

Dedworth Middle School

Smiths Lane, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 5PE

Inspection dates

30–31 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has declined in recent years due to ineffective leadership. Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are consistently good.
- There is too much variability in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, many teachers do not provide pupils with work that challenges them to make rapid progress.
- Pupils do not make consistent or sufficient progress from their different starting points. Pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as they should.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities lags behind others, although differences are diminishing.
- Many teachers do not use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to identify when they need extra help or can move on to harder work.
- Teachers do not always support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. The impact of support from additional adults is variable.
- Many middle leaders are new to the school. They have not had sufficient time to improve teaching in their areas to become routinely good.
- Leaders and governors do not evaluate effectively the impact of pupil premium spending on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has acted decisively to address areas of weakness in the school. He has prioritised improvements in the right areas and increased expectations at all levels.
- Current leaders have created a culture of openness and community. Staff strongly support the drive to improve the school.
- Governors have been instrumental in securing effective arrangements for leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are exceptionally polite, and incidents of low-level misbehaviour are rare.
- Arrangements for pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils feel safe and are well looked after.
- The curriculum is well planned, broad and balanced. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to become consistently good by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers routinely provide pupils with work that challenges them to make rapid progress from their different starting points
 - teachers consistently use assessment information effectively to monitor and improve pupils' progress.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders have the skills to improve the consistency of teaching in their areas
 - leaders routinely evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities by ensuring that:
 - leaders carefully measure the impact of pupil premium spending to make sure that actions are prioritised appropriately
 - teachers carefully use the information they have about these pupils when planning lessons
 - leaders provide training to staff on effective teaching strategies for these groups.
- Increase pupils' progress in mathematics by improving the quality of teaching.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders in the past have not shown enough ambition for what pupils can achieve, or provided clear direction for staff. Significantly, over half of the staff who responded to the online survey felt that the school had declined since the previous inspection. Trustees have acted decisively to ensure that the school now has effective leadership and governance.
- Despite this, leadership and management are not yet good because the quality of teaching is still too variable: improvements to pupils' achievement are not consistent throughout the school; improvements at middle leadership are not sufficiently consolidated, especially as many middle leaders are new in post; and the pupil premium is not used effectively.
- Many of the actions that leaders have rightly taken to improve aspects of the school's work are recent. Consequently, the impact of some of these actions is not yet apparent.
- Curriculum leaders do not yet have a clear view of the quality of teaching in their areas because they do not routinely check how well pupils are learning. As a result, teaching is variable and improving at different rates across the curriculum. This is especially the case in mathematics, where standards of teaching show most variability and pupils' outcomes are improving at a more uneven rate.
- Although outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving, leaders and governors are aware that differences in the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are not diminishing quickly enough. Leaders and governors have not evaluated the impact of additional pupil premium funding because, until recently, they have lacked reliable progress information to inform their evaluation.
- Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not yet ensuring that these pupils make good progress. Leaders are well intentioned and have convincing plans to improve the support pupils are given. However, they have not provided enough training for staff and do not check how well pupils are progressing. There is some high-quality support for pupils, particularly those who have physical disabilities and who access the nurture room.
- The new headteacher has reinvigorated the school in the short time he has been in post. He has galvanised and motivated staff. One described him as a 'breath of fresh air'. Members of staff have responded positively to leaders' high expectations and the clarity of purpose that now characterises the school's work.
- The new headteacher has worked closely with trustees to ensure that self-evaluation is frank and honest and that it demonstrates a clear understanding of where further improvements are needed. Together, they have formulated ambitious and precise plans to improve the school further.
- Leaders have established very clear expectations to promote effective teaching. These are ensuring greater consistency across the school. Teachers have welcomed the increased guidance and feedback that is now being provided by senior leaders.

