# Middleton Technology School

Kenyon Lane, Middleton, Manchester M24 2GT

| **Inspection dates** | 5–6 March 2019 |
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| **Overall effectiveness** | **Good** |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | **Good** |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | **Good** |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | **Good** |
| Outcomes for pupils | **Good** |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is a good school**

- Senior leaders work with determination to make sure that the school provides pupils with a good quality of education. They know the strengths and weaker aspects of the school. They provide a clear and positive model for other staff and pupils. Leaders are well organised.

- The arrangements for governance include both trustees and the governing body. These groups work together well and provide helpful challenge to leaders.

- Leaders and other staff are keen to learn from each other and from effective practice in other schools. Teachers feel that the training they receive helps them to improve.

- Pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding is effective. Staff know pupils and their needs. Pupil are well looked after.

- The funding provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and younger pupils who need to catch up is used well. These groups of pupils are successful in their learning.

- In the recent past, the progress made by pupils over their school careers has been broadly average. Boys and pupils with higher starting points have tended to make somewhat weaker progress than others. Leaders' plans are starting to improve the weaker progress of some groups of pupils.

- Leaders have improved the curriculum and assessment systems. These changes have helped pupils to make stronger progress. They provide a foundation for further improvement in the future. While pupils' progress across the school has now increased, more time is needed before these changes will have the greatest impact on pupils' learning.

- The school provides extensive opportunities for extra-curricular activities. These help pupils' wider development.

- Pupils behave well. They attend school regularly.

- Teaching is effective. Teachers know their subjects well. They use skilled questioning to share their knowledge with pupils.

- There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils get along well together. Difficulties such as bullying, racism and homophobia are rare and dealt with by staff if they do arise.

- The school helps pupils to develop their oral and writing skills. However, pupils are not challenged enough about poor spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- The school's careers programme works well. For example, very nearly all pupils leave the school to take up college education or an apprenticeship.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to support teachers in developing their skills so that they can best meet the needs of groups of learners, including higher-attaining pupils and boys.
- Further refine the curriculum and assessment systems to ensure that these lead to pupils achieving the strongest possible outcomes.
- Ensure that teachers support pupils to use their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills and subject-specific language with precision.

## Inspection judgements

**Effectiveness of leadership and management**          **Good**

■ The headteacher and other leaders work together effectively to ensure that the success of pupils is central to the school's activities. Leaders seek ways to improve the school and are successfully addressing weaker aspects.

■ Leaders have a detailed and accurate understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to improve. This led them to redesign the school curriculum in the previous school year and the assessment system this year. These changes have provided more effective teaching and learning so that pupils now make stronger progress. However, there has not been sufficient time for the full long-term benefits of these changes to be realised.

■ The headteacher and senior leaders set high expectations. The way they approach their work provides a positive model for other staff to follow. Similarly, how leaders and other staff relate to pupils provides a clear example for pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

■ Senior leaders are well organised. They are systematic in the way they plan for improvement in the school and its day-to-day work. Middle leaders understand their responsibilities. They work closely with specific senior leaders and other staff. The support from other staff helps middle leaders to be effective.

■ Leaders use challenge and guidance from leaders in other schools to check that Middleton Technology School's work is of a high standard. If leaders are advised that this is not the case, they act to improve things and check that their actions are working. This kind of approach has been instrumental in helping subject teams, including those in humanities and foreign languages, to improve their work. Through its teaching school, the school works in partnership with other academies in the multi-academy trust and other schools in Rochdale so that all can learn from each other.

■ The school has well-developed systems to allow staff to share effective practice and develop this further through research based on what the school does. For example, leaders identified that pupils who nearly always behave well sometimes do not make as much progress as pupils who consistently behave well. As a result, leaders have set up a programme of mentoring and support for this group of pupils. Leaders also know that, in general, higher-attaining pupils and boys make less strong progress than others. They have put detailed plans in place to increase the achievement of these groups. These plans are starting to be successful.

■ Leaders provide staff with helpful training about effective teaching. Some training is based on research carried out by school staff. For example, rapid starts to learning in technology lessons are now used to good effect in art. Teachers welcome the opportunities that they have to increase their skills through training.

■ The changes to the curriculum mean that teachers are now expected to focus more on building pupils' knowledge rather than trying to prepare for assessment and examinations in a narrow way. The changes have led to pupils developing a deeper understanding of their work and so helped to build more effective learning.

■ Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities provided outside routine lessons. These include, for example, the chance for pupils in each year group to make a residential

visit to a foreign country, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and helping others in the wider community, as well as sports and artistic activities. This wider curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' personal development.

- The parents and carers who shared their views about the school, using Ofsted's parents' survey, were generally positive about the school and its work.

## Governance of the school

- Governance of the school works well. There are clear channels of communication between trustees, governors and other leaders. These allow for information about the school to be easily shared. This, in turn, ensures that the challenge provided by governors and trustees is well founded. Systems are thorough so that questions do not remain unanswered or actions requested incomplete.

