

Middlefield Community Primary School

Alderwood Avenue, Speke, Liverpool, Merseyside, L24 2UE

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. From starting points much lower than typically expected, pupils make good progress to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is usually good and there are examples of outstanding teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good.
- Pupils have a positive attitude toward learning and they enjoy school.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they know that they are cared for well.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and there is an effective programme for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are considerate and respectful towards adults and each other.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is successfully driving forward improvements. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher, school leaders, staff and a highly committed, well-informed governing body.
- Since the last inspection, school leaders have quickly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is not yet outstanding.
- Overall progress in Key Stage 1 is not as strong as in Key Stage 2, especially for the most able pupils. This is because pupils do not always get on with challenging tasks quickly enough.
- Not all leadership roles are clearly defined and as a result, not all school leaders are sufficiently accountable for standards in their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 parts of lessons, sessions taken by teaching assistants and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. Informal conversations took place between an inspector and parents.
- A telephone conversation took place between an inspector and the headteacher of the Primary Education Centre.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to trigger a report. However, inspectors considered 74 responses to a parental questionnaire recently distributed by the school and six staff questionnaires.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school’s analysis of how well it is performing, the school development plan, information about pupils’ progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils’ books.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school is supported by a National Leader of Education from Great Crosby Catholic Primary School.
- Middlefield School works in partnership with the Primary Education Centre to meet the needs of some pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and thereby pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - making sure that pupils, and especially the most able, get on with challenging tasks quickly so that they make as much progress as possible
 - sharing even more of the good and outstanding practice that exists in the school
 - embedding the new policy for marking pupils' work.
- Improve leadership and management by clarifying the roles of all leaders and making sure that they are fully accountable for standards in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage, although most start in the Nursery class with the skills and knowledge well below those typically expected for their age. Children benefit from the well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning areas that inspire them to want to be involved in the activities provided. By the time they join Year 1 just under one third of pupils have reached a good level of development.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are in line with the national average, with reading just below and writing well below average. The 2013 Year 6 national tests showed that attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows an overall rising attainment trend evident at both key stages, although stronger at Key Stage 2.
- The 2013 Year 6 national test results also confirmed overall good progress, with an increasing proportion of pupils making expected and more than expected progress across Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Younger pupils are effectively taught phonics, which is the ability to match letters to the sounds they make. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check compares well to the national average. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said the school encourages them to read different types of books. Moreover, they have plenty of opportunities to read by themselves and to adults who help them.
- The school provides focused support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils learn well and make good progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall. There are pupils on track to attain Level 6 at the end of Year 6. By the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils expected to reach above average levels is increasing. This is because their needs are quickly identified and effective support is put into place to help pupils meet their targets.
- The most able pupils in Key Stage 1 are not consistently making the same good level of progress. This is because they do not get on quickly enough with challenging activities that help them to make as much progress as they could.
- In Year 6 in 2013, most pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the pupil premium funding. Eligible pupils made good progress as did their classmates. Current school data shows that any gaps between eligible pupils and others are quickly addressed, so that all pupils are supported to make good progress. This reflects the school's dedication to making sure that all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved rapidly since the last inspection and is now good. Work in pupils' books and pupils' progress information show that the majority of pupils make good progress. Although standards are improving rapidly, progress is relatively weaker in Key Stage 1, while pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 make excellent progress.
- Teachers plan work which interests and involves pupils. For example, children in the Nursery Class were captivated from the word go when looking at pictures of pirates; the teacher's careful questioning helped children to put all the scenes in the right order to tell an exciting story. One boy was so enthralled he dashed off and came back wielding a sword (an empty lemonade bottle) shouting 'shiver me timbers' in a very pirate-like voice.
- Teaching and progress in mathematics has improved because teachers increasingly help pupils to build securely on what they already know and can do. There are also some good examples of mathematics being used in real-life contexts, for example, classes with 100% attendance are awarded £10.00 to spend on classroom resources and pupils have to work out what they can buy or whether to save and buy later.
- One of the school's leaders has developed the 'Chatterbox' reading and writing resource which

has been in place for five years in Key Stage 2 and more recently in Key Stage 1. Equal priority is given to fiction and non-fiction reading and writing and pupils know that they have to read, analyse the text, use the features to plan their own piece of writing and then evaluate everything they have produced. This being introduced into the Reception class and is helping to improve progress in reading and writing across the school.

