

Middlewich Primary School

Address: Park Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9BS

Unique reference number (URN): 131727

Inspection report: 9 September 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 ●

The Reception Year provides a superb first stepping stone for children as they begin their primary education. Expectations of what children can achieve are high. This is reflected in the ambitious curriculum that leaders and staff have designed. Sitting at its core is the drive to develop and expand children's vocabulary, alongside those first strides in learning to read, write and use numbers. Expertly designed activities help children achieve the ambition of the curriculum. Staff carefully check on what children know and remember, addressing gaps in knowledge in a timely fashion. Children benefit from caring and compassionate relationships with staff. These relationships model to children how they should interact with one another.

Children who join the Reception Year with barriers to learning are very well supported. They make rapid gains in their learning. Any concerns about potential special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. The astute level of understanding staff have around aspects of child development aids this approach. Children, including disadvantaged children and children with SEND, learn very well and hit the ground running when they join Year 1.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average. Some pupils gain the higher standards in these subjects, but this is less common in writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, typically progress well through the curriculum from their individual starting points. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment has risen over several years. Children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 secure the essential knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics.

In subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, pupils typically achieve well. In many subjects, pupils build up a secure level of understanding and make informed connections between what they know. Overall, pupils leave Year 6 well prepared for secondary school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Leaders have recently refined their approaches to monitor and analyse attendance at the school. Leaders identify trends of absences that impact overall levels of attendance. When required, they take actions that typically improve pupils' attendance over time. Where needed, they draw upon external partners to support improvements in attendance. The

approaches taken by leaders have resulted in highly positive levels of attendance year on year for many pupils. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is generally in line with that of the same group nationally. Leaders are ambitious to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have rates of attendance that are significantly above what is typical nationally. As such, they have put in place a range of measures to support this. However, these are at an early stage.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They work diligently in lessons. Pupils know what is expected in terms of their behaviour. This is underpinned by the school values. Pupils in Year 6 are wonderful role models who help their younger peers in the Reception Year settle into school. Leaders have established an environment where bullying is not tolerated. They work quickly to address any instances where expectations around behaviour fall below what is expected. This includes any online incidents that take place outside of school.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked diligently to design a curriculum that is carefully ordered from the Reception Year through to Year 6. The curriculum clearly sets out what important content should be taught and when this should happen. Typically, teachers use this information well to create learning activities that help pupils build up their knowledge across many subjects. As part of developing the curriculum, leaders have revised the content and teaching approaches for English. Overall, this has had a positive impact. However, there is further work to do to ensure that the consistency of teaching writing contributes to more pupils excelling in this area.

Children in the Reception Year benefit from highly effective approaches that secure the essential foundations they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Across the school, there is a focus on pupils building up the important knowledge they need in these subjects. Teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge in a timely manner.

Teachers generally employ effective approaches that ensure that pupils can access the curriculum. When needed, deliberate, well-chosen resources help many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established effective approaches that identify the barriers to learning that pupils may have. These approaches are very well embedded in the Reception Year. This ensures that staff identify and support children with precision at the start of their education.

Leaders ensure that pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) receive very effective support. Staff who work with pupils in the specially resourced provision benefit from training that enables them to meet different individual needs well.

Across the rest of the school, pupils with with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) typically benefit from support that helps to remove their barriers to learning. At times, some information on how best to support pupils with SEND is not shared as effectively as it could be. Furthermore, for a small number of staff, training on how to support

pupils with SEND has not been timely. This means that in some aspects of learning, a small number of pupils with SEND do not access learning as well as they could. That said, leaders have ensured that pupils who are known (or previously known) to social care receive positive support. Additionally, the use of alternative provision is carefully considered and managed.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively. Their strategy has contributed to the improved achievement of disadvantaged pupils across the school, especially in reading and writing.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors work well together. They recognise the strengths of the school and identify where improvements are needed. Leaders and governors have appropriately prioritised and overseen the improved academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Collectively, they have responded in a timely manner to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are appropriately provided for in school. Across different aspects of the school's work, leaders make well-informed decisions that are in the best interests of pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the way in which leaders and staff engage with them.

