

Middle Barton School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123005 |
| Local Authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 327826 |
| Inspection dates | 1–2 April 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Keith Sadler |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 127 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Richard Kennell |
| Headteacher | Ms Lynn Barnes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 June 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | 27 Church Lane Middle Barton Chipping Norton OX7 7BX |
| Telephone number | 01869 340522 |
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|--------------------------|----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Middle Barton is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils live in the village, although an increasing number come from surrounding villages. Almost all the pupils are of White British background. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Most of these pupils find learning difficult, and there are also some who have emotional and behavioural problems.

The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy School and International School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Middle Barton is a good school, where pupils achieve well. It has shown across-the-board improvements since the previous inspection and continues on an upward trend. Pupils are cared for well, develop mature and positive attitudes and enjoy school and learning. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and many express their satisfaction in having chosen the school for their children. Typical of the comments written was, 'It has a real sense of community and the pupils are encouraged to be caring and supportive of each other. It fosters a whole-school sense of belonging'.

Children enter the Reception class with levels of skills that are broadly average, although many have personal and social skills and writing skills that are below those typically found. They achieve well which provides a firm foundation for future learning. Because the quality of provision is consistently good in Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. At the end of Year 2, standards are average, though improving. Pupils achieve well in all three Key Stage 2 classes. In consequence, standards by the end of Year 6 are generally above average, and on occasion, such as in English in 2007, standards are exceptionally high. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain levels that are above average, although the proportion targeted to gain the higher level in mathematics is not as high as in English. There are good plans in place to address this weakness. Pupils who find learning hard are identified quickly and are supported well by skilled teaching assistants. This enables these pupils to progress well towards their individual targets.

The excellent pastoral support, linked to warm and friendly relationships, leads to pupils' good personal development. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and are pleased to point out that they have gained the Healthy School award. 'We enjoy the aerobics each day because it helps to tone our muscles', said one Year 6 school councillor. Older pupils are proud of the way that they help younger pupils by being playground rules mediators and play leaders. School councillors say that their work is influential in developing the school community and they also point out that they collect money to support a boy in India. These well-developed social and moral attitudes, when linked to their good inter-personal and basic skills, prepare them well for their move to secondary education.

The quality of teaching is good and much improved since the previous inspection. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, and the school's good focus on boosting pupils' learning is paying dividends because pupils are invariably clear about what is being learned and also what they have to do to achieve lesson objectives. Teaching is much more consistent than previously. Teaching is consistently good and variations have been ironed out. This is because close and careful monitoring of the implementation of school-wide policies has helped to ensure that pupils in all classes progress well.

There have also been improvements in the curriculum. There has been a good emphasis on linking subjects together and teaching through themes. This enhances learning and pupils' enjoyment.

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she has successfully guided the school well since the previous inspection. She is supported well by the assistant headteacher and governors. Staff morale is good and all the staff work closely as a team. Information gathered from the close monitoring of pupils' progress is being used well to target changes in learning. However, at present not all teachers with responsibility have the opportunity to monitor pupils' progress

in their areas. This limits subject leaders' understanding of the quality of provision in their areas as they are over-reliant on monitoring information gained by the headteacher. However, this is not universally the case as there are strong and purposeful models of good leadership in the staff, such as in the Foundation Stage, special educational needs and in mathematics. The good improvements in both provision and pupils' progress that have been led by the headteacher demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many parents commented on how much they appreciate the care the staff take to ensure that their children settle quickly on entry to the Reception/Year 1 class. This is achieved because there are good induction arrangements and also close links with the pre-school which is on the school site. There is a strong and nurturing atmosphere and staff know the children well before they start school. In addition, Year 1 pupils enjoy helping newcomers and, because there are good routines, children quickly grow in confidence.

The newly appointed assistant works closely with the teacher and together they ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children achieve well and, by the time that they enter Year 1, most attain the expected goals in all areas of learning. Teachers' learning plans are tailored very well to meet children's interests and needs and there is a good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated learning. Both members of staff have high expectations of behaviour and this helps the children to develop well in their personal, social and emotional skills. It also helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning. Children's language skills are developed well and the rigorous programme for teaching letters and sounds is supporting good achievement in writing as well as reading.

