

# John Buchan Middle School

BFPO 16, Germany

## Inspection dates

2–4 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils' attainment is better than expected for their age by the time they leave at the end of Year 8.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and communication during their time at John Buchan.
- Pupils' good behaviour and conduct contribute much to their learning. They are eager to learn and their attendance is good.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. Staff listen to pupils' views about the school.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well in a range of subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. They provide interesting activities that motivate pupils to learn.
- The headteacher and senior staff set clear direction for the school's improvement.
- Leaders are rigorous in checking what needs to improve next. They set pupils challenging targets appropriate to their needs.
- Values education underpins the school's positive ethos and culture of striving for excellence. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school governance committee plays an important part in supporting and challenging leaders.
- A wide range of facilities and resources add much to the breadth of pupils' experiences.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The curriculum for mathematics does not focus enough on teaching pupils to solve problems in a systematic way that develops their deeper understanding and mathematical reasoning.
- Pupils' spelling, punctuation and presentation are variable in quality and not reinforced consistently in all subjects. Pupils are not taught specific strategies to help them spell correctly.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, school improvement planning, checks carried out by leaders on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited numerous lessons for varying amounts of time to observe pupils' learning and look at pupils' work in their books. Almost all observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed break times and lunch times.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and talked to them about their work as well as their views of the school.
- Inspectors met senior and middle leaders, other staff with particular responsibilities, seven governors including the Chair of the School Governance Committee, and spoke by telephone with a representative from Service Children's Education (SCE).
- Inspectors considered the 77 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 35 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jane Wotherspoon, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Richard Light

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- John Buchan School serves a range of military units in the Sennelager/Paderborn garrison.
- The vast majority of pupils come from military families.
- Mobility is very high with pupils typically staying at the school for about two years. Few stay at John Buchan for all four years.
- Numbers of pupils fluctuate but are generally falling as posting patterns are affected by the relocation of military personnel to the United Kingdom.
- Approximately one in ten pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable staff turnover including at senior level. Several teaching staff have been redeployed from closing schools elsewhere in Service Children's Education. Mobility is also high among support staff.

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

- Strengthen the curriculum in mathematics by providing:
  - pupils with opportunities to deepen their conceptual understanding, reasoning, and ability to solve problems in a systematic way
  - training for staff to meet the increased demands of the new National Curriculum, including developing methods of assessment.
- Improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and presentation skills by:
  - systematically teaching pupils strategies to spell correctly
  - leaders of all subjects insisting that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' written skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The strong culture of high expectations comes from the headteacher's clear vision and drive for improvement. The senior team works together effectively to sustain the quality of provision against a backdrop of staff changes and uncertainty associated with the military drawdown arrangements.
- Senior leaders provide strong support to develop the leadership roles of middle leaders. For example, year leaders are clear about their accountability to support pupils' social and emotional needs, to remove any barriers to their academic success. Subject leaders are increasingly accountable for the pupils' achievement. Regular meetings to share information about pupils' progress and to set and re-set pupils' targets keep expectations high.
- The special needs leader has detailed knowledge of individuals and their families, which is used effectively to develop trusting relationships and devise individual programmes of support. Effective links with external agencies ensure a prompt response to provide support for pupils and their families.
- Joint observations carried out with the inspection team showed leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Investment in staff training and development has supported a culture in which teachers are self-reflective and keen to improve their practice. There are strong links between teachers' targets and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders undertake a broad range of monitoring activities to identify strengths and areas for improvement; they plan next steps accordingly. Thorough evaluations focus carefully on ensuring that actions have the desired impact on improving pupils' progress and attainment. Detailed analyses of pupils' performance enable staff to identify potential underachievement and provide additional support and challenge where necessary.
- Advisers from SCE have provided focused support for leaders in moderating information about pupils' starting points and leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching. Support, including training to improve teaching, has been well received and acted upon by leaders and staff. The level of advice has reduced as leaders have demonstrated the ability to sustain improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and much enjoyed by pupils. Increasingly, activities are planned to promote literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects. The school has won an award for its work in the arts and all pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils learn much from living in Germany.
- Values education has a significant impact on promoting pupils' personal qualities. Opportunities to explore values of right and wrong help pupils to develop a clear moral code. Celebrations of the different traditions and heritages of pupils at the school promote the shared values of tolerance and respect. A large number of sports clubs and whole-school events engender a strong sense of community and belonging. Careers guidance, a regular part of the citizenship programme, alongside careers days, prepares pupils to move on to the next school and consider future routes in education and/or the wider world of work.
- Policies and practice to keep pupils safe meet requirements. Policies are updated annually and staff receive regular training. Concerns about pupils are followed up thoroughly and more serious cases are referred appropriately to external agencies.
- Parents are positive about the school's work. The school's website provides a wealth of information about policies including guidance for parents on e-safety. Curriculum information includes helpful ideas for parents on how they can support learning at home. The creative learning projects support parents' involvement in homework activities.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good understanding of their role in holding the school's leaders to account for the quality of provision. Minutes of governors' meetings do not always capture the extent of the discussions they hold, the depth of their questions and the level of challenge they provide to the headteacher and other senior staff. They show an increasing ability to ask questions about the data on pupils' performance.
- Regular visits during the school day give governors a helpful insight into pupils' learning and the impact of teaching on learning. It enables them to ask deeper questions about the quality of provision.
- Governors are clear about the uniqueness of the school's position within the military community and how the values promoted in school permeate the wider community.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Patterns of misbehaviour are monitored closely by staff and records show that the number of incidents is falling. Serious incidents are rare.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is orderly without being over controlled by staff. Such self-regulation is a sign of pupils' maturity in understanding the need to 'behave well because you should, not because you are rewarded'. That said, rewards and consequences are clearly understood.
- Pupils say that the positive attitudes to learning that inspectors saw are typical of lessons at John Buchan. Pupils respond particularly well to practical aspects of learning and the many opportunities to work together in pairs and/or small groups. Just occasionally one or two pupils may lose focus but they are quickly brought back on track.
- Pupils are proud of their work and of their achievements; this is especially so where a task has challenged them and they have had to work hard to complete it or where high-quality work has been celebrated and praised by their teacher. Younger pupils enjoy many different subjects. Older pupils have more positive attitudes to English than to mathematics. They are discerning about the depth of work they do in English which requires them to think deeply, to analyse, edit and review their work than the routine activities they complete in mathematics.
- The importance of values is not lost on pupils. Some pupils told inspectors that values 'make the school a better place' and 'build a better person'. When considering whether some values were more important than others, a group of pupils in Year 5 decided there was no point striving for 'excellence' without 'unity'. They went on to imagine what the school would be like without values such as 'compassion'.
- Older pupils are very proud of their school and the wider community; they welcome corporate events such as the great bake off and sports day, in which every pupil takes part.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is supervised and managed well. Pupils have a good understanding of risks and how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations in and out of school. They have been taught about keeping safe when using the internet and are confident about the action they would take if they felt threatened.
- Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other. Bullying, including teasing and name calling of a racist nature, is infrequent. Pupils have been taught strategies to deal with any such incidents and have a high level of confidence that staff will quickly follow up and resolve any discriminatory behaviour.

