

Middleton Church of England Primary Academy

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

Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

- Leaders are not rigorous in checking that the actions they take are making a difference to pupils' achievement. The monitoring of teaching, assessment, behaviour and progress is inadequate. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance is overgenerous.
- The culture of safeguarding pupils is not sufficiently well established.
- Those responsible for governance do not hold leaders to account with the required challenge to secure rapid change.
- The quality of teaching and learning has not improved quickly enough. Identified weaknesses are not followed up with the necessary rigour to bring about swift improvements.
- Teaching and learning are constantly interrupted by poor behaviour. Many pupils are frustrated that they cannot access their learning because of this. As a result, pupils do not learn well in their lessons.
- Too few pupils make enough progress, or reach the standards expected for their age. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are not developed thoroughly across the school. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise these basic skills in a wide range of other subjects.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils are not met adequately. Leaders have only recently started monitoring whether the additional funding they receive is being used effectively. The pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils. Until recently, the school did not use the 2014 national curriculum. As a result, pupils are only just accessing learning at the appropriate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Leaders and teachers do not know accurately how children are doing against national standards, including in the early years. Leaders have not ensured that assessment is precise.
- Parents are concerned about pupils' progress and behaviour.

The school has the following strengths

- Newly appointed teaching staff are positive. They are bringing energy and enthusiasm to teaching and learning. They are committed to improving the progress pupils make.
- Pupils are now being assessed more accurately by the special educational needs coordinator. This is starting to secure more purposeful support to meet the specific needs of pupils.

Full report

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Swiftly improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - ensuring that all agreed new processes are implemented consistently by all staff
 - checking frequently that teaching is consistently effective in meeting pupils' needs
 - evaluating rigorously the difference that leaders' actions make to pupils' learning
 - making sure that improvement plans have robust measurements for judging the success of the actions taken
 - reporting and reviewing the success of improvement plans frequently
 - making sure that the use of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is effective in narrowing the gap in achievement between them and other pupils nationally
 - governors being steadfast and robust in holding leaders to account for pupils' outcomes in all subjects
 - developing positive relationships with parents and increasing their confidence in the school to support their children's education.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' achievement across the school so that:
 - teachers have the necessary skills to assess pupils' outcomes accurately
 - all adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - work matches the needs and abilities of the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - pupils understand precisely what is expected of them, and what they need to do to be successful learners
 - learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Implementing a high-quality curriculum so that pupils are prepared well for the next stages in their education by:
 - making sure that all pupils have equality of provision
 - making sure that there is sufficient time to teach all subjects of the curriculum.
- Urgently improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - establishing a strong culture of safeguarding pupils
 - eradicating disruptive behaviour within the classroom and around the school
 - ensuring that all staff use the school's agreed behaviour management strategies
 - ensuring that the assessment of pupils' personal development is thorough
 - securing appropriate intervention and the help of external agencies
 - nurturing positive, aspirational behaviours for learning so that pupils want to do their best and, consequently, achieve well.