Governors carry out their duties very effectively. They provide an assured level of strategic oversight. Governors use their visits to the school, along with a range of other information, to understand the different areas of its work. Governors use this knowledge well to provide leaders with focused levels of challenge and support. This has contributed to a range of improvements since the last inspection.

Teachers at different points of their career benefit from the guidance and training that is put in place for them by leaders. Within the early years, leaders have ensured that staff have the expert knowledge they need to enable children to get off to a flying start. In general, staff receive effective training that enables them to carry out their roles well. Staff appreciate the actions that leaders and governors take to listen to their feedback. This has had a positive impact on ensuring that staff have a manageable workload and feel supported.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' faces light up when they begin to speak about the range of trips that they get to take part in during their time at school. Leaders have given careful consideration to these trips and how they complement what pupils learn about in the curriculum. For example, teachers arrange a number of field trips which bring aspects of geographical learning to life. Trips are also designed to extend pupils' experiences of culture. For example, museum visits and performing alongside a professional orchestra. Pupils also learn the important role they can play in giving back to their local community. This includes being part of litter picks and carrying out craft activities with residents of a local retirement home. Pupils learn how to act in a conscientious way. They share a clear sense of what is right and what is wrong.

Pupils learn how to manage risks. These range from knowing how to keep themselves safe around the nearby canal, to looking after themselves when online. Pupils learn age-appropriate relationships education. They understand the importance of a healthy diet. This

begins in the Reception Year, where children eat healthy snacks during the day. Pupils have a depth of knowledge around fundamental British values. They understand concepts such as democracy, the rule of law and why they matter. Pupils have a developing understanding around different faiths and cultures, as well as ways in which they can keep themselves mentally healthy. Carefully considered approaches ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities fully benefit from the personal development opportunities available.

Pupils gain from access to the pastoral support that is available to them in school. They readily identify key members of staff who provide tailored help and guidance during times of need.

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

One of the school values is to show care and respect for each other. Pupils demonstrate this through the considered and kind way they act towards one another. Many older pupils take pride in setting the example for their younger peers on how to behave in school. The positive behaviour that pupils display helps to create a safe and very welcoming place to learn. If behaviour issues arise, including unkind words or bullying, staff rectify them quickly.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a broad range of clubs such as gardening, crafts and choir. As well as discovering new talents and interests, clubs also help many pupils to develop their confidence and teamwork skills.

Children in the Reception Year benefit from an excellent start to their education. Those who join the early years with gaps in their knowledge or skills receive very focused support. This ensures that they swiftly catch up. Children leave the Reception Year very well prepared for the demands of Year 1, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) typically benefit from effective adjustments that break down barriers to learning.

Over the past few years, an increasing number of disadvantaged pupils have attained well in subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Disadvantaged pupils in all year groups generally build a secure level of knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Pupils enjoy learning. Many attend school regularly. Overall, pupils are typically well prepared for their next stage of education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff have the information and training they need so that barriers to learning are swiftly removed for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Leaders should ensure that staff enable pupils to deepen their understanding so that more achieve at a greater depth in writing.
 - Leaders should ensure that high levels of attendance are maintained over sustained periods of time for disadvantaged pupils.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Atkinson.

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

This inspection took place on 9 and 10 September 2026.

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

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

The inspectors also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school operates a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a hearing impairment. There are currently two pupils attending from key stage 1.

The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and chair of governors have taken up post.

The information displayed on page 8 of this report card states that this school does not have a resourced provision. This is not accurate. This information comes from 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS) at the time of the inspection. Any changes to GIAS after the inspection cannot be reflected in the report card.

Headteacher: Gemma Reynolds

Lead inspector:

David Robinson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah Gower-Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Peter Berry, Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Joyce, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

404

Above 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: 268

School capacity

420

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)

15.10%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

4.21%

Close to 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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.37%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below 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	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	60%	Close to average

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	78%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	84%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	71%	Close to average

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	75%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average

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	44%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31%	44%	Below

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	49%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	60%	Below

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	46%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31%	58%	Below

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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	59%	Close to average

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	44%	68%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	69%	-13 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	67%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	66%	-36 pp

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	49%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	80%	-40 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	78%	-40 pp

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	46%	78%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	77%	-47 pp

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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	79%	-25 pp

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 (3 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	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 (3 term)	8.4%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.0%	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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