- Year 5 and Year 6 pupils wrote exceptionally high quality 'space' stories in one of the themes used across the curriculum. They published their stories in the hard-backed booklets they designed and illustrated and then read them to younger pupils. When pupils evaluated their work, one boy felt that he had given the younger listeners a head start by reading his thrilling story to them. Younger pupils aspired to writing such 'brilliant stories'. This is typical of teaching, offering real-life opportunities which add interest and promote enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss their views and help each other to improve their work. For example, pupils made wind-up toys and confidently shared their ideas and encouraged each other to find ways of making their models even better.
- Pupils sometimes do their corrections. For example, copying corrected spellings four times helps them to learn from their mistake. Most teachers give good advice to pupils to help them to improve their work. However, this is not yet consistent practice across the school. School leaders know that the quality of marking must improve and they are now tackling this.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to guarantee good support for pupils with additional learning needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show respect for each other and the adults around them. Pupils say they enjoy school and teachers make learning 'fun and interesting'. The school is well maintained and attractive; high quality displays and opportunities for pupils to celebrate their work are evident throughout. The school has a welcoming and happy atmosphere.
- 'Buddies' are older pupils who act as role models to younger friends; buddies pass on the message that good manners are the norm at Middlefield. Pupil councillors are always on the look out for good behaviour and good work, so that they can present a councillors' award at the weekly assembly.
- Pupils are generous and regularly send donations to support a village in Bangladesh. They keep up to date regarding how the money is spent through the internet.
- There are a few pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their behaviour. The school has a range of effective strategies in place to support these pupils well and learning is rarely disturbed.
- Most parents feel that behaviour is well managed at school and that their children are cared for well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils talked about how a recent play had taught them how to prevent bullying. There are occasions when some parents and pupils forget that there is a difference between bullying and falling out, but school staff work hard to remedy this.
- School staff are successfully working with external agencies and parents to improve attendance. When the poor attendance of the pupils from the few families who are not responding to the school's actions is taken away from the attendance figures, attendance is similar to average. Some older pupils are very keen to get to school and get themselves ready and arrive at school on time, when younger brothers and sisters are still in bed.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher wants the very best for the pupils and is clearly focussed on continuing to improve standards. She is very well supported by the assistant headteacher, staff and governors. Together they have worked tirelessly to make sure that the areas for development identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.
- The school's view of its performance is accurate because it is based on detailed and regular examination of its work. Targets set for teachers are closely linked to the school's planning and are focused on improving standards.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are supported by an effective programme of ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants. Newly-qualified teachers are very well supported by more experienced staff. However, the excellent practice seen in parts of the school could be shared even more effectively to further improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Some leadership roles, including those of both some senior and middle leaders, are not clearly defined, and as a result, they are not yet entirely accountable for improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given good attention and the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. A range of experts visit the school, for example, a chef taught Years 3 and 4 how to make healthy lunch box snacks and an artist helped pupils appreciate the work of Matisse. A range of after-school activities and trips that pupils remember and enjoy talking about further enriches the curriculum.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in sports to help them stay healthy and promote their well-being. The primary school sport funding is used to pay for specialist coaches to work with pupils and staff. Pupils' participation in sporting activities has increased because there is something for everyone to enjoy.
- School leaders work well in partnership with staff from the Primary Education Centre to make sure the needs of all pupils are effectively met.
- The local authority has worked very closely with the school since the last inspection. A good level of support has contributed to the improved standards, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics. The support is being withdrawn because the school's leaders have demonstrated the capacity and determination to improve further without the external assistance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely supportive of the school. They know its strengths and priorities because they receive accurate and comprehensive reports from school leaders. Governors are currently undertaking a self-review and an action plan is being developed to ensure that they are well trained to support and challenge the school even more. For example, they plan to improve their skills in analysing pupils' performance information. Governors check the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium to confirm that their spending is effective. They know about the quality of teaching and make sure that teachers' progression through the pay scale is linked to the effectiveness of their teaching. The governing body successfully undertakes statutory duties including, making sure that pupils and staff are kept safe and that the budget is spent wisely.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104591
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	432126

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Wilson
Headteacher	Paula Judd
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2013
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