

Middleton-in-Teesdale Nursery and Primary School

Town End, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 0TG

Inspection dates 10–11 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The vision and enthusiasm of the headteacher, together with a recently strengthened team of leaders, managers and governors, have established a strong culture of high aspirations and expectations, including in all teaching and learning. As a result, pupils achieve well.
- Good teaching and effective classroom support enable most pupils to exceed the standards expected of them. This is because tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs also achieve well and, in individual cases, exceptionally well.
- The good and sometimes excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils makes a highly positive contribution to the happy and good humoured atmosphere.
- Behaviour is never less than good. At times, it is exemplary. Pupils display responsible attitudes and a keenness to participate, learn and do well. Their positive attitudes have a strong impact on their good and improving achievement.
- Pupils' relationships in school are typified by kindness, tolerance and respect. Consequently, pupils of all backgrounds feel safe and happy. Their enjoyment is evident in their above average attendance.
- The good and constantly developing curriculum helps to bring learning to life and is effective in fostering pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Children make a flying start in the Nursery class, because they settle quickly in the warm and friendly atmosphere. Their good progress carries on in the Reception class with children increasingly well prepared for Year 1.
- Strong partnership working with the local village community ensures that the school is a valued resource.
- The re-energised governing body has regained a firm grip on the strategic direction of the school. Governors are robust in their challenge and consequently have an accurate grasp of school performance, tackling the inconsistencies apparent since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not regularly of the highest quality to produce a consistent pattern of rapid progress and high achievement for pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to practise pupils' writing skills in all subjects, share imaginative methods and stretch pupils' thinking and understanding even more.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons, including seven paired observations carried out with the headteacher. Work scrutiny was also carried out with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook learning walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, middle leaders, staff, governors and the local authority educational development partner.
- The inspector also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspector took account of 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 15 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- A very large majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds with none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Currently, there is a much lower than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. This funding is for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The provision in the early years Nursery is both full and part-time.
- The school provides a breakfast club each day for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Dawn Till Dusk Childcare is a privately run day care facility located on the site, but is not managed by the governing body. It is subject to a separate inspection. Reports for this setting may be viewed at <http://gov.uk/ofsted>.
- The senior and middle leadership were restructured in September 2014 and a new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in November 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching consistently enables pupils to learn exceptionally well in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, to enable all to make rapid and sustained progress and achieve highly by:
 - raising expectations even higher to make certain pupils of all abilities can reach their potential
 - sharing more widely the imaginative practice that already exists in the school
 - making sure that the knowledge of all pupils, including the most able, is constantly extended and their understanding deepened to ensure high achievement
 - practising relentlessly pupils' writing skills in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The recent restructuring of senior and middle leadership is successfully motivating the staff to enhance the quality of their collaborative working and extend their expertise. As a result, inconsistencies in the quality of the pupils' learning and in the pattern of their progress and achievement are being successfully addressed.
- Middle leaders are increasingly confident and accomplished in evaluating pupils' performance and addressing any gaps or variations they identify. Consequently, pupils from all different starting points make at least good progress.
- Systems to check pupils' performance are robust. Reflective and self-critical leadership is ensuring that the judgements of the pupils' performance are accurate and the action taken to improve is having the required impact. Teaching is well led and the talents and skills of teachers and classroom support staff are nurtured effectively. For example, such as for those staff in the early years and for newly qualified staff.
- Performance management is effective and makes sure that there is a firm link between classroom performance and pay progression.
- The interesting curriculum includes a wide range of thought-provoking activities and experiences. Themes that link subjects together in creative ways add to the often high levels of pupils' interest and enjoyment. For example, such as when examining artefacts from the local military museum, donated by the soldiers who fought in the trenches of Northern France, prior to writing creatively about the soldiers' experiences. Increasing opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and scientific skills in interesting ways, such as in the woodland environment. Pupils' personal development is a strength and underpins the climate of very positive relationships that exist in the school.
- Staff work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed and achieve their full potential. This includes those pupils who are most in need, the most able and the disabled. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- Primary school sport funding is effectively used in maintaining high participation rates and enhancing staff coaching skills and experience. It also nurtures higher pupil skills in a variety of sports, such as golf, tennis and rugby. This includes working closely with established sports clubs to provide additional opportunities for coaching, practice and to compete, such as at the local golf club.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet requirements. Procedures are clearly established and much good practice, supported by high quality care, is adopted in the day-to-day management, care and protection of all pupils.
- Partnership working with parents is a strength. It is evident in the responses to the online questionnaire that they believe that the school is making a significant difference to their children's learning.
- The local authority has an accurate view of school performance and areas for improvement. It offers both challenge and support. Specialist training has been particularly beneficial in enhancing the leadership skills of the governing body to help to address inconsistencies evident since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an accurate view of school data and of how well the school is doing and what areas require further development or improvement. Governors systematically check the quality of teaching and learning and have been firm in their view of how the school can be improved. They have displayed much commitment ensuring the leadership restructuring met the needs of the school and was a success. Performance management is effectively used to hold staff to account for pupils' outcomes. Governors tackle underperformance robustly. Governors also make sure that pupil premium and sport funding have the intended impact on raising standards, extending skills and closing gaps in performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. At times, their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are clear about the boundaries that are set for their conduct. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils of all ages prosper in the happy, friendly and caring school family atmosphere. They enjoy excellent relationships with staff and display good levels of tolerance and respect for each other, adults and visitors.
- Pupils are hardworking and are keen and eager to learn. They are attentive and respond extremely

