

Glendale Community Middle School

15 Brewery Road, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6QG

Inspection dates 3–4 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The vast majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well. All pupils are eager to learn and work hard in lessons because they are keen to do well. Standards in mathematics are above the national average in Year 6 and above the level expected for pupils in Year 8. A good proportion of pupils make outstanding progress in the subject.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that engage their interest and are well matched to their needs. This helps pupils become successful learners and motivates them to work hard.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour makes this a very happy, welcoming school where everyone feels valued. Pupils show high levels of respect for themselves and their teachers. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger ones in the way they take responsibility for helping the school run smoothly, as well as in their caring and friendly conduct around the school.
- Excellent pastoral care from staff creates a safe, secure environment where pupils are able to flourish. Pupils say they feel safe and know that any member of staff would help them if they had a problem.
- The rich curriculum gives pupils many exciting and memorable learning experiences in and out of school. This provides excellent support for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has moved quickly to establish productive links with the local First School. His aim, to share good practice between the schools, is being realised. He and senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to improve to build on the school's already outstanding features.
- Governors are well informed about teaching, learning and how well pupils achieve. They are passionate about making the school the best it can be so that it fully serves the local community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality and impact of middle leadership is inconsistent. Some recently appointed middle leaders have not yet had training to fully discharge their role, so they are not as effective as they might be.
- A small number of pupils in each year group do not make enough progress in their reading and writing skills. The assessment of their skills, when they join the school, has not been accurate enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons or parts of lessons, several of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, middle and senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school development plan.
- The inspector examined pupils' work on display and in their exercise books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and of the 15 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized middle school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funds for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupils looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2014. These are minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The governing body is working with the governors from Wooler First School to establish a single, federated governing body with one headteacher leading both schools. A new headteacher was appointed to lead both schools in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness and impact of middle leaders on school improvement by:
 - reviewing and developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders so that they play a full part in improving the school
 - providing training to enhance the skills of middle leaders, especially those who are new to role, so that they can capture and share good practice with all colleagues
 - ensure middle leaders have a clear schedule of monitoring activities from which they can evaluate the effectiveness of the subjects they lead and set priorities for further improvement.
- Rapidly raise the attainment of those pupils who are behind age-related expectations in reading and writing by:
 - establishing a screening programme to identify the specific needs of these pupils in reading and writing
 - providing sustained and skilled teaching and support until these pupils reach the level expected for their age in reading
 - developing writing skills for these, and other pupils, through more sustained writing in English and high-quality feedback to individual pupils on what and how to improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start in evaluating priorities for improvement, in order to ensure the continuity of learning for pupils when they transfer from the First School. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher who knows the school well and is committed to its continued improvement. The headteacher has worked effectively with the governing body of each of the schools to create strong and supportive links designed to improve the performance of both schools.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders in identifying where improvement is needed and in driving initiatives to bring about improvement varies in quality and effectiveness. This is because some middle leaders have been recently appointed, while others carry responsibility for more than one subject. Senior leaders have identified that roles need to be reviewed, so that middle leaders have a shared understanding of their role, and that they are allocated time away from the classroom to discharge their responsibilities.
- The school's rigorous systems to track pupils' progress over time have been further developed since the previous inspection. These are well understood by staff and used effectively to spot pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. Staff share information regularly so that senior leaders are able to check if pupils are making similar progress across all subjects and take action if this is not the case. These systems ensure that equal opportunities are well promoted for all groups of pupils.
- The management of teachers' performance is effective in holding teachers to account for the progress that their pupils make. Staff are supported to meet their targets through the school's monitoring systems and by sharing effective practice. There is a clear link, understood by governors, between teachers' performance and their salary progression. Senior staff recognise that more opportunities for professional development are needed to raise the quality of teaching to outstanding.
- The curriculum is well planned to interest and inspire pupils to develop their talents and a love of learning. Curricular enrichment programmes give pupils from this small rural community frequent opportunities to learn about the wider world, and to explore different faiths and cultures through visits to various Christian churches, synagogues, temples and mosques. Pupils value the residential trips they make not only to remote destinations but also to major cities such as Edinburgh and London. Through these, and other exciting activities, pupils learn about the need for tolerance and respect in modern British society. Parents are well informed about their child's curriculum through the school's website.
