

Westfield Middle School

Chester Road, Bedford, MK40 4HW

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are relentless in driving up the achievement of all pupils at the school. They lead a team of teachers who all share this commitment.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills that are below average for their age. Their attainment in reading and writing has improved rapidly since 2012 and is now in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is also improving.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is very good. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- Teaching is good and improving throughout the school, and pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are doing as well as other pupils at the school and the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are narrowing.
- By the end of Year 8, good progress means the majority of pupils have caught up with other pupils nationally in both mathematics and English.
- The effective provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means that most of them make expected or better than expected progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is below average. Numeracy skills are not applied as well as literacy skills in all subjects.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. A few teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how well they are doing in their subjects and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Some subject leaders do not take full responsibility for the development of teaching and the progress of pupils in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection it was Enterprise week at the school and pupils were engaged in design and business activities in mixed-year groups. Inspectors observed every activity and every group of pupils, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other senior and subject leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, the executive Principal of Biddenham Upper School and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation including that relating to attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, pupils' progress, systems for improving teaching and learning, and its use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils.
- Inspectors also undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and pupils discussed their learning with inspectors.
- There were too few responses to the online Parent View survey for them to be made available but inspectors considered the outcomes of the school's own parental surveys and spoke with a group of parents. Inspectors also took account of the 22 responses to a staff survey.

Inspection team

Lesley Daniel, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Judith Long	Additional Inspector
John Greevy	Additional Inspector

Lesley Daniel is appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average middle-deemed-secondary school. Pupils start in Year 5 and leave at the end of Year 8.
- About half the pupils are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after. This proportion of disadvantaged pupils is twice the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average at about a quarter of pupils.
- The very large majority of pupils are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and most speak English as an additional language.
- The school works closely with many local schools through its membership of the Biddenham Campus Trust, the West Bedford Cluster and the Bedford Borough Learning Exchange. It does not place students in alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupil's attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding, and so raise the achievement of all pupils, especially in mathematics, by:
 - developing the skills of all subject leaders fully so that they become responsible for improving the quality of teaching in their subject
 - making sure that all teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics so that they develop their numeracy skills rapidly
 - ensuring that all teachers make it clear to pupils how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's determination to raise the pupils' achievement and enable them to become successful learners is fully supported by a very committed staff. The school welcomes pupils of all abilities and backgrounds and works very hard to meet the needs of each one. This inclusive and supportive culture promotes equality of opportunity for all and encourages every teacher and pupil to be the best they can be. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- School leaders have maintained a sharp focus on raising standards. Information on how well pupils are doing is collected regularly and used to track carefully the progress of all groups of pupils. Leaders quickly spot underachievement, identify the reasons for it and put the right support in place to help pupils catch up. The school's own evaluation of teaching and how well it is doing in other areas closely matched that of inspectors.
- The school's systems for managing the behaviour of pupils are very effective because senior leaders ensure that they are used consistently by teachers. Pupils understand the school's expectations and the consequences of any poor behaviour so disruption to learning is very rare, allowing teachers to teach and pupils to learn in a calm environment.
- Senior leaders check closely the quality of teaching and tackle any underperformance promptly. They put varied and well-targeted support in place for teachers who need to develop or improve their practice. This has resulted in far more consistency in the quality of teaching across subjects and year groups, which is having a positive impact on the progress of pupils.
- The academic curriculum at the school is broad and varied and pupils receive good advice and guidance for the move to their upper school. Pupils in Year 8 were looking forward to visiting their new schools later this term. They feel confident about the move because they have already had contact with staff and pupils through joint projects and other events. There are also close relationships with the lower schools that feed into Westfield. The individual needs of pupils are well understood before they arrive at the school and so pupils settle quickly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates every area of the curriculum as well as the specialist citizenship lessons. Pupils described this as perhaps the most important subject, 'because it is all about preparing us for real living'. The school celebrates the fact that its pupils come from so many different cultures but also actively seeks to widen their experiences even further through activities, trips and visits. All pupils in Year 7 had recently visited the local court and pupils in Year 8 had just returned from a residential trip to Norfolk where some of them experienced the English coast for the first time. The school took part in the Bedford Youth Cabinet elections prior to the recent general election developing pupils' understanding of the democratic process and of the importance of using the right to vote. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Subject leaders at the school are enthusiastic and knowledgeable but still relatively inexperienced. The new subject leader in mathematics, supported by senior leaders, responded to the disappointing results in mathematics at the end Key Stage 2 in 2014 with a clear plan that has led to improved progress this year for pupils in Year 6. Subject leaders monitor the progress of pupils in their areas and also take the lead in adapting what is taught to ensure that pupils make good progress. They are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching through observations or holding individual teachers to account for the progress of their classes.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school. Leaders in English and mathematics have been well supported as they have developed their roles this year. The headteacher also uses the local authority staff effectively to check the progress of the school and provide advice on how to improve.
- The school uses additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils very effectively and ensures that these pupils make as much progress as other pupils at the school and have access to the same opportunities for broadening their experience through trips and visits.

