

Middleton Cheney Primary Academy

Address: Main Road, Middleton Cheney, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 2PD

Unique reference number (URN): 139866

Inspection report: 10 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children in early years benefit from a lively, purposeful and inclusive learning environment. Effective routines are well established. Children are supported to be independent and curious learners. Leaders and staff quickly and accurately identify children who face barriers to their learning and wellbeing. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders ensure that the well-sequenced curriculum is well taught across the early years. They make changes to improve provision as appropriate, for example, when increasing opportunities for developing fine and large motor skills. Staff check learning carefully, so children build knowledge and develop vocabulary.

Early reading, writing and number skills are taught frequently, with opportunities to rehearse this knowledge through play. Children are excited to build a house of bricks in the outdoor large construction area so that they can role play being 'The Three Little Pigs'. They recite the lines from the story beautifully.

Staff engage in high-quality interactions with children. This helps the children to articulate their learning well. Children develop knowledge and skills across the 7 areas of learning. Children know that staff care for them, and, as a result, children feel safe, behave well and make secure progress.

Partnerships with parents and carers are effective. Parents are highly positive about the relationship they have with the school.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Typically, they achieve well from their starting points. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' outcomes in national tests are often above national averages, including those of disadvantaged pupils. The dip in outcomes in reading, both at key stage 2 and in phonics in 2025 is not reflective of the provision in school. Pupils make notable progress in their reading.

Pupils have the knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics they need to make secure progress through the school's wider curriculum. They recall prior learning with accuracy and can talk confidently about what they have learned. For example, pupils in Year 2 talk about how their learning about capital cities links with what they learned when they studied the Great Fire of London. Pupils' growing knowledge is also evident in their work. For instance, in Year 6, pupils shared how they develop skills and techniques in art.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have clear systems and processes in place to support pupils to attend regularly. Leaders understand the reasons why pupils are absent. They work closely with families and provide support. For example, they greet pupils with well-chosen activities to prepare them for the school day.

Attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged is improving. However, some of these pupils are still absent from school too often and miss out on valuable learning time.

The school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently, for example, celebrating success through house points. Pupils enjoy celebrating these achievements. Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. These expectations are communicated effectively to parents and carers, staff and pupils. Any pupils who need help to meet the school's high expectations are supported effectively. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training to meet the challenging needs of pupils.

Pupils behave very well. They are able to learn without disruption. Pupils show dedication and commitment to their learning. They are proud of their work. Pupils work and play well with others across the year groups. Pupils are confident that bullying is not tolerated in school. Leaders have created a culture where staff support and protect pupils.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school's curriculum identifies what pupils will learn and when, including for those who are in mixed-year groups. The curriculum is sequenced and builds on what pupils have learned before. Leaders recognise that pupils need to be able to communicate effectively before fully accessing wider learning. As a result, a focus on developing pupils' communication and vocabulary underpins the curriculum.

Leaders demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. They have secured improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. In these subjects, learning is well sequenced and develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment. Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned. Any gaps in learning are identified and addressed quickly and effectively.

Teachers have detailed subject knowledge. They make links with prior learning and learning in other subjects to help pupils embed their knowledge. In some lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching and activities to support all pupils to learn. However, this is not consistent. Sometimes, the learning is not adapted to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn as well as they should.

Leaders have accurately identified the areas where teaching needs to improve. They ensure that staff have appropriate professional development to support them.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils are identified and checked effectively. Staff are alert and notice when pupils need extra support. They work productively with parents and carers and external agencies to gain as much information as possible. Leaders use this information, alongside their own checks, to put suitable support in place.

Staff benefit from effective training to meet the needs of pupils. They provide appropriate support in many lessons. For example, gaps in learning are identified in reading, writing and mathematics. Learning is adapted, and pupils are given the support to catch up with peers. However, this is not always the case across all curriculum subjects. Leaders check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, and plans are in place to support further improvements across the curriculum.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who are disadvantaged, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are known to social care. They promote an inclusive culture where pupils feel welcome and able to take part in school life. Leaders use additional funding, including the pupil premium, appropriately to reduce barriers for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They know the school, the community and pupils well.