positively to the learning activities and challenges arranged for them. Infrequently, concentration of individual pupils can drift, but this has no impact on the pace or quality of learning for the whole class.

- At social times, including in the breakfast club at the start of the day, the cheery, happy atmosphere reflects the school's extremely positive school ethos and secure values.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents in their online responses consider that their children are safe in school. Pupils take great pride in their own and the school's achievements. This includes the development of the library. They thrive on the responsibilities that they are given, such as when older pupils take responsibility for the care and well-being of younger pupils during the day, including at lunchtime. This helps to prepare pupils very well for life in the local village community and for life in modern Britain.
- In discussions, pupils display a good understanding of what constitutes bullying in its various forms. They are well informed about cyber bullying. They say that mean or unkind behaviour is rare. Pupils observe that staff deal with any incidents promptly and effectively. Pupils are well informed about risk and danger and are clear about how to keep themselves safe and free from harm.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good with examples of imaginative, inspiring and reflective practice observed. The whole staff team is keen to ensure that each pupil does their very best. Staff provide the pupils with excellent role models and set high expectations. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, especially when they can apply their skills to solve everyday problems and fun methods are adopted to stretch their knowledge and develop their understanding.
- Interesting opportunities, including a varied range of visitors and visits, link subjects together in thought-provoking ways. Challenging and demanding questions or puzzles inspire pupils to analyse problems, think critically and explain their solutions. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to match challenging tasks even more closely to the capabilities of pupils and enable them to practise their skills frequently, such as in their writing.
- When progress is even, quick and attainment is high:
 - the demands made of each pupil are consistently high, including for the most able
 - tasks are carefully shaped and adapted to take into account the learning needs and interests of all pupils
 - pupils' knowledge and understanding are constantly checked and accurately assessed
 - helpful marking identifies what has been done well, points out any misunderstandings and provides clear guidance for improvement.
- When the progress rates and attainment are more variable:
 - tasks do not create the essential spark and inspiration to trigger pupils' imagination and capture and hold their interest
 - demands are not always pitched at the right level to relentlessly build upon their knowledge and understanding
 - opportunities are missed for pupils to practise skills, such as in reading, writing and solving number problems
 - questions do not test pupils' thinking enough to make sure misconceptions are prevented or misunderstandings corrected.
- When achievement is at its highest, such as in the Reception class or in Year 2, inspiring teaching quickly captures pupils' interest and holds it for lengthy periods. For example, in a literacy lesson a group of pupils were engrossed using a poster as a word mat to write rhymes that people will remember to encourage healthy eating. However, such activities which are really well matched to the individual abilities and interests of each pupil do not feature in all classes and are not shared widely enough among all staff to improve practice further.
- Teachers mark work frequently and carefully and assessment is increasingly accurate. Pupils respond promptly to the teachers' demands for corrections. Meaningful homework is set regularly. Challenging targets are set and each pupil is well aware of what needs to be done to achieve them. Clear guidance is provided to enable pupils to improve although, now and then, opportunities are missed to expect and demand even more improvement.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Positive action to improve pupils' attainment, including of the most able, by the end of Year 2 is proving to be successful, although some inconsistencies remain in Year 1. For example, ensuring that all pupils reach the expected standard in their Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make). Progress in developing early reading and writing skills is quickening because tasks are so well matched to pupils' abilities. Consequently, skills are improving and attainment is rising from the broadly expected standards evident in recent assessments.
