

Inspection of a good school: Middle Barton Primary School

27 Church Lane, Middle Barton, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 7BX

Inspection date:

8 November 2022

Outcome

Middle Barton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are overwhelmingly proud of their school. One pupil stated, 'This is the best school in the world.' Adults have high expectations for behaviour and pupils rise to these. There is very little off-task behaviour. Unkindness and bullying are rare and always dealt with quickly. Pupils feel safe. They know that the adults are always there to help them out, sometimes with a little help from the 'worry monster'.

At this school pupils are free to choose who they want to be. Equality, inclusion and diversity weave through all that they do. One pupil who recently joined the school told an inspector, 'I feel so welcomed here.'

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils at this school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have made deliberate choices about the curriculum pupils learn. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy the practical elements of learning as this brings the curriculum alive for them. They especially enjoy learning in the outdoor classroom and their walks around the village to learn about road safety, or to spot a waterfall or a Victorian house.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that widens the knowledge and experiences of pupils. Leaders ensure that the themes pupils learn about include a diverse range of people, places and cultures. Pupils enjoy finding out about new things and know that learning is important. They therefore settle quickly to their tasks and engage well. Pupils, including those in Reception, get on well with one another. They are proud to receive a 'values leaf' when showing one of the school's values of compassion, respect and integrity.

Leaders have mapped out learning in all subjects. Opportunities for pupils to remember previous learning and link it to new learning have been clearly thought out. In most subjects, this helps pupils to know and remember the planned knowledge and skills. For

example, in geography, while in Reception, children start to learn about the space around them. Gradually, as pupils move through the school, they learn more about the landscapes and environments of different countries and begin to make connections between them. In a minority of subjects, teachers do not consistently check and take account of what pupils have learned. This means that sometimes pupils do not build on previous learning well enough and therefore do not achieve as well.

In the Reception class, adults use every opportunity to support children's understanding of number and to develop children's language skills. For example, children were seen in the mud kitchen filling containers with soil while others were in the 'shop' buying things for their bear hunt. Adults skilfully guide children's conversations to include identifying numbers and counting to ensure that they have important knowledge and skills before they move into Year 1.

Pupils enjoy listening to and reading a wide range of stories. Children in Reception get off to an early start in learning to read. Daily reading continues through the school in all age groups. Teachers in Reception and key stage 1 have a good knowledge of the resources used to teach phonics. This means there is consistency in the approach to the teaching of reading. Most pupils can use the new sounds they learn to read and spell words successfully. Those who find learning to read tricky quickly get the support they need to keep up. However, the books pupils read do not always match the sounds they are learning in class. This means they do not always practise the sounds they have learned to ensure that they can read fluently and with confidence.

Pupils with SEND learn in class alongside their peers. Adults make subtle adaptations for those who need a different approach to the planned learning. Pupils' needs are identified early. Relationships between leaders, feeder schools, parents and carers are strong. This means teachers have a good understanding of pupils' needs and can plan for them. Consequently, most pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of clubs, trips and sporting tournaments. Many learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils take an active role in fundraising for local and national charities. Some spoke proudly to inspectors about their involvement in and contribution to the village campaign for an electric bus.

Leaders and governors are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff, including those new to leadership roles, feel well supported. They appreciate the support they receive and the time given to continue to improve and develop the education for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has the highest priority. Everyone, including pupils, knows this.

All adults are aware of their role in keeping pupils safe. Regular training by leaders ensures that staff knowledge and understanding about safeguarding are kept up to date.

Adults know how to report concerns about pupils. These concerns are acted on by leaders in a timely way and referred on so that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils learn about offline as well as online risks. They learn about how to keep safe in the village while walking or riding their bikes. Pupils are empowered to speak up when they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, teachers do not consistently take account of what pupils already know and understand. This means that learning activities do not consistently build well on pupils' previous knowledge. Leaders need to provide training to ensure that teachers carefully check what pupils have learned and use this to adapt learning as needed.
- The reading books for some pupils are not consistently matched well to their reading knowledge. As a result, some pupils struggle to maintain fluency and apply their phonics knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that all books are carefully matched to the sounds pupils are learning so they can practise and develop their reading knowledge.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Middle Barton School, to be good in May 2017.

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	146236
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10240347
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kirsten Robinson
Headteacher	Kim Griffin
Website	www.middlebartonschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Middle Barton Primary School converted to become an academy in 2018. It is part of the River Learning Trust.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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, other leaders, members of staff and three representatives from the local governing body. An inspector also held a telephone discussion with two representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written responses.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' books and curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school's own evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. They considered a range of safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Clare Haines, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mary Ellen McCarthy

Ofsted Inspector

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