- The additional primary school physical education and sport funding is being used well to further the opportunities for all pupils to participate in competitive sport, to provide specialist staff for physical education lessons and for the training of teachers. Physical education has a high profile at the school and there are many lunchtime and after-school clubs, covering sports as varied as archery and aerobics. This variety ensures that the proportion of pupils who participate in at least one sporting activity is high.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are effective.

- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good knowledge of the performance of the school and governance is effective. Governors know the strengths of the school well and also the areas that are still developing. They fully support the work of the headteacher but also challenge her on how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools nationally.
- Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how underperformance is challenged. They ensure only effective teachers are rewarded with pay increases.
- The governing body regularly reviews how well the pupil premium funding is being used to support disadvantaged pupils and also questions school leaders on how well other groups of pupils are doing.
- The governing body carries out its statutory duties to keep pupils safe and ensure equality for all.
- Recent new appointments to the governing body have widened its areas of expertise and strengthened its ability to challenge the school as well as support it. A full internal reorganisation of the governing body is now almost complete.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school, pupils behave with consideration and care for others. They look after their environment and work and play in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.
- Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and told inspectors how they look forward to coming to school because they enjoy their lessons.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils want to learn and lose concentration only occasionally when tasks are not explained clearly to them. During the Enterprise week, pupils were working with others they did not know well but all welcomed the opportunity and were very supportive of each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibility, such as membership of the school council, acting as sports leaders or mentoring younger pupils and helping them with their mathematics. They take these responsibilities very seriously and are eager to perform their duties as well as they can. Pupils were confident and enthusiastic when talking to inspectors about their school.
- During the inspection, the whole school participated in a morning of competitive sport organised partly by the sports leaders. The house system meant that there was a spirit of healthy competition but participants of all abilities were encouraged and supported.
- The school does not exclude pupils. It has its own unit on site that supports pupils whose behaviour is more challenging or who find it difficult to learn in a normal school environment. In the unit, pupils develop the skills and the confidence that enable them to re-join lessons successfully in the main school.
- Attendance is lower than the national average for middle-deemed-secondary schools but is improving. The school is relentless in following up absences and challenging requests for term time holidays.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff prior to appointment and all teachers are up to date with current safeguarding guidance and training. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school.