A review of governance, and how pupil premium funding is spent, should be undertaken to improve these aspects of leadership and management.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Following the school converting to an academy, all levels of leadership have failed to accurately assess and effectively monitor the school's performance. Leaders' capacity for improvement has been hampered by the many changes of leadership over the past few years. Consequently, their actions have been ineffective in securing improvements in the school.
- Until recently, the trust, governors and leaders were overgenerous and inaccurate in their self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Evaluation was based largely on the many actions the school has taken to improve, rather than on what difference they are making. Since June, the trust has been more realistic in its view of the school's position and has provided appropriate support.
- Leaders have not established effective systems to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. As a result, the quality of teaching, assessment and pupils' outcomes have declined since the previous inspection.
- Assessment of pupils' outcomes is not accurate. This means that teachers cannot correctly identify the pupils who require additional support, and those who need more challenge to make better progress.
- Leaders have not followed up thoroughly that agreed actions are being implemented or are having a positive impact. As a result, for example, they do not know if behaviour is improving.
- The monitoring of teaching is weak. The focus of leadership scrutiny has largely been a check to manage and 'fire fight' behaviour, rather than determine how effectively pupils are making progress and extending their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Leaders and governors cannot demonstrate whether the additional funding they receive is making a difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have only recently introduced a curriculum that reflects the national changes from 2014. Staff are not yet confident, or effective, in using the new curriculum to plan or assess pupils accurately. The curriculum is not yet broad enough to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for physical education and sport to employ a sports coach who provides extra sporting activities at lunchtimes. Additional clubs and extra-curricular opportunities are now on offer to pupils. As a result, more pupils participate in regular physical activity. Leaders have not yet fully evaluated this provision for different groups of pupils.
- Some leaders are showing early signs of making a difference. The headteacher and newly appointed head of school have implemented systems recently to ensure that safeguarding procedures are compliant with the latest statutory requirements. Leaders are supporting new teachers to ensure that they settle well into the school, and that the new team are helped to manage pupils' challenging behaviour.

- The appointment of a special educational needs coordinator is resulting in improving provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The leader has carried out in-depth assessments of pupils to identify their needs. Leaders are now in a position to consider what intervention and support is required for the pupils.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not challenge leaders routinely over the information they receive. They rely on leaders' inaccurate assessment, or poor monitoring information, and do not question this. Consequently, governors do not have enough accurate information to support and challenge leaders to make rapid improvements.
- Governors do not check safeguarding procedures as thoroughly as they should. Consequently, although leaders' recent work to improve safeguarding procedures has been effective, governors have not been rigorous in ensuring that safeguarding has been effective in the past.
- Governors are not using the most up-to-date guidance to ensure that pupils are being taught the right curriculum content or achieving as they should, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who need to catch up.
- Governors do not check that leaders are using additional funding appropriately. Governors are not clear on how the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils is improving the pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are now effective.
- Following the one-day inspection carried out recently in response to concerns regarding safeguarding, the headteacher and head of school have worked tirelessly to put in place a number of rigorous systems that will ensure pupils are safe. The procedures in place are now compliant with statutory requirements. Although it is too early to evidence their effectiveness, the processes are thorough and detailed, with many planned opportunities for regular review.
- The head of school is now the designated leader for safeguarding. He has established detailed chronological records for all vulnerable pupils. Additionally, he is implementing weekly review meetings to include all aspects of safeguarding such as attendance, behaviour and notes of concern. As a result, potential risks to pupils are reduced significantly.
- All staff are aware of their responsibility to safeguard pupils and take safeguarding seriously. They have all received up-to-date training and read the latest guidance. Staff know the new systems in place for reporting any concerns and know the risks of radicalisation and pupils' access to social media.
- All staff are vigilant and consider safeguarding of pupils as one of their strengths, particularly regarding the behaviour challenges they face. Staff record detailed notes, and inspection evidence shows that their response is quick, appropriate and ensuring pupils' safety at all times.

