

# Middle Barton School

27 Church Road, Middle Barton, Chipping Norton, OX7 7BX

**Inspection dates** 6–7 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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. Pupils' progress has improved at a rapid pace since the last inspection. It is now good in all year groups and, at times, is outstanding.
- Rigorous classroom checks carried out by the interim leaders and the school improvement officer, coupled with the well-focused training opportunities, have led to good teaching throughout the school.
- Additional support for pupils who find learning difficult or may be at risk of falling behind in their work is effective in helping them to achieve well.
- The executive headteacher and associate headteacher, together with the governors and staff, work very hard together as an effective team to drive school improvement.
- Governors are securing the future success of the school by providing clear direction and steering with the upmost care. They have successfully helped the school re-engage with the community.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to improve their work and want to do well. Behaviour in lessons and in and around the school is good.
- The school has developed good relationships with parents and, most of whom are very pleased with what the school provides for their children.
- Relationships throughout the school have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now very positive.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The majority of pupils lack confidence when they read aloud in class. Their diction is not always clear and very little use is made of expression and intonation. This does not help them write with fluency and creativity.
- Subject leaders lack the depth of experience to take strategic leads, such as ensuring that pupils' books are marked consistently.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part lessons and all of these were seen jointly with the executive headteacher. The inspector also observed a school assembly and talked to parents and carers before the start of school on day two of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the associate headteacher, the school improvement officer, the local authority advisory teacher for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and the subject leaders for literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' views were sought throughout the inspection, during lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The inspector met with a group of pupils.
- Staff views were noted and the inspector had several conversations with individual teachers.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information on pupils' progress, policies, planning and monitoring records.
- The inspector paid close attention to school information on attendance, behaviour and all aspects of safeguarding.
- There were too few responses to the online Parent View questionnaire to be used for inspection purposes.

## Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school. There is no alternative or off-site provision.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional government money allocated for pupils who are at risk of not doing as well as their classmates (known as pupil premium) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is high. This includes those pupils who receive extra help from within the school and those who receive external funding to support physical and academic needs. A significant minority of pupils who move into the school part-way through their primary education have specific learning or behavioural difficulties.
- All pupils are White British and there are no pupils who use English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the national minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several changes of staff. In January 2012 an executive headteacher and an associate headteacher from a local school were appointed on a temporary basis to form an interim senior leadership team. The associate headteacher is shortly to be seconded to the school on a full-time basis until the recruitment process for a new substantive headteacher is completed.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers provide more opportunities for the pupils to gain confidence in reading aloud in lessons and develop further their use of expression and intonation.
- Enable subject leaders to gain a greater depth of experience by observing good practice in other schools and taking responsibility for ensuring that pupils' books are marked consistently.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- In the Year 6 national tests taken in 2012, pupils attained above average standards in mathematics and reading and average standards in writing. This group of pupils made very good progress during the second part of Year 6, having finished Year 5 with standards that were well below age-related expectations. This was achieved through extra help for individuals and specialist support which speeded up pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Current standards in Year 6 remain above average, continuing the improving trend since 2011 when standards were well below average.
- Attainment on entry into school varies from year to year but communication skills are below age-related expectations for a significant proportion of children and this affects their level of ability in other areas of learning. A significant minority of pupils who come to Middle Barton part-way through their primary education may have experienced difficulties elsewhere and this has an effect on overall standards. Nevertheless, all pupils are making good progress and are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Parents and carers have seen the huge improvement and one commented that her child had made 'phenomenal progress'. Another considered that her 'child is flying now' in her academic work.
- Findings from the regular six weekly checks and tests are used well by the interim leaders to hold teachers to account for their performance and to identify those pupils who need extra help to make faster progress. For example, a six week programme which improves pupils' mathematical skills on an individual basis has been successful in helping individuals return to class sessions with greater confidence. Tips from this programme are also shared with teachers for use in class and this further supports pupils' learning.
- In the 2012 national tests, girls did much better than boys in writing and achieved above average standards. By introducing writing sessions which interest the boys, such as using the *The Tempest* and *Great Expectations* for inspiration, this gender gap is narrowing. Throughout the school, writing standards are, in fact, improving at a fast rate. This is because the pupils are given plenty of time to write at length. In one class pupils eagerly rewrote a well-known sea story to practise their use of sentences and correct punctuation. The work produced was impressive.
- The high proportion of pupils who are disabled, those who have special educational needs and those who receive additional government funding make good progress in their learning. This is because they are given high-quality individual support, the progress they are making is very carefully checked and close links are maintained with the parents and carers. Consequently, the average point score gap between pupils who are eligible for free school meals, those who receive additional funding and those who are disabled and may have special educational needs and the rest of their classmates is closing at a fast rate.
- Younger children are developing accuracy in sounding out letters and confidently work out words they do not know using picture clues. Results from the 2012 Year 1 letter and sounds screening check were average. The school uses the information from this to provide extra help for those pupils who find learning to read difficult. Older pupils read well and have an impressive choice and range of books. However, most pupils lack confidence when they read aloud in class. Their diction is not always clear and very little use is made of expression and intonation.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In the majority of lessons observed, and in the work seen, teaching is consistently good and continues to improve. This is clearly reflected in the detailed checks made during the past year.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because not all teaching is inspirational and the agreed

policy for marking has not yet been adopted by every teacher. When used well it clearly highlights what the pupils have learnt and how they need to think about the next step to improve their work.