- Pupils accept differences in viewpoint and beliefs and are sympathetic to any pupil who is facing difficulties. They have learned to uphold British values of fairness and the rules and structures that keep everyone safe. They understand that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in the school, which is highly successful in fostering good relations between pupils.
- The school uses primary sport funding well to promote active lifestyles and physical well-being by taking part in local initiatives to share expertise and develop competitive sporting activities. The use of a rugby coach and special programmes of training for gifted and talented pupils help to develop a passion for sport and an understanding of the need for regular and vigorous exercise.
- Pupil premium funding is effectively used to support disadvantaged pupils. The school's tracking system has been developed so that the progress of these pupils is well monitored and prompt action taken to ensure they make the same progress as others. Published data show that the attainment of these pupils is about one term behind their peers in school and above that of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and fully meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided effective, light touch support for the school since the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-informed about the school's performance, from their own monitoring visits and through a good understanding of school and published data. They are aware of the school's strengths in mathematics and of the need to improve the reading and writing skills of small groups of pupils in each year. Governors have supported good improvements to teaching since the last inspection, by holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make, only rewarding those who fully meet their targets. Governors have taken decisive action to secure the future of the school and its partner First School in the local community by forming a federation of the governing bodies under the leadership of one headteacher. Their commitment and dedicated service to the school and the community could not be stronger.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In and out of the classroom, pupils look after each other very well because they are set an excellent example by all staff in the school. They are kind and considerate to each other, to staff and are very welcoming to visitors. School records show that exclusions are rare, and that excellent behaviour is typical over time.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who relish the variety of new skills they learn and the challenges of thinking for themselves. They are resilient and determined to succeed; they take pride in their work and want to please their teachers. In lessons pupils move quickly from one task to another because the teachers have established good routines to help them learn and make good use of time.
- Pupils are well taught to understand the need for tolerance and understanding. This is seen in the harmonious, happy atmosphere that pervades classrooms and the playground.
- Year 8 pupils proudly take on a wide range of responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. They set a good example of service to younger pupils, organise events and are enthusiastic fundraisers for a range of charitable causes.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff are well trained to spot any changes in a pupil's mood or effort in class. Pupils whose circumstances place them at risk of becoming vulnerable are very effectively monitored by staff. Rigorous systems ensure that concerns are promptly and thoroughly investigated.
- Pastoral care is excellent. It creates a warm, happy school where pupils feel very safe and valued. Year 8 pupils believe that, 'you can take any worries to a member of staff and they will be dealt with quickly and effectively'. The Chat Room provides a haven for pupils who have concerns they can talk over with older pupils, and is another facet of the school's over-arching pastoral care.
- Pupils are well taught to assess risks to their well-being and safety, including those associated with the internet. Anti-bullying week helps them to assess the behaviour of others and recognise that playground squabbles are not the same as bullying. Pupils in all year groups are confident that incidents of bullying are rare and if it does occur, 'teachers deal with it quickly'.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which is consistently above the national average year on year.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall, pupils' progress is well monitored by teachers, giving them an accurate picture of what pupils need to learn next. Activities are planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are able to work independently and at a good rate, though this is not always the case in reading and writing activities for lower attaining pupils, whose progress is sometimes slower than that of other pupils. Where there is a good match of work to pupils' needs, they develop confidence and the belief that if they work hard they will succeed.
- Good questioning, which develops pupils' thinking and reasoning skills, is well used, especially in science and mathematics. Year 6 pupils made great strides in their understanding of how to use branching questions to identify different animals in their science lesson. Well-structured questions from the teacher prompted pupils to think hard about how to eliminate certain animals, so that they quickly saw how they were able to apply this method to new challenges. Learning progressed at a very good pace, and pupils were proud of their achievements by the end of the lesson.
- Pupils' enjoy developing their practical and creative skills, which allows them to show their individual talents and enthusiasm. In art and food technology lessons, pupils find plenty of opportunity to learn, enjoy and find delight in their finished products. Year 5 pupils developed skills and acquired knowledge at a rapid rate while making soda bread to their own 'design'. They worked with enthusiasm and excellent concentration throughout the practical activity to produce bread of a very high standard that was original in its form and flavours!
- A range of assessment methods is used to track pupils' progress in lessons and over time. Older pupils acknowledged how well these helped them to improve their work and commented that the best by far was when teachers kept a constant check on how well they were doing during lessons. This was noted in a mathematics lesson in Year 5 where pupils worked on negative numbers. The teacher moved around the classroom constantly noting where pupils needed extra support to overcome slight obstacles, as well as