- At the end of Year 6 in the 2014 national tests, standards were above average in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and similar to the average in mathematics and writing. Concerted action to improve writing, especially of boys, is paying dividends. Current school predictions confirmed by inspection evidence indicate that current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve above average standards in all subjects with an increased proportion reaching higher levels.
- The most able pupils of all ages are responding well to the thought-provoking teaching introduced since the previous inspection. For example, establishing a woodland area to enable pupils to consider and solve problems and apply their skills in practical ways. Consequently, achievement is rising although now and then opportunities are overlooked to refine pupils' skills, extend their knowledge and expand their understanding even more.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress, because their needs and abilities are accurately pinpointed and support is effective. In individual cases, pupils learn exceptionally well despite their highly complex needs.
- A whole-school drive to nurture an enjoyment of reading, including among younger pupils, is proving to be very successful. The recently refurbished library opened by the second Children's Laureate is having a positive impact on pupils' reading habits. This includes taking responsibility for the day-to-day running of the library. Consequently, pupils read widely and often and their fluency and confidence when reading have increased appreciably.
- Gaps in attainment between the disadvantaged and other pupils are addressed successfully. This is evident in the current school data and in pupils' work in books, where no attainment gaps are evident between the two groups. The number of those pupils entitled to support through the extra funding are small and variable in number in each cohort, year on year. Consequently, comparisons of gaps in attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 are unreliable.

The early years provision is good

- Children arrive in the Nursery class with skills that are below those typical for their age. Social, emotional, communication and number skills are sometimes weaknesses. They make rapid progress, happily settling into the caring and supportive atmosphere.
- Progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes is quickening as a result of a sharper focus developing early reading, writing and number skills. More wide-ranging opportunities are provided to practise these skills. These are bolstered by increasingly accurate assessments of children's skills and rate of development. This is making certain that children are better prepared for the next stage of their learning in Year 1.
- Teaching is good and at times inspiring and thought-provoking. Activities capture and hold children's interest well. Their self-control and self-confidence are really well developed so their behaviour is good. Essential skills are developed effectively in all areas of learning, including when exploring and investigating outdoors. A firm emphasis is placed upon encouraging children to persevere and work things out for themselves and complete tasks.
- Frequent checks on children's progress, development and well-being inform activity planning well. More recent developments include experiencing a variety of practical experiences in woodland areas which meet children's individual needs well. Increasingly, parents share recent experiences with their children, such as the work-related family stay of one of their classmates in New Zealand. This helps to broaden children's experience of the wider world around them.
- The recently appointed leader has made a very assured and impressive start. She ensures that all children are kept safe and secure. The strengths in the quality of provision are accurately identified. Areas for improvement, such as encouraging children to apply their phonics skills in all areas of learning, are effectively tackled. As a result, children's progress is quickening and achievement rising.

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	114109
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	453180

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Welsby
Headteacher	Steve Vallack
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2011
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