- Leaders have worked hard to establish more reliable baseline assessment information to track pupils' progress from when they join the school. Consequently, expectations for pupils' progress have been increased and there is now greater accountability for leaders at all levels.
- Pupils in Year 7 who had not developed sufficient literacy and numeracy skills are catching up with other pupils in the school because of the good support they receive. Senior leaders ensure that the extra funding allocated for this group is used wisely.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. While there is an increasing focus on the core subjects (English and mathematics), particularly mathematics, other subjects are given a high priority. Leaders have made a valuable contribution to the important partnership work, both across the trust and with other local middle schools. As a result, the curriculum is increasingly well planned.
- The curriculum provides well for pupil's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) development. There is a cohesive approach through the 'choices' lessons, assemblies, visiting speakers and opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide variety of trips. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding develops well over time.
- Pupils participate in a wide variety of activities which support their artistic, sporting and musical abilities. The additional sport funding is used effectively to promote team sports. The school has received an accredited award in recognition of its achievements.

Governance of the school

- The school became an academy and joined the Windsor Learning Partnership in May 2016. The trust has acted decisively to address weaknesses in leadership and governance. Following the outcomes of an external review commissioned by the trust, the school's governing body has been reconstituted with a new chair of governors and several additional new members.
- Governors now have a much clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the school because they have better information about areas of performance. Consequently, governors are now holding leaders to account more rigorously than they have in the past.
- Governors recognise that they are not yet monitoring the impact of additional pupil premium funding effectively and would welcome an external review.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding that is firmly established. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well cared for. School leaders responsible for safeguarding are very experienced and ensure that all staff have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures, the signs to look for and how to report concerns. They monitor pupils' welfare closely, and information from case studies shows that leaders often go the extra mile to secure extra help from beyond the school for pupils who may need it.

- Senior leaders successfully promote positive messages about safeguarding with parents, carers and pupils in a variety of ways, for example through newsletters and information sessions. They ensure that all staff are kept aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, and consequently a culture of vigilance runs throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Standards of teaching are inconsistent and do not lead to pupils making good progress across the curriculum. Variations are most evident in key stage 3 where some of the strongest, but equally some of the weakest, teaching can be found. Teaching is generally less effective in mathematics and French.
- Where teaching is weaker, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, work is not routinely pitched at a level that challenges pupils to make rapid progress. Most-able pupils are often not challenged with work which makes them think hard.
- Teachers do not always give enough attention to planning activities which deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, rather than keeping them busy. Where this happens, pupils' initial interest is not built upon and progress is limited. For example, in a history lesson, pupils' understanding of the conditions for different types of passengers on the Titanic was not developed by an activity which required them to draw rather than think.
- Teachers now have access to much better assessment information about pupils' progress and learning needs. However, they do not always check effectively how well pupils have understood what they have been taught. This means pupils sometimes repeat work they can already do, or struggle because errors and misconceptions are not quickly identified.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make slower progress because information on support plans is often not used well by teachers. In some lessons, additional adults help with the general organisation of lessons but do not provide effective support to improve these pupils' progress.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers have high expectations and carefully plan tasks which challenge pupils and deepen their understanding. For example, in English, teachers expose pupils to challenging tasks and expect them to use sophisticated vocabulary and complex grammar. Pupils respond well to this challenge and produce high-quality writing.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and very good relationships with their teachers. Pupils are often curious to find out more about what they are learning. For example, in a science lesson, Year 5 pupils were enthused and had lots of questions about how planets move around the solar system.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders make sure that pupils are cared for exceptionally well.
- Staff cater well for pupils' physical and emotional well-being. The nurture-room facility provides valuable personalised support for the development of some pupils' social skills. The majority of parents are very positive about the care that their children receive while at school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare at the school. Pupils know who to speak to if they encounter bullying, and they are confident that members of staff will resolve any issues effectively.
- Pupils respond positively to the school's work to keep them safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and are aware of how to manage risk outside school. For example, pupils have found information in the recent cyber security days to be particularly helpful. As a result of this work, cyber mentors have been appointed and pupils have shown increased confidence to report concerns.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to take on leadership roles within the school and develop their leadership skills. The LORIC programme provides planned opportunities for pupils to develop skills in leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication across the curriculum.
- Appropriate careers information and guidance is provided for Year 8 pupils through the school's 'choices' programme. Pupils found the recent careers day useful. There is a well-organised programme to promote pupils interest in careers in STEM subjects (science, technology and mathematics). Leaders have particularly prioritised raising the career aspirations of girls.
- The great majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that their children are happy at school and are well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are exceptionally polite and courteous to staff, their peers and visitors. Staff say that pupils' behaviour has improved this term because expectations are higher and a more robust behaviour policy is now being applied more consistently.
- Disruption to learning is rare. Exclusion rates are below the national averages and falling. The school uses its 'personal learning centre' as an effective alternative to fixed-term exclusion. Pupils told inspectors that the support of staff in the centre has helped them improve their behaviour.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to their school are reflected in their good attendance. Absence rates are lower than the national average and improving. Disadvantaged pupils and

pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities attend school almost as regularly as their peers.