moving on those pupils who had quickly grasped the concept and were not progressing as fast as they might. This ensured that the introduction to negative numbers held no fears for these young pupils who all got on at a rapid rate because of this supportive monitoring and timely intervention. Pupils confirm that this approach is usual in mathematics lessons and helps them to make good progress.

- While pupils have frequent opportunities for writing in other subjects, which helps to consolidate their skills, not all are developing skills that are appropriate to their age. As with reading, there is a group in each year whose performance in writing is behind where it should be, because they do not make enough progress in English lessons. Sometimes this is because a reasonable length of time is not made available each lesson for pupils to practise their writing.
- Reading skills are well promoted through regular reading in class, and the majority of pupils read well and with good understanding. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure and for information and are expected to read at home regularly. The exception is small group of pupils in each year group for who gaps in their reading skills have not been identified early enough to allow them to catch up quickly when they join the school.
- Pupils enjoy learning from each other and show great enthusiasm for watching and listening to others. A Years 5 and 6 physical education lesson illustrated how well pupils picked up on each other's skills and determination as they watched the skilful gymnastic performance of their peers. This, and the teachers' encouragement, spurred them on to try their best to copy their classmates, so that all made good progress and were very pleased with their own efforts.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overall performance of Year 6 pupils in English was at the national average in 2014 but was significantly above average in mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on target to reach similar standards this year, sustaining year on year performance that compares favourably with the national averages.
- Pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 was also in line with the national average, except in mathematics, where progress and attainment were significantly above the national average. Many more pupils than nationally made more than expected progress in the subject. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was well above the national figure and the proportion reaching Level 6 was close to it. Progress in reading for lower attaining pupils was significantly below the national picture for this small group of pupils.
- Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 7 and 8, so that by the end of Year 8 the proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age has increased. Fewer pupils exceed the level for their age in writing and reading, where progress over time is slower than in mathematics. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 8, pupils are well prepared for the challenges of the high school.
- In other subjects, pupils make good progress and have plenty of opportunities to use their basic skills of literacy and numeracy to research and record information and to make calculations for their work, for example, in technology and art. Pupils' work from the wider curriculum shows individuality and impressive creativity, reflecting pupils' determination to master and apply new skills and knowledge to solving problems.
- For a few pupils, reading presents difficulties because they have not mastered early reading skills before they leave First School. In each year group there is small group of pupils who have weak phonics knowledge (the sounds that letters make), which hampers their ability to sound out new words. The school has recognised that an early reading programme is needed for these pupils when they join the school to help them reach the expected level for their age.
- The new curriculum in mathematics is developing well, with increased challenge and problem-solving activities driving pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. In all year groups, a large proportion of pupils claim that, 'maths is the best subject, because it makes you think'.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported in lessons to make similar progress to their peers. School records and published data show that these pupils make the best progress in mathematics and writing.
- The most able pupils are well challenged to attain the higher levels in English and mathematics. They are encouraged to develop ambition and independence in their work and are confident, enthusiastic learners. By the end of Year 8, this group of pupils has reached a high standard in both English and mathematics, so they are extremely well prepared for the high school.
- Disadvantaged pupils also make good progress. Pupil premium funds have been well used to close the gaps in both attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is about one term behind their peers. The

attainment of disadvantaged pupils is the same as that of all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

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	122352
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	459649

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Allport
Headteacher	Mike Deane-Hall
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
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