

Middle Barton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123005
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380566
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda McGill HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Brock
Headteacher	Lynn Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector who was present for half a day. They observed eight lessons taught by four teachers and made other visits to classrooms to look at pupils' books. Meetings were held with the headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the Chair of the Governing Body and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding children, members of staff and a group of pupils. Telephone discussions were held with representatives of the local authority and a parent. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school's self-evaluation and plans for development, minutes of meetings of the governing body and policies and procedures for protecting pupils and keeping them safe. Questionnaires returned by 51 parents and carers, 14 members of staff and 40 pupils were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The team evaluated the impact of any steps taken to improve pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics.
- It investigated whether all groups of pupils, including those who have special needs and/or disabilities are making at least satisfactory progress in their learning.
- It assessed how far the governing body holds the school to account and contributes to leadership and strategic direction.
- Inspectors evaluated whether the school currently has the capacity to make and sustain improvements.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school serving the village of Middle Barton and the surrounding area. All of its pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion who are known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. The school has Healthy School status.

There has been considerable turmoil in staffing over the past year, and a substantial fall in the number of pupils on roll. Three members of teaching staff are currently absent. One class is taught by a full-time supply teacher and another is shared between a supply teacher who works for three days and a permanent teacher. In February 2011 the school's provision for mathematics was inspected by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors as part of a survey. The inspection raised some concerns, particularly about leadership.

The school shares its site with a pre-school. As it is not managed by the school, it will be inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) 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.

There are two main reasons why the school has not maintained the good performance noted at its last full inspection. First, the evaluation of the effectiveness of all aspects of provision and outcomes for pupils by senior leaders and the governing body has been insufficiently rigorous and not firmly rooted in evidence, leading to an over-optimistic view of performance. The governing body did not check that areas for improvement from the previous inspection were being successfully addressed, nor hold leaders to account for outcomes for pupils. Second, tensions between members of staff distracted attention away from teaching and learning and caused morale to dip considerably. The concerns raised at the mathematics survey inspection focused the attention of leaders and the governing body on the need for urgent action. Steps have recently been taken to strengthen the school's systems for monitoring teaching and learning, for tracking pupils' progress and for holding teachers accountable for progress. The governing body has begun to improve its effectiveness. Staffing difficulties are being addressed. These actions have had a positive impact on the atmosphere in school, which has been noticed by parents, carers and staff. As one parent noted, 'The school seems a much happier, calmer place this term. This is very good for parents and children alike.' However, the responses to the inspection questionnaire indicate that there is still a substantial amount of work to do to restore parents' and carers' faith in the effectiveness of the school's leaders and the governing body.

The changes are recent and have not yet made a discernible positive difference to the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress. Although attainment is broadly average, too many pupils do not make as much progress as they should, especially in mathematics, therefore their achievement is inadequate. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make inadequate progress, because provision for these pupils is not based on an accurate assessment of their needs. Although most of the teaching observed during this inspection was satisfactory, its impact on pupils' learning over time is inadequate, because there are many inconsistencies in practice. Teachers are not skilled in using assessment information to make sure that tasks and activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Questioning

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is sometimes superficial and does not challenge pupils to respond at length or explain their reasoning.

There are strengths in the school's work. Children flourish in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their learning. Procedures for protecting pupils and keeping them safe are robust, well known and regularly updated. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and make a good contribution to school life and the wider community. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe there – views that are wholeheartedly endorsed by their parents and carers.

The headteacher is working closely with the local authority to bring about improvements, particularly in the leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. New systems are not yet well embedded. The headteacher carries a heavy leadership load and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has also willingly taken on additional responsibilities. They recognise, however, that they will be unable to bring about the necessary changes without a good deal of external support. Weaknesses in leadership and governance and the decline in performance since the last inspection confirm that the school does not have the capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels by:
 - implementing rigorous systems for checking all aspects of the school's performance, especially the progress pupils are making and the effectiveness of teaching
 - setting appropriately challenging targets for pupils' learning and progress and ensuring that teachers, subject leaders and the leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are held accountable for pupils' progress towards them
 - ensuring that self-evaluation is accurate and based firmly on evidence
 - ensuring that the governing body plays a strong part in checking progress and evaluating the impact of action plans, and contributes systematically to planning for the future.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and particularly in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that agreed whole-school approaches are consistently followed
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations of how work will be presented
 - strengthening teachers' skills in asking questions in order to probe pupils' understanding, challenge them to think and develop their reasoning
 - making greater use of technology to enhance teaching and learning
 - further developing teachers' skills in using assessment information to plan tasks and activities that are suitably challenging for all pupils
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are deployed to best effect throughout

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lessons.

