off. Many pupils are catching up in reading and mathematics. Pupils are studying a broader range of subjects now. However, pupils do not learn enough across the curriculum.

There are lots of exciting activities and curriculum enrichment. Highlights include taking part in creating large-scale artwork with visiting artists, and attending workshops on climate change.

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

Leaders are working with determination and skill to bring about sustainable improvements. Current leaders have ensured that strong foundations are now in place. For example, staffing is now stable. Pupils now attend well. Governance arrangements are effective. Staff are using their strong subject knowledge to rebuild the curriculum from scratch. While improving, the quality of education pupils receive is not good enough yet. Collectively, leaders, teachers, central trust staff and the interim executive board (IEB) are working effectively to put things right. Parents recognise this.

There is a sharp focus on getting the basics right. The curriculum in place to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving steadily. Key changes to sequences of work in mathematics are increasingly effective. Many pupils are keeping up, learning more and enjoying mathematics. Much work has already taken place to revamp the early reading curriculum. Pupils who have fallen behind in the past receive wide-ranging support. These pupils are becoming more confident and fluent readers. In Years 4, 5 and 6 there is a considerable emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and language comprehension, so that they understand what they read. Increasingly, teaching is being adjusted precisely to close the existing gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, it is early days.

Leaders' work to secure an effective curriculum in other subjects is in progress. Some sequences of work now set out precisely the essential concepts that pupils need to know, and when they need to know them. This is helping pupils to

remember the knowledge they learn, for example in history. Nonetheless, some curriculum plans miss out important content or do not teach essential concepts in depth. Teaching in some subjects does not address pupils' prior underachievement and gaps in knowledge well enough. For example, many pupils in key stage 2 have limited knowledge of basic scientific processes and concepts. This makes it difficult for them to learn more complex scientific knowledge over time.

Staff and pupils follow the clear behaviour policies and guidance. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and have become resilient when learning new things.

Leaders and teachers provide many opportunities to develop pupils as well-rounded young citizens. Staff listen and act on pupils' views. A well-thought-out curriculum teaches pupils about the importance of keeping healthy relationships, and the risks of online technologies. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about different faiths, tolerance and equality. Pupils told inspectors that 'diversity is part of normality, everyone is accepted here'.

The IEB checks that leaders are implementing the school improvement plan. However, the board members' work to assure themselves that the wider curriculum is being implemented effectively is at an earlier stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders keep staff up to date with safeguarding guidance. Staff are trained in local safeguarding risks, such as county lines. Staff identify and report concerns promptly. Record-keeping is comprehensive. Leaders provide strong support for families. They work well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils, and follow up any concerns diligently to minimise pupils' risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are only part way through their work to remedy the school's weaknesses. The school's curriculum is not yet designed well enough to address the legacy of pupils' prior underachievement caused by a previously poor curriculum. Pupils are not yet developing the detailed knowledge and skills they need year-on-year across the whole curriculum. Leaders must ensure that all pupils complete their programmes of study in every subject, so that all pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Teaching does not tackle gaps in pupils' knowledge across the curriculum well enough. Subject content that was missed in previous years is not addressed sufficiently. This means that a legacy of pupils' underachievement remains. Central trust staff and those responsible for governance must ensure that they

stringently hold school leaders to account for ensuring that gaps in pupils' knowledge are resolved swiftly, including for those pupils with SEND.

- There are weaknesses in the content and sequencing of some curriculum plans. This makes it difficult for pupils to learn more complex concepts and apply them over time. Leaders need to identify, sequence and be more precise about the key knowledge that they expect pupils to remember across the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that the teaching of these plans is fully effective, so that pupils gain all the knowledge they should in every subject.

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	141795
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10200957
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	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Kerrigan
Headteacher	Lindsay Hayward
Website	www.middlezoyandotheryschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is one headteacher across Middlezoy and Othery primary schools. Othery Primary School was not inspected at this time.
- Pupils in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3 from both schools are taught at the Othery site. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught at the Middlezoy site. There were no children in Reception registered to Middlezoy school at the time of the inspection.
- Both schools joined the Levels Academy Trust in 2015. In February 2021, both schools joined Preston Primary Academy Trust (PPAT). This is a multi-academy trust of nine local primary schools.
- The local governance arrangements are through one IEB for both schools.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) oversees the work of both schools.
- Staffing is now much more stable after considerable changes, including in leadership. Most staff have joined the school in the last 12 to 18 months.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other school staff.
- An inspector held meetings with the CEO, the chair of trustees of PPAT and representatives of the IEB.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked more widely at subject plans and pupils' work. Inspectors talked to the curriculum leaders for geography, design technology, religious education and personal, social and health education to review their current work.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around both school sites.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys and Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Aykin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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