Leaders identify the right priorities for improvement. They take timely and well-managed actions because they want to achieve the best possible outcomes and experiences for pupils. They act in pupils' best interests. They take the time to embed new initiatives to ensure that all staff are aware of changes and the rationale behind them. Leaders prioritise professional learning. Staff access appropriate training. The impact of this training is evident, for example in the consistency of teachers revisiting prior learning to ensure that pupils embed their learning.

Those responsible for governance support and challenge school leaders. They are fully aware of the impact of the school's work, including the drive to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils.

Staff appreciate that leaders are mindful of their wellbeing. Leaders ensure that their workload is manageable.

Relationships with parents and carers and the wider community are positive. These relationships are used well to provide support and guidance for pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders work with other schools within their trust. They share examples of effective practice in early years to improve provision across the trust. They share the good practice of the 'sports leader' programme with the local authority. They work closely with the feeder

secondary school to support successful transition and when supporting families who are known to social care.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that the personal development curriculum reflects the school's context. It is well sequenced and ensures that pupils revisit learning to embed their knowledge. Pupils learn how to be safe in the community. They know how to be safe when working online.

Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They know that they should not be 'too hard on yourself'. They learn about different faiths and cultures. The school's values underpin expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils demonstrate empathy, trust and resilience. They value being part of a team and show kindness to one another. They demonstrate a deep understanding of respect, but their knowledge of the fundamental British values is not as strong. Pupils are not clear how they link with the school's values.

The pastoral offer is tailored to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils can access the pastoral support that they need. Pupils understand that sometimes their friends need additional help, and they are keen to support this.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime. Leaders provide opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. These include sports clubs and musical instrument tuition. Leaders respond to pupils' requests, for example, to run a drama club.

Leaders ensure that trips and residential activities provide memorable experiences for pupils. They make sure that all groups of pupils are included. When necessary, leaders ensure that pupils have the additional support needed so that they can participate.

Pupils value their leadership roles. They take them seriously. Sports leaders know that it is important to support younger pupils to access sporting activities and develop their play. Members of the school council, including those in the early years, enjoy attending their meetings. This gives them a sense of purpose and belonging.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are valued, cared for and supported at Middleton Cheney Primary Academy. They have a sense of belonging. They say that they are proud to be part of the school. Many pupils shared comments such as, 'You feel that you are in a community,' and, 'It is the best place.'

At the start of each school day, children are seen skipping into school, where they are welcomed into a calm, inclusive and friendly environment.

Staff build strong, trusting relationships with pupils and their families. This creates a culture of respect where pupils are confident that they can share any worries they may have with

staff. They know that staff care for them and will listen to them. Pupils show genuine care and consideration for each other. The older pupils support the younger ones through their sports leader roles. Pupils enjoy this responsibility and say that they feel proud to help the little ones. Pupils behave well. They are friendly and polite. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils understand the importance of attending regularly. Most pupils attend well. Pupils live out the values of honesty, kindness and friendship. They understand the importance of teamwork. Pupils enjoy enrichment activities, including lunch clubs, trips and residential visits.

Children get off to a great start in the early years. They quickly become independent and articulate learners. They work well together and cooperate happily to learn new things. Pupils enjoy learning and say that their teachers help them. They work with focus. They listen well to the adults in school and to each other. They talk enthusiastically about their learning. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities learn successfully alongside their peers.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information and their knowledge of pupils' barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to adapt the curriculum and teaching so that pupils build successfully on what they know across all subject areas.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils understand how the school's values that they follow in their behaviour and conduct link with fundamental British values.
 - Leaders should further strengthen their work to improve attendance, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to ensure that all pupils come to school as often as possible.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Prime7 Multi Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ian Lowe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lynsey Hedley.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, trustees and governors, including the chairs of the trust and local governing body. They also spoke to a range of teaching and non-teaching staff and a wide range of pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of alternative provision.

The school provides before-school provision.

Headteacher: Theresa Hillier

Lead inspector:

Donna Chambers, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ryan Brown, Ofsted Inspector

Louise Aird, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

348

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

397

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

8.33%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.72%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

20.40%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	68%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	87%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	69%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.6%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	12.3%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.3%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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