- Pupils think that the school is becoming a safer place. However, they say that they do get hurt and they are sometimes subjected to unkindness. Pupils report that most adults are now doing something to help them, and they feel happier going to speak to an adult if they are worried or anxious.
- Parents think that more recently their children are safe in school. They feel more able to approach the adults in school. However, many parents still believe that pupils' behaviour makes the school unsafe for their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Pupils are not learning enough in lessons. They have significant gaps in their learning from previous weak teaching. The poor behaviour of pupils interrupts current teaching. Consequently, too many pupils across the school make inadequate progress and do not reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievements are being assessed inaccurately. As a result, expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving have been too low. Besides leading to inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics, this also affects the attitude pupils have towards their learning, and the pride that pupils take in their work.
- Pupils are not acquiring sufficient subject knowledge in a range of subjects, and do not have the opportunity to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to other curriculum subjects.
- Teachers and learning support assistants are not consistently applying the 'non-negotiables' recently introduced by leaders. These 'non-negotiables' are a list of teaching strategies that leaders want teachers to use in every lesson. Staff are trying to abide by these, but poor behaviour is hampering their efforts. Teachers are having to prioritise the often urgent and volatile behaviours of some pupils.
- During the inspection, where teaching took place without disruption, the new teaching staff could be effective. Where behaviour was good enough to allow teachers to question pupils, these questions often were valuable in helping pupils to understand the topic more fully. However, inadequate behaviour interrupts teaching and learning across the school too frequently.
- Teachers do not yet have effective strategies to secure appropriate, or better, behaviour. There is a historic, entrenched culture of poor behaviour in the school. Techniques implemented recently by leaders are not yet successful in setting high expectations for pupils about what good behaviour looks like. Equally, staff are unable to systematically embed consequences for poor behaviour.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Despite recent work by leaders to ensure that the systems for safeguarding are effective, not enough time has passed to make a difference to the deep-rooted culture in the school.
- Leaders' and staff members' expectations about how pupils should behave are too low. Staff assigned to deal with significant behavioural issues throughout the day act in a calm and nurturing way. However, a lack of coherence around expectations and consequences for poor behaviour means that staff are not supported well enough to improve pupils' behaviour over a longer period of time.
- Leaders have not implemented a curriculum which supports pupils to understand the importance of tolerance or equality. Consequently, too many pupils do not treat each other, and staff, with appropriate care and respect.
- Pupils know how to keep safe when they access the internet. They understand why you do not reveal personal details about yourself and also know to inform an adult if they are worried about the behaviour of strangers online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders have reviewed the agreed behaviour policy and implemented new behaviour systems, such as stages of consequences. But little evidence was seen during the inspection of the new systems being referred to.
- Despite a recently implemented zero tolerance approach, unacceptable incidences of poor behaviour, physical aggression and name-calling have not been eradicated.
- New methods to reward and sanction pupils are now in place. However, pupils do not have a sound understanding of the new system. Consequently, pupils continue to misbehave and resort to the same strategies to disrupt the class and school.
- A core group of pupils do not listen well in class and are constantly disruptive. Increasing numbers of pupils are mimicking this behaviour. Pupils who demonstrate good behaviour perceptively identify that it is rare for adults to work with them. Pupils also perceive that 'naughty' children receive better rewards when they behave, such as access to sports coaching, and therefore see little point in behaving appropriately themselves.
- Lunchtimes are managed more effectively than previously. This is because leaders now employ a sports coach to lead lunchtime activities. This provision is planned to focus particularly on the challenging pupils to teach them appropriate social skills and to play together appropriately. While this is successful in ensuring that lunchtimes are more harmonious, some pupils consider it unfair as they want to join in the fun activities. Parents confirm that they view the lunchtime club as a reward for those who exhibit poor behaviour.
- Parents are not happy with the provision for their children. While a few mentioned some minor improvements, most feel 'it is too little too late'. They feel that there have

been so many changes that this is not enough to make a big enough difference for their children. They refer particularly to behaviour as being 'awful', 'appalling', and 'a real concern'.

