

Inspection of a good school: Middlefield Community Primary School

Alderwood Avenue, Speke, Liverpool, Merseyside L24 2UE

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 March 2024

Outcome

Middlefield Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to this welcoming school. Their positive behaviour helps to create a calm and orderly learning environment. The 'Middlefield Way' is threaded through everything that pupils and staff do. Pupils behave well and demonstrate the school values of ambition, resilience, empathy, determination, kindness and positivity. It is important to them that everyone is treated fairly.

Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), relish the wider opportunities that they receive. They take part in many sports tournaments, such as football, curling and cross country. Many pupils spoke with sheer delight about their role in a recent theatrical production. They were extremely proud to have performed in a local auditorium for their parents and their friends.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement. Pupils try their best and work hard. Pupils learn about the world of work and money. This enables them to have clear goals and aspirations for life beyond Middlefield. Pupils enjoy learning new information and are enthused when sharing this knowledge with others. Pupils spoke confidently about their recent learning. Typically, pupils achieve well.

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

The school has devised a well-ordered curriculum that takes account of pupils' learning needs. This begins in the early years, where foundational knowledge is clearly set out. Across key stages 1 and 2, the carefully designed curriculum continues to identify in a logical order the essential knowledge that pupils should learn.

The school has deliberately built in a series of rich experiences for pupils, such as trips to the local safari park or to museums and art galleries. These events spark pupils' interests in their learning and opens further opportunities for them to learn beyond the local area.

Typically, teachers deliver the curriculum using appropriate and well-chosen resources. Most teachers skilfully check what pupils know and remember. However, in a small number of subjects, these checks are at an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, teachers are not as skilled in identifying the gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders the progress that some pupils make through the curriculum.

The school has carefully considered how it uses assessment information to check that pupils are learning the curriculum. However, in a few subjects, some teachers do not revisit essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that has been previously delivered. From time to time, this prevents some pupils from committing new knowledge into their long-term memory.

Reading is threaded through the curriculum with books and authors taking centre stage. The school library is much loved by pupils of all ages. Year 6 librarians take great pride in their roles to ensure that the library is tidy, well-maintained and inviting to others. Skilled staff deliver the phonics programme with fidelity. The books that pupils read from match the sounds that they already know. This ensures that pupils progress well to become fluent readers. Staff check that pupils are learning well from the phonics programme. Pupils who struggle with reading are quickly supported so that they can learn to be confident, fluent readers.

Staff encourage children in the early years to listen attentively and to concentrate well on their activities. Children learn to share and to cooperate with others. They play happily with their friends. These solid foundations are built on throughout the school. Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around school.

The school quickly and accurately identifies pupils with SEND. Staff are well trained to adapt the delivery of the curriculum, if necessary, so that pupils can learn alongside their peers. This enables pupils with additional needs to make substantial progress from their starting points.

The attendance of pupils is a priority for the school. They carefully monitor and track absence levels to understand why some pupils are persistently absent from school. The school works effectively with families to remove any potential barriers to attendance. The school utilises support from external agencies where attendance for individual pupils fails to improve. In recent years, the school has seen a significant reduction in persistent absenteeism rates and recognises the continued work to be carried out with families.

The school has a well-thought-out programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about well-being and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They spoke with passion about how the school supports their mental health. Pupils talked confidently about a range of strategies that they can use. They know that they can speak to someone if they have any worries.

Staff feel fully supported by the school. They spoke about an openness to listen, respond and act to any concerns or training needs that they may have. Staff are highly thankful of the work that is completed by the school to set out the learning intentions clearly for

them in many subjects. They said that this has effectively supported their work-life balance and well-being.

Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties with rigour. They have the necessary skills to undertake their roles exceptionally well. They challenge and support the school so that Middlefield is a happy, safe and purposeful place to work and to learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few curriculum subjects, the assessment strategies that the school uses are in the early stages of implementation. This means that teachers' checks on what pupils know are not as effective as they could be. The school should refine its methods for checking what pupils remember over time, to ensure that any gaps in learning are identified and addressed.
- In a few subjects, the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to revisit the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they learn. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from having sufficiently secure foundations on which to build new learning. In these remaining curriculum areas, the school should develop strategies to ensure that pupils embed knowledge successfully into their long-term memory.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104591 |
| Local authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 10313959 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 364 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Michelle Pearson |
| Headteacher | David Potter |
| Website | www.middlefieldcommunityprimary.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, she held discussions about the curriculum, visited a

sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at playtime. She considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the school's internal records for parent views.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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