- Governors ensure that the range of their skills and experience across the governing body match the needs of the school.

- Governors take their role seriously in ensuring that the school finances are used properly. The school's increasing size means that governors have been able to allocate funding to increase the support available to pupils in school. Some of this has been used to provide staff to ensure that boys are encouraged to achieve as well as possible. Governors have ensured that the additional funding available for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those who arrive at the school in Year 7 needing to catch up in English and mathematics is used properly. Governors consider information about the progress and wider success of these groups of pupils to help them determine how well resources are used.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The school's strong safeguarding culture forms part of staff members' commitment to the welfare and success of pupils.

- Staff receive regular training to ensure that they know what to do should they have a safeguarding concern about a pupil. If such concerns are raised, they are carefully followed up in school and in partnership with outside agencies, when necessary. Record-keeping about all aspects of safety is thorough. Visitors to the school are required to confirm that they are aware of the school's safeguarding procedures. The school's safeguarding policy is easily available on its website.

- The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. It pays attention to risks that pupils might come across, for example knife crime and extremism.

| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |

- Teaching in the school helps pupils to learn well. Teaching has improved as a result of improvements to the curriculum and to assessment.

- Teaching is almost all provided by teachers who are specialists in the subjects they teach. This means that they have strong subject knowledge and can confidently share

this with pupils. Teachers are skilled at asking probing questions. Effective questioning and class discussion help to build pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.

- Classrooms are characterised by positive and friendly relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils value the teaching they receive. Teachers are skilled at modelling the relationships and attitudes they expect from pupils. Occasionally, if teaching is not as inspiring, pupils lose concentration and sometimes do not display the same helpful and positive approaches in class.

- The changes to the curriculum have demanded that pupils use more complex and extended writing. This increased challenge is clear in a number of subjects, including, for example, English and history. Pupils' oral skills are used to good effect and developed further as they talk about their learning in class. However, teachers' development of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills is not as consistently effective. In some subjects, this includes poor spelling of key words that form part of the subject study itself. Some pupils' books contain too much incomplete work. This means that these books are less useful in helping pupils to revise.

- The school is well equipped. This allows teachers to use resources to help pupils' learning. Pupils take part in practical work, for example, in science, and use computers to aid their study when needed. An inspector saw Year 10 pupils doing this with independence as part of their engineering course. Teachers also use resources that do not require complex technology. Many lessons start by pupils responding to questions set to ensure that learning gets off to a rapid start. Pupils often record their answers on small whiteboards so that the teacher can easily check pupils' responses. Common approaches such as these help pupils to know what is expected during their learning.

- School leaders have revised the school's assessment system. This has allowed them to introduce a more easily understood way of assessing pupils in key stage 3. While this change was only made at the start of this school year, it is already providing clear information about pupils' achievement. This is helping leaders and teachers to match learning to pupils' individual needs and to challenge any subject areas where pupils appear to be doing less well. In class, teachers often ask pupils to assess their own work. They frequently provide helpful guidance for pupils when doing this so that it adds effectively to pupils' learning.

- School leaders have improved the system used for setting and recording homework. This is now done using an electronic programme which allows teachers, parents and pupils to check what must be done and what has been completed.

| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- The leadership of this area of school life is a strength. Pupils are looked after very well. Pastoral staff know pupils individually, and staff take care to ensure that there is 'someone for everyone' so that pupils know who they can talk to if they have a worry or concern. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.

- Bullying in the school is rare. Staff and pupils have been trained as anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils are confident that they could go to staff to discuss any problems in their relationships with other pupils. Instances of derogatory language, such as homophobia or racism, are also rare. The school is harmonious. Pupils in Year 10 act as 'guardian angels' to pupils in Year 7. This gives younger pupils confidence, particularly when they are new to the school.

- The school's development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength. Pupils are challenged to think about such matters by the display of helpful information around the school. The personal, social and health education provided gives an effective framework for pupils' understanding about themselves and others, particularly for pupils in key stage 3. Pupils demonstrate that they know about important values that will help them in the future, such as tolerance and respect. Some older pupils told inspectors that they would welcome more teaching about relationships and sex education. The school's curriculum provides time for this at a later stage of Year 11.

- The school supports pupils well through transitions in their education. For example, Year 9 pupils told inspectors that they found that the school had helped them in choosing their GCSE option subjects for key stage 4. Similarly, pupils in Year 11 appreciate the information and support they receive about the possible next stages in their education.

- Pupils who attend alternative provision are carefully monitored to ensure that they are attending, behaving and learning well. There is a strong working relationship between staff in the provision used and school leaders. The provision is located in premises next to the school.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils generally behave well in class. This means that all can get on with their learning. In many classes, pupils' engagement with the learning taking place is very strong. Pupils try hard and want to succeed. Learning is seldom disturbed by pupils behaving less well. However, this occasionally happens when teaching is less confident or does not capture pupils' interest.

