

Inspection of Middlewich Primary School

Park Road, Middlewich, Cheshire CW10 9BS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy coming to this kind, friendly and supportive school. They arrive in the playground with a spring in their step, eager to start the day.

Teachers create a stimulating learning environment, which encourages pupils to achieve well. Pupils benefit from strong, positive relationships with staff. These relationships help pupils to feel safe in school.

All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. These expectations permeate throughout the entire school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn effectively across a variety of subjects. Pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), work well alongside their peers in class.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are extremely polite and they respect each other, regardless of any differences that they may have. Pupils, including children in the early years, share equipment considerately. They follow the school rules diligently, including during playtimes. Pupils said that if bullying ever happens, adults sort it out quickly.

Pupils benefit from a variety of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. These enrichment activities enhance their school experience. They visit places of interest in the local area, listen to live musical performances and partake in residential trips. Pupils value the opportunities provided to them by leaders and teachers.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils. They have successfully identified the knowledge that they want pupils, including children in the early years, to learn. New knowledge is presented in a well-ordered and logical way. As a result of a carefully designed curriculum, most pupils make secure links between the different subjects and topics that they study. Added to this, teachers make sure that pupils get plentiful opportunities to revisit previous learning.

Many teachers, including adults in the early years, choose appropriate activities to deliver new information. When this happens, pupils quickly deepen their knowledge of topics and concepts. However, in a minority of subjects, teachers do not always choose the most suitable activities which help pupils to learn new ideas. Occasionally, this means that a few pupils struggle to recall all that they have learned.

In the main, teachers use leaders' assessment systems well to establish what pupils know and can do. They use this information to identify and address misconceptions.

Leaders prioritise reading throughout the school, including in the early years. Many pupils said that they love reading. They talked enthusiastically with inspectors about the variety of different books, authors and poets that they have learned about. Pupils enjoy using the book corner in their classrooms to give recommendations to their peers.

Leaders make sure that all staff are trained to teach reading. Daily phonics lessons begin as soon as children start in the early years. Teachers make sure that pupils learn the sounds that they need. Leaders and teachers make sure that they quickly identify pupils who are struggling with their reading knowledge. Adults provide timely support so that these pupils catch up quickly. In most cases, pupils have books which match their phonics skills. However, occasionally, some pupils have books with sounds that they do not know. This means that they struggle to read the words and occasionally misunderstand what they have read.

The school is an exceptionally calm and purposeful environment in which all pupils can learn. Pupils are extremely keen learners. They display high levels of concentration, focusing on the tasks that they have been set. Pupils said that their lessons are hardly ever disrupted. Inspectors concurred with this view. Children in the early years also quickly adopt the high expectations set out by teachers. They embrace school routines. This helps children in the early years to settle into school swiftly each day.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities that contribute to their personal development. For example, pupils in Year 6 can apply for a variety of leadership responsibilities, which they take seriously. Pupils explained to inspectors how the skills that they learn through enrichment opportunities could be useful in their later lives. Teachers encourage pupils to take part in 'Personal Development Awards', which are designed to support character development. Pupils know a lot about British values. They successfully learn about different types of families, faiths and cultures. All members of the school have signed up to the 'Equality Pledge'. Pupils show high levels of respect to all in their school community and beyond.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. Leaders identify pupils who need additional support quickly. Teachers make sure that all pupils are included in lessons, for example by making appropriate adaptations to tasks for pupils with SEND. Pupils in the specially resourced provision benefit from an effective curriculum. They too achieve well.

The headteacher, alongside her wider leadership and teaching team, ensures that pupils get a high-quality education. Governors know the school's strengths and what it needs to do better. They hold leaders to account fully for the education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Middlewich Primary School. Leaders take care to identify any pupils who need additional help quickly and effectively. They work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils receive the timely support that they need.

Through the well-designed curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. This includes when they are online. Pupils know what they should do if they are worried about anything. They talk to trusted adults in school when they have a problem or concern.

Leaders make sure that all adults in school are trained to spot any potential signs of abuse. They make certain that all adults in school have had the appropriate checks before they start working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the books that pupils read are not closely matched to the sounds that they know. This means that some pupils struggle to read the words in their books and, on occasions, they do not understand what they have read. Leaders should ensure that all pupils have books which closely match the sounds that they know.
- Occasionally, teachers do not select the most appropriate activities to help pupils learn new ideas and concepts. This hinders how well some pupils learn. Leaders should ensure that teachers think carefully about the activities that they choose to present new knowledge and information to pupils. This is to ensure that pupils learn all that they should.

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.

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	131727
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10226241
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Bunn
Headteacher	Sandra La Porta
Website	www.middlewichprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	18 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body is responsible for the daily breakfast club.
- The school has had several new members of staff since the previous inspection.
- The school operates a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND with a hearing impairment. There are currently three pupils from key stages 1 and 2.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection that the school has 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 met with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also met with subject leaders. Inspectors met with a range of leaders who are responsible for the school's pastoral system and the school's personal development programmes.

- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed other subjects in the curriculum.
- The lead inspector observed adults reading with some pupils in Years 1 to 3.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding with leaders and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the end of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Lobodzinski	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Baron	Ofsted Inspector

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