- Classroom environments are stimulating, relationships between adults and pupils are positive and daily routines clearly understood. A good range of effective strategies are used, for example visual clues, discussions with partners, and the effective use of wipe-over boards to consolidate their learning. Effective use is made of the outdoor areas to help the reception children to actively develop their knowledge and skills.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan lessons that will challenge and develop their pupils. In a mathematics lesson which focused on division with remainders, the teacher started off with a class session. Gradually, as individuals began to understand they moved away to work independently, leaving the teacher with a small group who needed specific support.
- In the best lessons teachers ask probing questions and continually refer to the purpose of the lesson and the targets that the pupils are working towards. In an English lesson the teacher skilfully made use of detailed technical language to improve the pupils' learning. By encouraging them to talk to each other, share their ideas and make observations, their writing skills developed well.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have specific learning or behavioural difficulties are clearly identified in the planning and they receive high-quality help from both teachers and teaching assistants. This approach is also used well to support those pupils who have been given additional funding from the government.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The atmosphere in school is highly positive. Pupils participate eagerly and confidently in discussions because their contributions are valued. As one pupil explained, 'It sets you up for life.' Consequently, pupils come to school on time and attendance rates are good. This is because they find that their 'learning is interesting and fun'. Parents and carers agree that their children are 'very happy now – fantastic!'
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils work diligently to complete tasks and always give of their best. They listen well and eagerly engage in tasks and activities. Lessons are not interrupted and low-level disruption is rare. Attitudes to learning are very good, particularly when they are really motivated by vibrant teaching. Pupils listen and concentrate hard, both to each other and their teachers. They work together constructively and are respectful and considerate towards each other.
- Pupils say that the good behaviour that inspectors saw in class and around the school is typical. They report that they get on well with each other and any occasional issue in the playground is sorted out quickly. As one group of pupils reported to inspectors 'no bad behaviour gets ignored'.
- Pupils who have behavioural difficulties blend in well because their behaviour is very sensitively managed. Pupils joining the school from other schools or settings are helped to settle quickly and benefit from the clear boundaries of what is acceptable behaviour.
- Pupils are able to talk about the different forms of bullying and know what to do and who to inform if it happens. For example, they know that certain words are not acceptable and are confident that any inappropriate language is dealt with swiftly by their teachers.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are knowledgeable about internet safety. Good links with the local community police officer enhance their understanding of safety out of school, such as a good awareness of stranger danger.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because although the interim leadership team has plans to introduce a consistent and progressive programme for personal health education, it has

not, as yet, been firmly established.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The calm and measured approach of the executive headteacher, coupled with the enthusiasm and determination of the associate headteacher, has given Middle Barton the exceptional quality of leadership it has required to drive improvements through at a rapid pace.
- By working closely with the Year 6 teacher, and by providing extra support for literacy and numeracy as soon as they arrived, the executive headteacher and the associate headteacher successfully supported the oldest pupils to achieve rapid gains in their progress from January to May 2012. This resulted in the much improved standards in the national tests for English and mathematics at the end of this academic year, especially in mathematical and reading skills.
- By providing expertise and bespoke training from their substantive school, the executive headteacher and the associate headteacher have embedded major improvements in the teaching. They have led by example and created a cohesive team who work respectfully together. This has been much appreciated by parents and carers who have seen a great improvement in staff morale. As one parent or carer explained, 'The two headteachers have been brilliant.' Another was thrilled with the 'accessibility to staff and managers that they have'.
- The journey for improvement has been steep but staff have engaged well with better ways of working. Rigorous systems to check the performance of teachers have resulted in the elimination of inadequate teaching and that requiring improvement. Performance management systems have been revised with teachers now held securely to account for the progress that their pupils make in class.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. Leadership is aspirational with secure development planning with key objectives and timescales that aim to keep the school moving forward at a rapid pace.
- Through high-quality training and coaching sessions, the executive headteacher and associate headteacher have securely established the role of key subject leaders. The next step required for outstanding leadership and management is the further development of these subject leader roles by enabling them to gain a greater depth of experience by observing good practice in other schools.
- Equality of opportunity is well promoted and any discrimination is tackled effectively. The school has used its additional government funding effectively to support eligible pupils with a wide range of extra literacy and mathematics sessions with adults so that these pupils are making equally good progress in line with their classmates.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through exciting themes and topic activities that enrich their learning and broaden pupils' horizons. Years 5 and 6 have been working on 'Talking heads' which has involved enquiries into British monarchs over time, with a specific focus on the Victorian era. Pupils were observed enthusiastically filming a Victorian scene where they dressed appropriately for the period and made excellent use of the old schoolhouse as a backdrop. This culminated in a film premiere afternoon to which parents and carers and the wider community were invited and enthusiastically attended.
- Safeguarding meets current government requirements and is effective. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children.
- The executive headteacher and associate headteacher have successfully restored relationships with parents and carers and, in partnership with the governors, have re-established positive links with the parish council and the wider local community. A recently well-attended meeting, organised to discuss a shared vision for the school and map out its future direction, successfully demonstrated the improved pride and confidence that the community shows towards it.
- The local authority has provided an outstanding level of support to the school which has contributed well to the rapid improvements that have been made. The challenge from the school improvement officer, support from the special educational needs advisory teacher and funding to

support additional teaching have contributed well to the rapid improvements that have been made.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are effective in supporting the school's interim leadership by playing a central role in shaping the strategic direction of the school and taking important decisions about the future of the school. They have undertaken professional development, can demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the school's performance, link the quality of teaching with salary progression and know how to tackle underperformance. They also know how the school needs to improve still further and they are insightful in their proposals for achieving this. For example, they are keen to engage parents and carers further in their children's learning and are eager to involve the community much more in school life. Governors have a very well-established approach to monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. They meet with subject leaders, they check on pupils' progress and ask challenging questions about development plans. Governors ensure effective budget management and use funding prudently to bring about improvements which are clearly focused on what is best for the pupils. This has included the proactive management of the additional funding for those pupils who are at risk of not doing as well as others in their class.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123005
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	408637

**This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.**

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Silvester
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Woodward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01869 340522
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