- Pupils occasionally lose focus and get distracted when teaching does not successfully maintain their attention. Also, although they are willing, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop the effective learning skills which would help them to accelerate their progress. Pupils are sometimes too reliant on their teachers and occasionally they lack the initiative to overcome difficulties for themselves.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school in Year 5 and leave at the end of Year 8. Therefore, published information for the progress of pupils at the end of Year 6 could be misleading. Over time, pupils' progress in the national tests for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been below the national average. Recently improved assessment on entry has better informed leaders, who agree that pupils should be doing better in their first two years at the school.
- Pupils' attainment when they leave the school at the end of Year 8 has, in the past, been generally below age-related expectations. This indicates that, overall, pupils in the past have not made good progress from their starting points during their time at the school. Outcomes are now improving, so that current points are more in line with national expectations in many subjects.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in writing and mathematics is much lower than that of other pupils nationally at the end of Year 6, and there are large differences in the number of pupils achieving the expected standard. These differences gradually diminish by the end of Year 8. In reading, the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others are much smaller, with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard being very close to other pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making slower progress than others. Although their progress is regularly reviewed and support is put in place, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties is hampered by weak teaching.
- The most able pupils are not making as much progress as they should because teaching often does not provide enough challenge for this group.
- The progress of pupils in mathematics is variable, depending on the quality of the teaching. In some current Year 6 classes, pupils are making good progress and becoming more confident in their learning because of effective and carefully targeted teaching. However, work seen in Year 7 is of a lower standard because it does not build enough on what pupils can already do.
- Pupils' achievement in French is low in both key stages 2 and 3. Many pupils lack confidence in the subject and are not being prepared well to continue studying languages in upper school.
- Current Year 6 pupils are making more progress and achieving higher standards in a number of subjects, including both English and mathematics, because of more consistent teaching.
- Pupils' progress in English has improved. This is due to a strong focus on improving writing through the school's 'big write' project, improved teaching, and careful

assessment which is used to inform lesson planning. The quality of pupils' work seen in English is notably higher than it is in other subjects. Pupils are now writing at greater length and depth and use more sophisticated vocabulary.

- Pupils are learning well in science. They are developing the skills to carry out scientific investigations and have a sound understanding of scientific processes like the rock cycle. Similarly, in geography, pupils use specialist vocabulary well when explaining geographical processes, such as erosion.
- Pupils are also achieving very well in physical education and music because of the excellent subject knowledge of teachers in these areas and the well-planned curriculum.
- Year 8 pupils receive appropriate careers advice through the 'choices' programme, including a careers day. They feel well prepared for transfer to secondary school, but would welcome more information on GCSE subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	142791
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10058176

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	503
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Barry Darvill
Headteacher	Andrew Titheridge
Telephone number	01753 860 561
Website	www.dedworthmiddle.co.uk/
Email address	office@dedworthmiddle.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It takes in pupils in Year 5, which is halfway through key stage 2, and pupils leave after Year 8, which is one year before the end of key stage 3.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The school has a small number of children of service families in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, with small numbers of pupils from a very wide range of groups.
- The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils.

- Since the last full inspection, the school has had two different headteachers. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2018.
- In May 2016 the school became an academy and joined the Windsor Learning Partnership. Dedworth Middle School is one of four schools within this multi-academy trust (along with Dedworth First School, Windsor Boys School and Windsor Girls School).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects in different year groups. Many observations were undertaken jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with pupils to listen to their views, both formally and informally.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, and representatives from the governing body. Inspectors also met with a representative from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation that included: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's improvement plan; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes, lunchtimes, in lessons, during registration periods and at the end of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at samples of their books, jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 59 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via Ofsted's free-text service. Inspectors also took into account the 29 responses to a questionnaire for staff and the 91 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Mark Bagust, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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