- Pupils told inspectors that there is very little bullying at school but, if it does happen, they know that staff will deal with it quickly and effectively. School records support this. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to and well supported.
- Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe. They told inspectors that they learn about how to manage risks as varied as cyber bullying and road safety during assemblies and topics covered in citizenship lessons. All pupils in Year 5 have swimming lessons and learn about water safety because they live in a town with a river.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Effective teaching was seen throughout the school in different year groups. During the inspection, teachers were not teaching their usual subjects but were delivering lessons to mixed-year groups focusing on business and enterprise. Activities were well planned, with a variety of challenges that successfully engaged and enthused pupils of all abilities. Pupils' books showed teachers had planned similarly challenging activities throughout the year.
- There is a positive climate for learning within the school and good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. All teachers have high expectations and encourage good work habits. Pupils know that mistakes are seen as things that they learn from. Pupils do not automatically ask the teacher for help if they get stuck but will try to think things through for themselves or talk about it with another pupil first. Pupils' books are very well presented and show that they take a pride in their work.
- Pupils told inspectors that homework is set and marked regularly and is always linked to what they are learning in class and so helps to reinforce their learning. Reading has a high profile in the school and is improving because teachers give pupils many opportunities to read and provide extra support to boost confidence. The reading club is well attended and pupils enjoy completing the online quizzes and activities about the books they read.
- A common focus on improving literacy skills was seen across many activities. Teachers used, and insisted that pupils use, subject-specific language, much of which was unfamiliar to pupils because of the business focus. In pupils' books, this attention to improving literacy was seen across subjects. In history, for example, teachers give pupils clear literacy targets. This focus on literacy is improving the accuracy of pupils' written work. However, some teachers do not use opportunities in lessons to reinforce numeracy skills in the same way and so pupils' numeracy skills are not improving as rapidly as those in literacy.
- Written work is marked regularly and advice from teachers on how to improve is usually helpful and acted upon by pupils. Work is well matched to the abilities of pupils and offers the right level of challenge to interest them and stretch them so that they make good progress. When talking to inspectors about their work, a few pupils were not clear about how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils, including those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from starting points which, for the majority, are below average. Good teaching brings increasingly faster progress and, by the end of Year 8, most pupils have caught up and are achieving standards in line with all pupils nationally.
- In 2014, the performance of most groups of pupils in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was in line with national averages in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. This dip in mathematics results followed a rising trend of improvement in 2012 and 2013. The school reacted to these disappointing results with determination and vigour, tackling both the cause and effect of pupils' lower than expected levels. Most of the pupils who underachieved in mathematics in 2014 are now on track to make expected progress by the end of Year 7.
- In 2014, there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who made expected and

more than expected progress in writing. This year's writing assessments at end of Key Stage 2 show that almost all pupils will have made expected progress with another increase in the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is as fast as that of other pupils at the school. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 outperformed other pupils in 2014 in the end-of-year writing assessments and were less than half a term behind their peers in mathematics and reading. Disadvantaged pupils were about a year behind other pupils nationally in 2014 in reading and writing and a year and a half behind in mathematics. This gap is narrower than it was 2013 in reading and writing, but wider in mathematics. By the time they reach Year 8, disadvantaged pupils catch up with their classmates and, in the current Year 8, the gap has closed in all three subjects.
- The most-able pupils make expected progress in Years 5 and 6 and all achieved a level 5 in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 in reading and writing. Information provided by the school indicates that a greater proportion of most-able pupils will make more than expected progress this year. This information, supported by a close scrutiny of pupils' work, clearly shows that attainment in both writing and mathematics is rising.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well supported. Strong and determined leadership has resulted in very comprehensive provision for these pupils, many of whom have very complex needs. Their progress is closely monitored to ensure that the wide variety of support and extra help available is used most effectively. Because of the complexity of their needs, the progress of these pupils varies widely but currently is strongest in Year 6.
- A small minority of pupils arrive after the beginning of Year 5 or leave before they reach Year 8. Some of these new pupils will speak little or no English. The school has effective procedures for quickly integrating these new arrivals into both the language and learning of the school. Information on the progress of the pupils in the current Year 8 who have attended the school for all four years shows that the majority of them have made more than expected progress to reach average attainment.

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

Unique reference number	109666
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	456025

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Gunther
Headteacher	Karen Watts
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2012
Telephone number	01234 267353
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Email address	office@westfield.net

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