

Inspection of a good school: Middleton Technology School

Kenyon Lane, Middleton, Manchester M24 2GT

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 June 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Janine Kellett. This school is part of Great Academies Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Brendan Loughran, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Jones.

What is it like to attend this school?

A feeling of belonging helps most pupils to feel happy in school. Pupils value the friendships that they forge with each other. They said that the large size of the school helps them to meet other pupils with similar interests. For example, during breaktimes, some pupils enjoy playing football together, while others socialise in the school's relaxing spaces.

Typically, the atmosphere in the school is calm and orderly. Most pupils are attentive to their teachers during lessons. However, some pupils lack the motivation that they need to be successful in their learning.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop different talents and hobbies. For instance, some pupils participate in the school's annual performance or in sports competitions. Others enjoy the electives programme, which provides pupils with the opportunity to explore subjects in more depth.

The school has high aspirations for pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Supported by the trust, the school is taking effective action to address some of the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as pupils' low rates of attendance. The school is also strengthening its curriculum offer. However, there is much more to be done to ensure that staff deliver the curriculum consistently well. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is suitably ambitious for pupils, including for those with SEND. The school has identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this should happen.

Most teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They explain new concepts clearly to pupils. However, some teachers' understanding of how to deliver the curriculum effectively is underdeveloped. For example, at times, learning activities do not support pupils to learn the intended curriculum well. Some teachers identify and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively. However, other teachers do not check carefully that pupils have learned what they intended before moving on. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their subject knowledge.

The school accurately identifies pupils with SEND. Typically, it provides staff with useful information about the additional needs of these pupils. Most staff make appropriate use of this information. However, where there are inconsistencies in curriculum delivery, these hinder some pupils with SEND from achieving as well as they could. Although the school is taking appropriate action to ensure that the needs of all pupils with SEND are being met, there is further work needed to check that these actions are effective.

The school knows that reading is a barrier to learning for many pupils. However, its approach to supporting these pupils is underdeveloped, particularly in key stage 4. The school identifies pupils who need further help with their reading. Some of these pupils benefit from expert support to develop their confidence and fluency in reading. However, the support that is given to other pupils is not sharply focused on the gaps in their reading knowledge. The school does not check well enough whether this support is working as intended. Consequently, some pupils do not get the help that they need to read well.

Most pupils behave according to the school's rules. Typically, they are courteous and respectful. A minority of pupils struggle to regulate their own conduct. The school is successfully tackling this, for instance the number of pupils truanting within school has rapidly reduced.

Recently, the school has ensured that all staff take a role in raising attendance. Although some groups of pupils do not attend as frequently as they should, the school's approach to addressing this is beginning to take effect.

The school provides a suitable programme of personal development. Pupils learn important information in 'life education' lessons and assemblies, such as the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils receive careers guidance that helps them to make informed choices about their next steps when they leave school.

Trustees and governors are committed to improving the school. They have an accurate understanding of what should be done to ensure that pupils benefit from a high-quality education. Most staff are positive about the way that the school considers their workload. They particularly appreciate the school's sharply focused approach to training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers lack the pedagogical understanding needed to implement the curriculum well. This means that some pupils do not build a secure understanding in a number of subjects. The school should provide teachers with the training and guidance that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Some teachers do not check that pupils have understood their learning before moving on. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed. The school should ensure that teachers use effective assessment strategies to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The school's approach to supporting pupils who struggle to read is underdeveloped, particularly in key stage 4. This means that some pupils do not receive the help that they need in a timely and effective way, which hinders their learning. The school should ensure that appropriate support is in place, and carefully monitored, for these pupils, so that they learn to read confidently and fluently.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143319
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10348348
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,350
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Jones
CEO of the trust	Brendan Loughran
Principal	Janine Kellett
Website	www.midtech.com
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Great Academies Education Trust.
- The school uses one registered and six unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other school leaders and staff.

- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the trust and of the local governing body.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including minutes of trust board meetings and the school's self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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