

Corbridge Middle School

Cow Lane, Corbridge, Northumberland, NE45 5HX

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Pupils make good progress in all years throughout the school. By the end of Year 8 they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above those expected for their age.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school, and sometimes outstanding. Staff set work that stimulates and engages pupils in their learning.
- Each pupil's progress is checked very carefully and any underachievement is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils are supported well so they progress at least as well as their classmates do.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They are very proud of their school and get on very well with one another.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school and are very well cared for. They say that poor behaviour and bullying is very rare.
- The curriculum is well planned and engages pupils very effectively in their learning. It is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities, clubs, trips and visits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school is led and managed very well. The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together and have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it could do better. They have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement successfully.
- Parents are strongly supportive and very appreciative of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly for the most able pupils and in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are not always set work that is hard enough to enable them to make the best possible progress and achieve the highest standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on 22 occasions, including one lesson observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, and met four governors, including the Chair and vice- chair of the Governing Body. In addition, inspectors met the Director of Education for the local authority and spoke to the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils and also spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and over time in their books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 86 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and eight letters or emails from parents. Inspectors also considered 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Waugh	Additional Inspector
Kevin Broadfoot	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is around the average size for a middle school.
- Pupils are taught in 12 single-age group classes from Year 5 to Year 8.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. These are pupils supported by the pupil premium which is funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- No pupils attend any off-site alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.
- Six teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement, particularly for the most able pupils and at Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - the work set is always hard enough so that pupils are challenged to make the best possible progress and achieve the highest standards.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management, including governance, are good. School leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection effectively. Their actions have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and raised pupil achievement.
- The headteacher leads the school very effectively, and is supported well by senior leaders, staff and governors. There is a very strong and shared commitment to improving the outcomes for all pupils.
- The role of middle leaders has been greatly enhanced. They now take a much more active and effective role and are more accountable for the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress in their areas.
- There are rigorous systems to check how well pupils are performing. School leaders at all levels make good use of information about pupils' progress and attainment. They have a very clear and accurate view of where the school is performing well and where it could do better. School improvement planning is robust and correctly identifies the key priorities of improving teaching in order to raise achievement further.
- School leaders, including middle leaders, closely monitor the quality of teaching and check on and evaluate pupils' performance. Any underachievement is addressed by providing pupils with extra help and support if they need it. As a result, all groups of pupils in the school are making good progress.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding very effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils in the classroom, individually and in small groups. As a result, any gaps in the performance of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils are closing. This shows the school's successful commitment to equal opportunity for all pupils.
- School leaders also use information about pupils' achievement to check on how well teachers are performing and to identify where further support or training is needed. Staff are working increasingly successfully to share best practice within the school, and also have closer working relationships with other local schools, including first schools, middle schools and high schools.
- Information about pupils' attainment and progress is also used by school leaders when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is well planned and engages pupils very effectively in their learning. It is enhanced by a wide range of activities, clubs, trips and visits, including sport, music, drama and culture. The recently introduced enrichment programme for Key Stage 3 pupils includes activities such as first aid, orienteering, pottery, the school garden and a school newspaper, and is proving very popular with both pupils and parents.
- The curriculum tackles discrimination positively and fosters good relations. It makes a clear contribution to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values are addressed within lessons effectively, and through activities and assemblies. Inspectors observed a very moving assembly delivered by pupils following a visit to World War One battlefields, for example. This ensures that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are implemented effectively.
- The school is using the additional primary school sport funding successfully to enhance provision. Specialist teachers and coaches take lessons and run activities. In addition, it has provided specialist training for staff, new equipment, and transport to sporting venues and competitions. As a result, the range of sporting activities has widened to include dance, aerobics, fitness, tae kwon do, table tennis and cricket, and more pupils take part in sports and competitions.
- The local authority has provided effective monitoring and support for the school which have contributed to improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the use and analysis of data about pupils' achievement and progress and how these are linked to the quality of teaching. Governors are very well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and have a clear knowledge of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and ambitious for its development. There is an effective committee structure and governors ensure that school leaders are held to account by asking searching questions and by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal. They also make sure that pupils' attainment and progress are taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay. They undertake regular training to keep themselves up to date and to improve their skills, and

