

Inspection of a good school: Middleton Community Primary School

Main Street, Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4LQ

Inspection date: 2 February 2022

Outcome

Middleton Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Middleton is a small and welcoming school. The aim of 'valuing, inspiring and creating opportunities' for pupils is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils enjoy learning in a caring and safe environment. They can take part in a variety of activities, trips and experiences.

The school has a purposeful, busy atmosphere. Pupils are eager to do their best. They are proud of their achievements. They relish getting rewards, including the much-prized 'Middleton cup'. They enjoy collecting rewards to put towards whole-class treats that staff organise for them.

Pupils behave well. Bullying is rare. Pupils say they feel safe. They have good relationships with staff. Pupils know they can talk to them if they are worried. They say staff sort out any incidents of poor behaviour fairly. Older pupils take care of younger pupils. School ambassadors make sure pupils always have someone to play with. Year 5 sports leaders organise games for pupils to play at lunchtimes.

Pupils enjoy spending time with the school therapy dog, Meg. Meg sits with pupils as they read and lets them take her for walks. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from her calm nature.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils are taught a broad range of subjects. Leaders link subjects and topics together. Pupils can make connections in their learning. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills from different subjects to solve problems and tackle challenges. For example, governors enjoyed being invited to watch pupils use their design and mathematical skills to create effective marble runs.

The sequencing of content in the curriculum develops pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Leaders have thought about what they want pupils to learn in each subject from the

early years through to Year 6. In some subjects, such as mathematics and personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education, it is clear what is the most important knowledge pupils need to know and in what order. Yet in some subjects, such as history, it is not as clear what key knowledge teachers need to teach or when. Subject leaders are working to improve these aspects of the curriculum.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff promote the importance of reading for pleasure and for information. Each topic of learning links to a relevant class book. Pupils read this book together. Pupils talk enthusiastically about books and authors they enjoy. Children in the Reception Year start to learn to read from their first week in school. Children develop their knowledge of phonics quickly. This helps them to make a good start to school life. Teachers match the books pupils read to the sounds they know. They make sure that pupils have the knowledge of phonics they need to read on their own. Pupils become confident, fluent readers. Pupils who need help with reading, including those with SEND, have extra phonics and reading sessions.

Teachers ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported. Children in the early years enjoy timely adult support. Teachers help pupils to access the curriculum by adapting the way they teach. Teachers provide extra individual or small-group lessons, where necessary. Leaders check often that these sessions are helpful to pupils.

Trips linked to the curriculum help to broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils visit the theatre, places of worship and the nearby heritage centre. They take part in residential experiences. They were especially thrilled to visit The Lowry in Manchester. Close links with schools in Derby help pupils to extend their understanding of life beyond their own community.

Staff provide a rich variety of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to enjoy. These include different sporting activities. Pupils particularly enjoy the yoga and mindfulness club. Pupils are proud of the roles of responsibility they can hold in school. These roles help pupils develop confidence and leadership skills.

Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders and governors give to their workload and welfare. They enjoy working at the school and feel very well supported.

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. Typically, they praise the inclusive and caring nature of the provision. One parent said, 'There is an ethos of trying your best. Children are included and supported. They are well cared for. Every day, lots of smiling faces leave their classrooms.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is strong. School rules remind pupils to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. These are at the heart of the school's work to safeguard pupils. Pupils learn about potential risks to their safety, including when learning online. Staff are trained to identify signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They promptly report any concerns.

Governors maintain good oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Their checks on the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. Leaders provide appropriate help for pupils and their families. They use the advice and guidance of external services when they may be beneficial to pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have ensured that the content of the curriculum is well structured and coherently planned so that pupils build sufficient knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. However, in some subjects the key knowledge that pupils must learn and remember is not explicit. In these subjects it is difficult for teachers to know the most important knowledge pupils need to learn, and in what order. Leaders must ensure that the knowledge pupils need to know is clearly identified and logically ordered, for all subjects.

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 school to be good in March 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 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	112654
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10211595
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Reeve
Headteacher	Alison Dugdale
Website	www.middleton.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Within the last year, two senior teachers have left the school. Two new senior teachers have been appointed.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in January 2020.
- The school works closely with a cluster of schools within the local area.
- The school does not use the services of alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior teachers, the senior office manager, some subject leaders, several members of staff, and groups of pupils. The lead inspector met with several members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also met remotely with a school improvement partner for the local authority.

- The quality of education was considered through deep dives into mathematics, history and early reading. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of work with leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's policies and procedures, met with the designated safeguarding leader and spoke with pupils and staff.
- The responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for parents, staff and pupils were taken into account.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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