- Most pupils are purposeful as they move around the buildings. A few pupils tend to gather in groups and are slow to move to where they should be. Some younger pupils told inspectors that they can find such groups somewhat intimidating. The increased roll of the school means that parts of the buildings can become congested and departure from school busy. However, pupils are usually patient in letting others move around.

- The school's expectations about pupils' behaviour are very high. There are clear 'red lines' about unacceptable behaviour which must not be crossed. These include a 'hands off' policy concerning other pupils. While the school's records of poor behaviour show few incidents overall, a significant proportion arise from the firm application of this policy.

- The rate of fixed-term exclusion is below the national average. A small number of pupils have been permanently excluded from the school over recent years. However, leaders take careful steps to support pupils to avoid this happening. There are no common patterns in the reasons for permanent exclusion.

- Pupils are friendly towards each other and helpful to adults.

- Pupils' attendance rates are above the national average, although girls' attendance is slightly lower than boys'. Pupils' good attendance indicates their commitment to make the best of all the school offers.

| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
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- Pupils in all year groups make good progress. Pupils' current progress is stronger than that finally achieved by Year 11 pupils over the previous two years.

- Year 11 pupils' GCSE results over the last two years indicate that their progress from their starting points at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average. This represented a fall from the above-average progress achieved by similar pupils before then. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was similar to that of other pupils in the school.

- The school's own assessment system provides information confirming that pupils' progress is now stronger, for example how well pupils currently in Year 11 are doing compared to progress of the Year 11 a year ago. Similarly, the school's records about key stage 3 pupils show that these pupils are typically exceeding the challenging achievement targets set by the school.

- Inspection evidence, including discussion with pupils and staff, examination of pupils' work and direct observation of teaching and learning show that pupils, in general, learn well.

- This effective learning is increasingly the case for pupils in higher sets. In the past, such pupils tended to achieve rather less strongly than others. In addition, boys tended to do less well than girls, and pupils' overall grades in humanities subjects and modern languages were lower than in other subjects. The increasing progress currently found across the school indicates that leaders' determined actions to improve outcomes, in these and other aspects, are starting to succeed.

- Pupils with SEND say that they make progress. They confirm that the support they receive helps them to learn.

- Disadvantaged pupils continue to make similar progress to others. This has also led to their attainment increasing, with the difference between their results and that of other pupils across the country reducing. For example, an increasing proportion are being successful in both English and mathematics at GCSE.

- The alternative provision used for a few Year 11 pupils is also supporting these pupils' English and mathematical skills.

- Reading is strongly encouraged in the school, for example by setting aside time each day for younger pupils to read. Leaders regularly check pupils' reading ages. These show clear gains, especially for pupils who find reading harder. These pupils receive intensive support to develop their reading skills.

- Very nearly all pupils leave the school to take up further education or training, including apprenticeships. These high levels of success reflect the strength of the school's provision for careers education and guidance. Leaders continue to monitor pupils' further success once they have left the school.

## School details

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| Unique reference number | 143319 |
| Local authority | Rochdale |
| Inspection number | 10090538 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| 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 | 1,233 |
| Appropriate authority | The board of trustees |
| Chair | Ian Munro |
| Headteacher | Janine Kellett |
| Telephone number | 0161 643 5116 |
| Website | www.middtech.com/ |
| Email address | enquiries@middtech.com |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than average in size. The number of pupils is increasing. At the same time, the proportion of pupils with higher prior attainment is also increasing.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.

- While the proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than found in most schools, the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is broadly average.

- A small number of pupils in Year 11 attend off-site, alternative provision at Redwood Education and Enterprise Centre.

- In 2016, the school converted to become an academy and joined the Great Academies Education Trust (GAET).

- The academy's predecessor school was most recently inspected in 2006. It was judged to be outstanding.

- The headteacher was appointed in 2016. At the same time, and since then, a number of new senior and middle leaders have been appointed, including new deputy headteachers and subject leaders of English, mathematics and science.
- The school is a teaching school.

# Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other members of staff.

- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to others in lessons and during breaktimes. Inspectors observed pupils' conduct throughout the school day and as they left at the end of the school day.

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning, including during morning tutor time. Some of this was completed jointly with senior leaders.

- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books. Some of this was done jointly with senior leaders. In addition, other workbooks were examined during lessons.

- An inspector met with the vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors. He met with the chief executive officer of GAET. He had telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and an educational consultant who is the school's improvement partner.

- Inspectors scrutinised school documents about outcomes, teaching and learning, behaviour and leadership. These included the school's record of self-evaluation, overall improvement plan and other plans concerning specific improvements to the school. In addition, records and information about safeguarding and samples of minutes of meetings of the full governing body and those of governors' committees were considered.

- Inspectors considered the responses of 127 parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, completed this school year.

## Inspection team

| | |
|---|---|
| David Selby, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Nell Banfield | Ofsted Inspector |
| Deborah Bailey | Ofsted Inspector |
| Colin Bell | Ofsted Inspector |
| Dympna Woods | Ofsted Inspector |
| Philip Wood | Ofsted Inspector |

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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