evaluate their own performance. Governors make sure that policies, including those relating to safeguarding, are reviewed, meet requirements and are implemented effectively, and that the school's finances are sound and managed well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have very positive and enthusiastic attitudes in lessons and are keen to do well and succeed. This makes a strong contribution to their learning and achievement. They listen attentively, respond well to questions and challenges and work very well, both individually and in groups. Lessons proceed smoothly with no interruptions to learning.
- Behaviour around the school is excellent. Pupils mix well and play enthusiastically during breaks, and behave responsibly and safely in the canteen at lunchtime. They are very respectful of each other and are polite and courteous to adults and visitors. Pupils say that everyone gets on and that the school is a very friendly place.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a variety of roles. The elected school council is active and effective, and pupils help in assembly, act as sports leaders and run some clubs and activities. This makes a good contribution to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils say that poor behaviour is very rare, but that staff sort it out quickly, if it happens. Pupils are very tolerant and understanding, and there have been no racist or discriminatory incidents in recent years.
- Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school, and are very proud of it. Attendance is consistently above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel completely safe in school and cared for very well.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of the different forms of bullying, and are very aware of the harmful effects of bullying and discrimination. They say that bullying is very rare in school, but would report it if it occurred. They are very confident that the school would sort it out quickly.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of safety-related issues, and speak confidently about how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the Internet.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey think that their child is happy, feels safe and is well looked after in school, and almost all think that pupils are well behaved. In addition, several parents wrote in to express their satisfaction with the school, and to highlight how it has improved and grown recently. Inspection evidence supports these views.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Over time it is consistently good, and sometimes outstanding. This was confirmed by the work in pupils' books, observing teaching and learning during the inspection, and the school's checks on the quality of teaching and records of pupils' progress. This results in all groups of pupils making good progress during their time in the school.
- There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff, and staff set work that engages pupils very effectively in their learning. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and say that 'learning is fun'. In science, for example, Year 7 pupils hugely enjoyed learning about the human digestive system using a practical model. They clearly understood the links between the various organs and processes involved and made excellent progress.
- Reading is taught very effectively, and pupils make good progress. Staff ensure that all pupils read regularly at a suitable level.
- Writing is taught well, with an appropriate focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils write effectively in a variety of styles in different subjects across the curriculum.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' numeracy skills are securely developed, and they are encouraged effectively to apply these skills to solve practical problems. They are also encouraged to think about the aesthetic aspects of the subject. For example, Year 8 pupils have investigated the link between the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Number.
- The quality of marking and feedback has improved markedly since the previous inspection. This was

commented on by several parents. Staff use praise effectively, and give detailed guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Some of the marking seen during the inspection was exemplary. As a result, pupils say that they know clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There is firm evidence that pupils respond to teachers' advice.

- Staff have very good subject knowledge and typically have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Where pupils make the most rapid progress, staff challenge pupils to think hard and build on their previous learning. This was seen during a geography lesson when Year 7 pupils were examining the One Child Policy in China.
- However, in some classes, staff expectations are sometimes not high enough, and they do not always set work that is demanding enough to enable pupils, particularly the most able, to make the best possible progress and reach the highest standards, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to help pupils who find learning more difficult. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs. This enables these pupils to make good progress and achieve better than their classmates do in some cases.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well during their time in the school. They join in Year 5 with standards that are mostly around those expected for their age. They make good progress from their starting points and reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above the expectations for their age by the end of Year 8.
- Whilst pupils make good progress throughout their time in the school, this tends to be more rapid during Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 2.
- At times a lack of high enough expectations and challenge for the most able pupils and in Key Stage 2 has resulted in achievement in writing and mathematics not being as strong as in reading. However, strong leadership and management and more challenging teaching is raising achievement. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve higher standards this year, with the proportions of pupils making expected and above expected progress, rising strongly.
- Inspection evidence from the work in pupils' books and the school's most recent data show that pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are currently making good progress and achieving well.
- Standards in Key Stage 3 are also improving. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are making rapid progress and achieving well. Year 8 pupils are above the expectations for their age. This represents good progress since the end of Key Stage 2 and since they joined the school in Year 5.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed. Pupils have opportunities to read regularly and are taught well. They read fluently and have a clear understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Pupils' writing skills have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to write in a variety of contexts in different subjects.
- Pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge have improved since the previous inspection because of good leadership and improved teaching. They have strong numeracy skills and apply and use these skills well to solve problems in real-life situations.
- Evidence from pupils' books and observing learning shows that pupils make good progress in subjects across the wider curriculum, including science, humanities, art, music, physical education and design technology.
- The most able pupils make good progress and achieve well, and they are increasingly being given more challenging work. However, they are not always given work that is challenging enough to enable them to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved. They receive effective support if they need it and make good progress. As a result, any gaps in achievement have been closing. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils was two terms ahead of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading, around the same in writing, and about a term behind in mathematics. In comparison with other pupils in the school, they were almost two terms ahead in reading, around half a term ahead in mathematics, and the same in writing. Disadvantaged pupils in the school make progress that is at least in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well. Their needs are identified accurately, they receive good quality support and their achievement and progress is checked on carefully. Consequently, they make progress at least as rapidly as other pupils, and better in some cases.

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	122326
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	462215

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Holmes
Headteacher	Jane Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2013
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