**The quality of teaching****is good**

- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and has a positive impact on pupils' achievement over time in a range of subjects. Teaching is technically accurate. Clear explanations ensure pupils develop good subject knowledge, including subject-specific vocabulary, and practise key skills.
- Teachers assure pupils' engagement in learning through thoughtful activities presented in interesting and practical ways. Often pupils work collaboratively to provide support and challenge to each other and to promote deep critical thinking.
- Teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate. They manage pupils' behaviour with a level of courtesy and respect that provides a good model for pupils. Teachers take relevant opportunities to weave learning about the school's values into lessons. By creating an open and safe environment for pupils to express their views, teachers challenge pupils' perceptions, encourage pupils to express their feelings and foster respect for other views.
- Teachers use high-quality texts effectively to help pupils develop their own writing. This includes using a range of imagery and literary features in different forms of written work. Pupils are encouraged to use adventurous vocabulary to enliven their writing. However, there is not a systematic approach to teaching strategies for spelling and so errors mar pupils' work.
- Pupils are clear about their targets and levels of work. They know what they need to do to improve because teachers' marking makes clear how pupils can improve the content of their work. Work on supporting literacy in different subjects has met with some success but variations in the quality of pupils' spelling and presentation are not always picked up.
- Tasks are adapted appropriately to provide high levels of challenge for the most able. Pupils enjoy this approach. Lower ability pupils have adapted activities and texts and/or support from an adult to help them make progress.
- Plans to meet the demands of the new curriculum for mathematics are not as far advanced as those for

English. Developing the new mathematics curriculum and methods for assessing pupils' mathematical development, alongside initiatives to promote numeracy across the curriculum, is the next step. While the content is appropriate, teachers do not teach pupils to solve problems in a systematic way that ensures they develop the mathematical reasoning that sits behind the strategies they use.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is improving over time. There are no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved markedly in 2014. It was slightly better than the national average, although the proportion attaining Level 5 was lower than the national average. The proportion making the progress they should is similar to the national picture as is the proportion making more progress than expected.
- By the time pupils leave John Buchan at the end of Year 8 their attainment compares favourably with that of similarly aged pupils. Importantly, current pupils in Year 8 have made rapid progress to catch up on their previously weak attainment in 2013.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, though it is not as strong in mathematics as it is in English. Pupils are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants who have a clear rationale for the support they give pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are represented in all ability groups and make similar progress to others.
- More-able pupils are set demanding targets and make the progress expected of them. They are challenged through being taught alongside pupils of a similar ability in some subjects. Pupils rise to the challenge of stimulating work such as critically analysing the work of their peers.
- The school's information shows that pupils in all year groups make good progress. This positive picture is borne out by the work in pupils' books. The content of pupils' written work is improving strongly but spelling and punctuation are weaker aspects and handwriting and presentation are inconsistent in quality.
- Within the context of above average attainment in mathematics, pupils' mathematical reasoning is less well developed. This is because there are not enough opportunities for them to apply their knowledge and skills through enquiry and problem solving.
- Pupils read often and enjoy doing so. Staff actively promote reading through the reading for enjoyment project. The huge range of reading material available in the school's vast library offers pupils a wide choice. Suggested reading lists promoting high-quality texts, including some children's classic literature, prompt pupils to read a good breadth of material.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132396
<b>Local authority</b>	Service Children's Education
<b>Inspection number</b>	454193

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	259
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Service Children's Education
<b>Chair</b>	Lt Col Mark Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Mark Whalley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	November 2011
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