

Whytrig Community Middle School

Western Avenue, Seaton Delaval, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE25 0EB

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress, although speeding up, is not yet good. Pupils enter the school with below average standards. In the Year 6 national tests, standards remain below average. By Year 8, pupils' attainment is closer to, but still below, national expectations.
- Leadership and management have many strengths and are steadily bringing about improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement. However, it still requires further improvement because systems to check pupils' progress are not yet fully refined and developed and used consistently by all staff.
- Extra lessons in literacy and numeracy have yet to be adapted and further improved to ensure they are narrowing the gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils.
- Although teaching is improving it is not yet good enough. Not enough lessons are good or better to enable pupils to achieve well.
- Too many lessons still require improvement because pupils have too few opportunities to work on their own, take part in practical activities, solve problems and improve their work in response to teachers' marking. Their learning is not always checked regularly enough in lessons so work is sometimes too easy or too hard.
- The school website is not up to date and does not contain the required information, for example, about pupils' national test results and how the extra funding, the pupil premium, is spent.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Since the last inspection, teaching, although not yet consistently good, has improved and pupils' progress has quickened.
- Governance is good. Governors have a clear, strategic view of how to improve the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well and most are kind and respectful to each other, to staff and to visitors.
- Staff manage their classes well. They provide good personal support for pupils so they gain in confidence and enjoy learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons and part-lessons. They also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Eleven responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as well as those from the school's own parental survey.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This middle-deemed-secondary school is much smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those whose parents are in the Armed Forces, is above average.
- A well below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision involving off-site education for pupils.
- The school is federated with Seaton Sluice Middle School and Astley Community High School. All three schools share the same governing body. Both middle schools were inspected at the same time and will receive separate reports published on the Ofsted website. Astley Community High school was inspected in February 2012 and also has a separate inspection report published on the Ofsted website. The federation achieved specialist status in mathematics and information and communication technology in July 2009.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more lessons are good or better, pupils' attainment rises and all make good progress by:
 - checking pupils' learning regularly in lessons to make sure work is not too easy or too hard
 - giving pupils more opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and improve their work
 - allowing pupils more opportunities in lessons to work on their own, take part in practical activities and solve problems.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing and refining recently introduced systems to track pupils' progress and ensuring they are used consistently across the school
 - further adapt and improve strategies to narrow the gaps in the attainment of different groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve the sharing of information with parents by ensuring that the school website is up to date and contains the required information.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school in Year 5. The school's baseline testing shows that most are working at levels below those expected for their age. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been significantly below average for the last three years. However, data shows that standards do begin to rise, to become closer to those expected for their age, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8.
- Overall, pupils' progress as they move through the school still requires further improvement. The school's own tracking data, observation of lessons and work in pupils' books shows two key things. Firstly, that whilst pupils make good progress in some lessons, classes and subjects, progress is slower in others. Secondly, that the progress of current pupils is beginning to speed up and standards, although below average, are beginning to rise.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those few from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress and have similar achievement to their classmates, including in improving their reading. This is because they receive timely extra help from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Scores in national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2012 indicate that those pupils who are eligible for free school meals are not attaining as highly as most other groups of pupils in the school. The school has made good use of the extra funds available to support these pupils (the pupil premium) to reduce group sizes, provide extra classes in literacy and numeracy and to give more one-to-one tuition to those pupils who need it. Consequently, the progress of these pupils is now beginning to speed up.
- However, extra lessons in literacy and numeracy have yet to be adapted and further improved to ensure that as pupils' progress accelerates, any gaps in the standards different groups of pupils reach are closed.
- In lessons, most pupils have good attitudes and behave well, which helps them to make the most of their lessons and enjoy learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school varies from requiring improvement to good. Although teaching has improved since the last inspection, not enough lessons are consistently good or better in order to enable all pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- In some lessons which require improvement, teachers miss opportunities to check on pupils' learning regularly and consequently, are not always aware that the work set is too easy or too difficult for them. In these lessons, pupils are not always fully challenged and, therefore, do not make the maximum progress of which they are capable.
- In other lessons, for example in mathematics, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to undertake practical activities which they enjoy, to find out things for themselves, or to solve problems.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are given helpful pointers for improvement. In some classes and subjects, pupils have opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and to improve their work. However, this good practice is not seen consistently across the school.
- In the best lessons, pupils make good progress, their social and moral development is promoted well and they very much enjoy learning. For example, in an art lesson, pupils worked well together when they discussed sophisticated ways to produce interesting and humorous animations using the clay animals they had made.
- In lessons, teachers manage pupils skilfully. Well supported by teaching assistants, they help to build the confidence of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, so they are prepared to answer questions and are not afraid to make mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well, both in classrooms and around the school. Records show that there are few incidents of bullying or racist behaviour and these are dealt with quickly and effectively. Good relationships exist between all groups of pupils and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Most pupils show respect for their teachers and for each other. They talk confidently and politely to visitors.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand that there are different types of bullying and are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They have a sensible attitude to risk taking and are clear about the dangers of, for example, drug and alcohol abuse.
- A few parents have concerns about behaviour. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found pupils' behaviour to be good and any incidents of challenging behaviour to be well managed.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Attendance is broadly average.
- Well thought-out assemblies, such as celebrating the qualities of national heroes, give the right messages to help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Aspects of the work of leaders and managers require further improvement. Systems to track pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection, but have yet to be fully refined and used consistently by all staff. The success of the extra literacy and numeracy lessons has also to be fully checked, so these can be improved to make sure that all pupils are given the best chance and equal opportunity to achieve well and attain equal standards.
- Important areas of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, although not yet good, have improved since the last inspection. This is because the governing body and the headteacher have a clear view of the school's strengths and are proactive in tackling any weaknesses.
- The performance of teachers is managed skilfully, lessons are observed regularly and constructive support and further training are given to staff where this is needed.
- Close links with other schools in the federation allow teachers' skills to be shared, as well as ensuring that pupils make a smooth transition to the high school.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are fully trained and well aware of risk assessment and child protection issues.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to the school, for example, by arranging training for staff, by providing support for governors and through the work of the school improvement partner.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There is an appropriate balance between class teaching in Years 5 and 6 and specialist subject teaching in Years 7 and 8. A good range of trips, visits, visitors and sporting activities add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Trips to France, successfully competing in rugby tournaments, a visit from an inspiring author, and themed study weeks were all mentioned by pupils as highlights of their time at school.
- Parents (and others) do not have on-line access to current information about the school, for example, about national test results and the way in which pupil premium funding is spent. This is because the school's website is not up-to-date and does not contain the required information.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors, whilst working across the whole federation, know Whytrig Middle School well and have a very clear strategic view of how to improve pupils' achievement. They are knowledgeable about the school's performance data, the quality of teaching and the way in

which staff are managed and rewarded. They hold the school to account for the way in pupil premium money is spent.

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	122335
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	402794

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Dungworth
Headteacher	Pamela Watts
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2010
Telephone number	0191 2371402
Fax number	0191 2371830
Email address	admin@whytrig.northumberland.sch.uk

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