- Strengthen the provision and leadership for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that these pupils make at least satisfactory progress by:
 - ensuring that pupils who may be having difficulty learning are identified as early as possible
 - assessing pupils' needs accurately so that interventions precisely match these needs
 - involving teaching assistants more fully in decision-making and checking the progress made by the pupils they support
 - ensuring that teachers understand the strategies used by teaching assistants to support pupils when they are withdrawn from lessons and include similar strategies in class.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils' attainment on entry varies widely, but is broadly as expected for their age. Good progress in the Reception Year ensures most pupils start Year 1 having attained a good level of development. While some maintain this good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2, others, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not; in the national tests and assessments for pupils aged seven and 11 in 2011 there was a very wide gap in attainment between these two groups. Currently, attainment overall in both English and mathematics is broadly average but progress is erratic; pupils are making better progress in English than in mathematics, and better progress in some year groups than others. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make sound progress when working in small groups with an adult, but because their learning needs have not been precisely identified and similar strategies are not used in class lessons, the impact on their overall progress is not maximised. They are not closing the gap towards the levels expected nationally for their age.

Pupils say they enjoy their lessons. When their interest is captured they apply themselves well to their work. However, if the topic does not fully engage them, some pupils, especially boys, lose concentration and make little progress through their tasks. This is why behaviour is judged satisfactory, even though pupils often behave well in lessons and around the school at break and lunch times. Attendance is broadly average. The pupils work well together in pairs and small groups. These factors, together with their average levels of attainment, mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils have a keen sense of justice and fair play and clearly know right from wrong. Their knowledge and understanding of life in multicultural Britain is developed through topics and occasional events, but this is not a strong aspect of the school's work.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There is a positive atmosphere in classrooms and relationships between adults and pupils are good. Teachers plan their lessons in detail, taking account of the expectations for different year groups. However, until recently teachers have not been closely involved in discussing individual pupils' progress in order to ensure that work is precisely matched to learning needs and interventions are swiftly made where needed. Agreed policies are not consistently implemented. For example, pupils' work is marked regularly, but teachers do not all use the same method to give feedback on what needs to be done next and pupils rarely have the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments. All classrooms have electronic whiteboards but limited use is made of them to enhance teaching and learning. During question and answer sessions, teachers take responses from pupils who put up their hands, rather than targeting questions at individuals to keep everyone on their toes. Pupils are frequently asked to discuss their ideas with a partner, but are not asked to report back what their partner said so that the teacher can check that they have been listening as well as speaking. Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work and of its accuracy are not high enough. For example, in one class of older pupils the word 'literacy' is incorrectly spelled on the front of some pupils' books and has gone uncorrected. The skills of teaching assistants are underused during whole-class teaching sessions, when they are often observers rather than active participants.

The curriculum is planned so that subjects are grouped into interesting and relevant topics and account is taken of the needs of mixed-age classes. Learning is enhanced

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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by educational visits and a residential experience for older pupils. However, there are few extra-curricular activities at present, because of the pressures on staffing.

Pastoral care, including of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is strong. Care, guidance and support clearly enhance pupils’ well-being, but do not have such a strong impact on their learning. Good links with the pre-school and with the local secondary school mean that times of transition are managed very well. The staff persist and try every avenue to harness support for potentially vulnerable children. Good partnership working with outside agencies brings positive outcomes; the school’s work helps both children and their families to come through difficult times and to overcome barriers to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Until recently, leaders and the governing body were not aware of the extent of the school’s difficulties. This is because the monitoring and evaluation of provision and outcomes lacked rigour and precision, and reports were accepted at face value. Teachers were observed in the classroom and points for improvement identified, but these were not analysed in order to provide appropriate support and professional development for individuals or groups of staff. Forward plans are aspirational, but insufficiently rooted in current performance and lack clear, quantifiable measures to judge progress and success. This is beginning to change. With the support of the local authority, new systems have been implemented to track pupils’ progress and set targets, to hold teachers responsible for pupils’ progress and to check the quality of teaching. A raising attainment plan makes clear the expectations for the end of this academic year. The governing body is undertaking training to enable it to play a stronger role in challenging the school and shaping its strategic direction.