There is a very large space for outdoor learning and children thoroughly enjoy making use of the good range of activities provided across all areas of learning. However, there are insufficient resources to support the children's physical development. Because leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, the leader is keenly aware of this issue and there are plans in place to remedy it. She also ensures that the good assessments that are made, based on close observation of the children, are used well to help to plan future activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the number of pupils reaching the higher level at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that all teachers with responsibilities play an active role in monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards at the end of Year 6 were at the national average, in English, mathematics and science, the school met its targets which were lower than in 2007 because the 2008 cohort had a number of pupils who find learning hard. However, progress is good and inspection evidence shows that pupils in all year groups are making good progress from their starting points. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are above average. Achievement has strengthened from satisfactory levels at the time of the previous inspection. This is because the quality of teaching has improved. Also, the rigorous tracking of pupils'

progress linked to well-founded target setting for both individuals and groups of pupils, has helped to ensure that all groups of pupils progress well. Pupils who find learning hard and those who have behavioural and emotional difficulties achieve particularly well because they are supported skilfully in their personal development and learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a secure ability to recognise right from wrong and moral values are well understood and supported. They develop a good understanding of their own culture. Their understanding of other cultures is good because it is promoted well both through international links with other schools, such as a school in Japan, and Uganda. As they progress through the school, pupils show increasing awareness of and respect for one another, helping pupils of different age groups and abilities, and welcoming any newcomers to the school. Parents were unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and that they are safe and well cared for. As a school councillor said, 'Our teachers make learning fun and they teach us new skills'. Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in their attendance, which is above average.

A few parents commented on some boisterous behaviour. However, behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, with pupils responding well to all the expected routines. They respond particularly well to the school's emphasis on developing their emotional health through strong promotion of social skills. Pupils make good progress in developing their collaborative skills and enjoy working in groups.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Teaching was inconsistent but this is not now the case. Teachers manage the pupils well, ensuring that the positive relationships and interesting activities set capture pupils' interest and lead to their enjoyment of learning. All classrooms present a quiet, industrious atmosphere in which pupils progress well. In the best teaching, lessons proceed briskly, work is matched well to pupils' needs and the high expectations that were absent at the previous inspection are commonplace. This is because the improvements in tracking pupils' progress enable staff to make good use of assessments to ensure that learning is challenging for different groups of pupils. Even so, there is some evidence of lack of challenge for the most able pupils because too few gain the higher level at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics. Those who find learning hard receive good support from skilled and well-qualified teaching assistants and this results in them making good progress towards their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and pupils appreciate the exciting and relevant range of work and activities that are provided for them. Pupils particularly enjoy visits to places of interest, which link well with their work in the classroom and enhance their social and cultural experiences. The good range of additional activities, including residential visits for pupils in Years 4 and 6, contributes well to the pupils' personal development. The good opportunities

provided for pupils to develop their skills and capabilities in information and communication technology and literacy and numeracy also add to their enjoyment. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities focusing mainly on the arts and sport, although the school is aware that musical opportunities are more limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support is good, with all members of staff making sure that pupils are helped to feel safe and secure. Parents are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and are safe. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and regulations met. The school provides particularly well for any vulnerable pupils. Staff are accomplished in dealing with any misbehaviour and pupils who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties are supported well so that, by the time pupils reach Year 6, any difficulties have been removed. The quality of guidance for pupils is good. All teachers make good use of targets, and the careful tracking of progress in English, mathematics and science enables any pupils who are in danger of slipping behind to be quickly identified so that support can be provided. The school is aware that it now needs to ensure that the tracking of progress in other subjects is made more robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher have been pivotal to the improvements made since the previous inspection and to the effectiveness of self-evaluation. The rigour and structure she has added to the procedures for checking provision and standards have enabled the school to keep a close check on pupils' progress. She is given good support from the assistant headteacher and all members of staff, all of whom work closely together as a team. Some coordinators are new to their role and, as yet, they are over-reliant on senior staff to analyse strengths in their areas; however, management at all levels is good due to the overall monitoring systems that enable a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that need more development.

There is a strong sense of community cohesion. The school is actively involved in the village, making contributions to the Barton Bulletin. The school council is also joining with the Parish playing fields committee to design improvements to the play facilities in the village. In addition, many villagers were involved as extras and contributors when making a film about evacuees into the village during the Second World War. An understanding of the international dimension is demonstrated by the school's International award. This was gained by the linking of the school with a school in Japan and also with a number of European schools.

The governors bring a wide range of skills to their role as critical friends. They hold the school to account well by challenging decisions and requesting explanations.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 April 2009

Dear Pupils

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

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for helping me so well and making me welcome. I really enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. I particularly enjoyed watching your Easter performance; I thought you were all really good, but I thought that the children in Acorn class retold 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' particularly well! I can see why you enjoy school so much because yours is a good school and it is getting better.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- You enjoy school and you all get on very well together. Your behaviour is good.
- You make good progress in your learning and want to do your best. Well done for this!
- The staff take good care of you and make sure that you are safe and very well looked after.
- Your teachers do a good job. Teaching is good and you thoroughly enjoy learning.
- You are lucky to have well-planned activities to do. I was pleased to hear how many of you enjoy the after school activities.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job. She is supported well by all the other adults in the school.

I have asked the school to continue to focus on two things.

- Making sure that more of you gain Level 5 by the time that you leave school, particularly in mathematics.
- For all your teachers who have responsibilities for subjects to check teaching and your progress in their areas.

You can help by making sure you work as hard as possible to meet your targets.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector