

# Inspection of Middleton Church of England Primary Academy

School Road, Middleton, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 1SA

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Middleton Church of England Primary Academy do not receive an adequate quality of education. Expectations of what pupils can achieve, are too low.

Some pupils say that a significant minority of pupils do not behave well and disrupt other pupils' learning. Some pupils do not think teachers deal with behaviour appropriately. Bullying is not common. If it does happen, pupils are able to approach teachers knowing that they will deal with it. However, some pupils experience name calling and consider this a problem.

Most pupils say they feel safe. They feel they can share concerns with an adult. Most pupils like their school. They enjoy all the space they have in which to play well together. Pupils have opportunities to lead others, take part in clubs and raise money for charity.

Children in the early years learn to read well. Older pupils talk about subjects they enjoy. However, very often, pupils do not learn as much as they could. They complete work which is not appropriately matched to their needs. Their teachers are not aware of this because they do not fully understand the needs of their pupils. The curriculum is not well constructed to enable pupils to learn successfully.

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

Leaders do not have the sufficient breadth of subject knowledge to construct an ambitious curriculum for pupils. This is also the case in early years. Across subjects, leaders do not clearly identify what knowledge they want pupils to gain over time. What pupils learn does not build on what they have learned before. Pupils often do not remember knowledge well because teachers do not revisit prior learning. Pupils in different year groups often learn the same information again without adults giving thought to how learning builds over time. A significant number of pupils are not learning with pupils of the same age group because leaders' expectations are not high enough.

Leaders do not accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result of this, pupils do not receive the precise support they need. They do not learn or achieve as well as they should in all areas of the curriculum.

Leaders have prioritised reading in the early years. Children in Reception build on the sounds that they know quickly. This is because they practise previously learned sounds every day. Children blend sounds successfully so that they can read words and short sentences. In Year 1, pupils continue to read more-complex sounds. However, some older pupils do not read as fluently as they should for their age. Their reading books are not consistently well matched to their reading level. Those pupils that have fallen behind with their reading do not receive the precise support

they need to improve. Reading activities are not well planned to enable older pupils to learn to read effectively.

The early years' environment is bright and spacious. Teachers plan many different activities to help children practise language and develop their understanding of the world. However, some curriculum time is not used well. Teaching time is wasted. Consequently, children do not learn as much as they could.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum allows pupils to develop their understanding of healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. Children learn about 'who they are' in Reception. Pupils learn about how their bodies will change as they get older. This contributes well towards pupils' personal development.

Most pupils learn to respect difference. Pupils understand the school's ethos. They know that it is important to 'treat others as they would like to be treated'. However, leaders have been slow to ensure that pupils access reading books which celebrate diversity. Pupils told us that at times they still hear homophobic comments.

Leaders' actions are well meant. They care about their pupils and want them to achieve well. However, leaders are focusing on many different areas of the school's work. As a result, leaders, governors, and the trust have lost sight of what actions will make a positive and significant difference. The trust has not always provided relevant support to enable the school to improve. Leaders have accepted too many different ideas about improving the curriculum without reflecting on what is precisely needed to provide a high-quality education.

Leaders do not rigorously check how well systems in the school are working, for example, to improve and manage behaviour. Leaders think the school is performing much better than it is. This results in the right actions not being taken when needed and leaders not having sufficient oversight of what is working well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff receive thorough safeguarding training. They know how to identify when children might be at risk of abuse or are in danger. Staff know to report concerns immediately. Leaders respond quickly and appropriately. Leaders make timely referrals. They draw on several outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support and care they need.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of the risk of being online. They know how to respond should they detect any suspicious behaviour.

The school's recruitment processes ensure that all new staff are fully checked and are suitable to work with children.

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

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

- The curriculum is not ambitious and carefully considered. It does not meet pupils' needs. Leaders do not precisely select the knowledge they want pupils to learn and do not therefore ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced. As a result of this, teachers do not have the subject knowledge to ensure pupils learn well over time. Leaders need to construct an ambitious curriculum which will equip teachers with the subject knowledge to ensure pupils gain knowledge which builds clearly on what they have learned before.
- Leaders do not accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result of this, pupils with SEND do not receive the precise support they need to learn well. Leaders must ensure that they fully identify and clearly understand the needs of pupils in their care. They need to provide appropriate and precise support for those pupils. They also need to ensure regular and timely review of this support to check how well it is working.
- Pupils' reading books are not always matched closely enough to pupils' ability. As a result of this, some pupils are not regularly reading familiar language and they do not become fluent readers. Leaders must ensure that pupils access reading books which contain much familiar language, matched to their current ability, which they regularly practise.
- Teachers do not address some negative behaviours consistently and a minority of pupils use homophobic language. Most pupils do not appreciate this. It is not in keeping with the largely open minded and welcoming attitude of most pupils. Leaders need to ensure that there are appropriate systems to report and manage behaviour which staff apply consistently.
- Some curriculum time is not used effectively in the early years. As a result of this, children do not have opportunities to learn as much as they could. Leaders need to ensure that no time is wasted in the early years curriculum and that it provides a firm foundation for pupils' subsequent learning.
- Leaders' systems for quality assurance are not effective. As a result, leaders, governors, and the trust do not know the effectiveness of different aspects of the school's work. They do not know how well the school is meeting the needs of pupils. Leaders, governors, and the trust must review quality assurance systems to ensure they precisely identify what will make a positive difference. They must evaluate the effectiveness of the quality of education and how this ensures all pupils achieve well.

It is strongly recommended that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141662
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227316
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Willie Crawshay
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Greenhalgh
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.middleton.norfolk.sch.uk/">www.middleton.norfolk.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Middleton Church of England Primary Academy has nursery provision for 12 children.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and art and design. The deep dives included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of documentation, including the single central record of pre-employment checks. A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding leader.
- There were 26 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, eight responses to Ofsted's staff survey, and 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors analysed the responses together with 13 free-text comments from parents.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Isabel Davis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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