There are particular weaknesses in the leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils’ difficulties are not identified in a timely way, provision for individuals and groups has been ad hoc and judgements about the impact of additional support have been inaccurate. Teaching assistants have been insufficiently involved in evaluating the success of interventions. Urgent action is being taken to rectify this.

The school engages satisfactorily with parents and carers, providing regular information about children’s progress and events at school, and organising meetings

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where parents and carers can air their views. Partnership working to support pupils’ well-being is good, but the potential of partners to boost pupils’ learning and progress is not fully exploited. The school has clear policies for equalities and for preventing discrimination and has information about the performance of different groups. However, the promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate because of the wide gap between the outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who do not. The school is a focal point for many activities and events in the village, promoting community cohesion well at a local level. Links with other communities nationally and internationally are underdeveloped.

Although the effectiveness of the governing body’s work is inadequate overall, it has been assiduous in ensuring that statutory requirements for safeguarding children are fully met. Procedures for protecting pupils are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect latest recommendations on best practice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily into school because close links with the pre-school and good relationships with parents and carers help to smooth transition. The warm and supportive environment ensures that children quickly grow in confidence and independence. Adults take care to assess what children know and can do from the beginning, and to make sure that the next steps in learning are carefully planned. They ensure that there is a good balance of activities that children can choose for themselves and more structured sessions led by adults. Sometimes the pace is a little leisurely. For example, children confidently identified the sounds at the start of words, but were not then moved quickly on to a more challenging activity. Children

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have the scope to follow their own interests and investigate events that capture their interest. For example, during this inspection a group of children were fascinated by a length of computer paper that had blown about in the wind. They jumped on it to keep it still, and then noticed their footprints. Discussion about printing, the wind and how best to fold the paper back again ensued, along with enthusiastic jumping up and down to make more prints. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has high expectations and most children make good progress to reach the goals that are expected for their learning by the time they start Year 1. 'Homework' books explain clearly what children are learning about and give parents and carers good opportunities to support their child's learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A greater proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires than is typical in primary schools. Many parents and carers also submitted written comments, some praising the school's work and recent changes while others raised matters that concerned them. The chart below shows that everyone who returned a questionnaire believes that their child is kept safe and enjoys school. It also highlights the aspects of the school's work that a substantial proportion of parents and carers are concerned about, namely: how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, the account that is taken of suggestions and concerns and how effectively the school is led and managed. These matters were followed up during the inspection. The lead inspector found that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare, and that they are dealt with in accordance with the school's policy. The school's leaders know that there are matters parents and carers are concerned about. Meetings have been held to hear parents' and carers' views and submissions can also be made to the governing body by email. This inspection found that there are weaknesses in leadership and management at all levels, which is one of the reasons that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Middle Barton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	69	16	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	47	27	53	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	13	25	34	67	2	4	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	22	30	59	8	16	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	12	24	31	61	7	14	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	22	32	61	6	12	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	35	28	55	5	10	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	29	25	49	5	10	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	29	25	49	8	16	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	18	24	47	11	22	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	18	24	47	12	24	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	8	16	19	37	15	29	9	18
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	17	33	25	49	7	14	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Middle Barton Primary School, Chipping Norton OX7 7BX

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. It was good to be able to see you at work and play, and to talk to you about your school. What you told us was very useful and helped us when we were making our decisions. We found that your school does some things well but that there are other things that need to be improved quickly. Because of this, your school needs what are called 'special measures'. An inspector will visit your school once a term from now on, until the improvements have been made.

These are the main strengths that we found.

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe.
- You know how to live healthily and you do a lot of things to help others in school, in the village and in other countries.

We found that some of you do not make as much progress as you should, especially in mathematics, and that the support for those who find learning difficult is not well organised. We also found that the way the school's leaders and the governing body check how well the school is doing is not as sharp and accurate as it should be. This is what needs to happen now.

- The school's leaders and the governing body must keep a close eye on everything that goes on in school.
- They must make sure that teaching is of the highest quality, so that you all make the progress that you are capable of, especially in mathematics.
- They must make sure that those of you who find learning more difficult are given the right support and guidance straight away.

You can all help by telling your teacher if you find your work is too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill
Her Majesty's Inspector

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