- Leaders are beginning to implement systems that are showing early signs of improving pupils' attendance. Leaders are using these new monitoring and intervention systems to respond to any emerging concerns over pupils' absence. The introduction of a new rewards programme is also serving as an incentive to pupils to improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate in all curriculum areas because, over time, pupils underachieve considerably. This is due to historically weak leadership, poor teaching and insufficient coverage of subjects for pupils to do well. As a result, the majority of pupils do not do as well as they should.
- Inaccurate assessment means that pupils are often given work that is too easy or too hard. As a result, progress is minimal. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are not well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.
- Although not officially confirmed, in the 2016 national tests the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 was below the standard set for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Assessment is inaccurate. Historic information provided by teachers regarding the progress being made by individual pupils in their class is unreliable. There is little or no evidence in pupils' past workbooks to support the reported view of progress. Leaders acknowledge that reports on past assessment have not been reliable.
- Pupils' progress this term has not yet been monitored or reviewed. Leaders could not provide inspectors with any accurate, checked evidence about current pupils' progress. Inspectors spent time looking at pupils' work. There is little evidence that teachers know pupils' accurate starting points, and that pupils are making sustained or improved progress.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not sufficiently challenged. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what they can achieve. As a result, very few pupils across the school are working at greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Leaders do not know if they make a difference to disadvantaged pupils. There is no systematic evaluation of how the additional funding is spent, and identification of these pupils has been incorrect in the past. The head of school has implemented more rigorous systems to follow disadvantaged pupils' progress. However, it is too early to ascertain whether the differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are increasing or narrowing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not been supported in the past to make good progress. The work of the new leader to accurately identify pupils' needs is too recent to assess the difference it makes. In the past, pupils' needs have not been identified accurately, and staff have not been supported to meet these needs. As a result, the pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Leaders report that children enter the Reception class with skills lower than is typical of their age. Inspection analysis of the school's on-entry baseline information shows that this evaluation is not accurate for all areas of the early years curriculum. Many children enter with abilities better than this, especially in mathematics. As a result, leaders think that progress is better than it is.
- Leaders do not know how well children are doing. Leaders' monitoring is not systematic or sufficient in assessing pupils learning accurately. Consequently, it is difficult to validate whether teaching is meeting the needs of all children.
- All adults in the Reception class work effectively together. They are a new team, taking on board the new, sound approach to provide the early years education that young children need. For example, the team are already planning how to improve the outdoor learning environment to increase children's access to all aspects of the early years curriculum. The staff team try hard to implement the school's new behaviour expectations and consider the children's safety when planning and organising the classroom area. As a result, children are well supervised and kept safe.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2016 is broadly in line with national averages. However, leaders acknowledge that assessment was not reliable in 2015/2016. Compounding this, leaders did not evidence that they routinely seek enough external checking of the school's assessment information to verify that their assessment of the early years is accurate.

School details

Unique reference number	141662
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10025556

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Linda Davies
Headteacher	Angela Eden
Telephone number	01553 840 234
Website	www.middleton.norfolk.sch.uk/
Email address	office@middleton.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Middleton Primary Academy is smaller than the average school.
- The academy became a sponsored academy in March 2015. The sponsors are DNEAT (Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust).
- Since the school became an academy there have been leadership changes. In September 2015, the executive headteacher joined the school and a partnership was formed with Flitcham Church of England Primary Academy.
- In July 2016 the partnership with Flitcham Church of England Primary Academy ended. The executive headteacher became the interim headteacher at Middleton Primary Academy.
- There is a completely new teaching staff who took up post in September 2016, including a new head of school.

- The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for children looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department of Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website.

Information about this inspection

- This section 5 inspection was prompted by a non-formal designation section 8 inspection that took place following parental complaints on 6 October 2016.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also made short visits to all classrooms at various times to scrutinise the work in pupils' books, assess behaviour and look at the school's learning environment.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the head of school and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with three governors, including the vice-chair, and DNEAT trust representatives.
- The inspection team met informally with different groups of pupils during lesson times, lunch, and breaktime. Groups of pupils met formally with inspectors to talk about their views of the school. One inspector heard some pupils read.
- A scrutiny of the available 2015/2016 academic year books, and current pupils' work, including mathematics and English, was undertaken.
- The 2016 unvalidated results were taken into account. A range of paperwork was scrutinised relating to the monitoring of the school's work by the academy trust, governing body minutes, behaviour, exclusion, attendance and safeguarding, and also leadership monitoring and evaluation documents. The lead inspector evaluated the information available on the school's website.
- Inspectors gave parents the opportunity to meet with them in school, and also spoke to parents on the playground prior to the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 11 parent texts, and responses made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). Additionally, inspectors looked at the 10 pupil views submitted on the online pupil survey, and the views expressed by five members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Webb

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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