

Alnwick Lindisfarne Middle School

Lindisfarne Road, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1AX

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
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 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach standards above those typically seen by the end of Year 8.
- The progress of all pupils is checked regularly and accurately; any underachievement is rapidly and effectively addressed.
- Performance gaps between different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils with others, are rapidly closing.
- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly. Almost all teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants work well together, enabling pupils who have special educational needs to make the same good progress as others.
- Pupils are proud of their school and participate enthusiastically in a wide and broadening range of clubs and activities. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe at school, in the wider community and online. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that staff will address any problems that arise.
- All aspects of leadership and management are outstanding. Senior and middle leaders are highly successful in promoting effective teaching and ensuring that staff readily take full responsibility for improving pupils' achievement.
- Governors know the school very well. They make good use of information on the quality of teaching and data on pupils' achievement to hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for the most-able pupils. Work set can occasionally lack challenge and be too easy.
- Although much improved, the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is still too variable between classes and year groups.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as the fifth monitoring inspection of the school because it was judged to require special measures at its previous inspection in October 2013. Inspectors deemed the monitoring inspection a full section 5 inspection during the first day.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons and part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the executive headteacher. Lessons were observed in a range of subjects and were taught by teachers across the age range of the school. In addition, inspectors watched senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body steering committee together with the Vice-Chair and three other members, the School Improvement Partner and the Commissioner for Early Years and Primary for Northumberland local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's view of its own performance, monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body steering committee, records of behaviour and attendance, and records relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and over time in their books.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour in the school. Inspectors also spoke with pupils in lessons and at various times during both days of the inspection.
- Too few parents completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) for their responses to be taken into account. However, the inspectors took account of parents' views through the 198 responses to a recent school questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Whittaker

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Alnwick Lindisfarne is a middle-deemed-secondary school with pupils starting in Year 5 and finishing at the end of Year 8. The school is significantly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is one of three schools in the hard federation of Alnwick schools, along with the Duke's Middle School and the Duchess' Community High School. The headteacher of the Duke's Middle School was appointed executive headteacher of both middle schools in January.
- There is one federated governing body, with each of the three schools having a steering group which works directly with the school and reports to the full governing body.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding 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 majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- No pupils attend any off-site alternative provision.
- Few pupils leave or join the school other than at the beginning and end of the school year.
- 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 local authority is currently considering a number of models for the reorganisation of schools in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that all lessons provide high levels of challenge
 - increasing the use of investigative and problem-solving activities to engage pupils and deepen their understanding across all areas of the curriculum
 - improving the consistency of high quality feedback and marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has improved rapidly since the executive headteacher's appointment in January 2015. She has a very clear vision for the school, enjoys the respect of all staff, and has created a culture of effective teamwork and rapidly improving morale. Senior and middle leaders work together as a very effective team and there is now a strong and shared commitment to improving the outcomes for all pupils.
- Self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. Leaders have a very clear and accurate view of where the school is performing well and where it could do better. The school improvement plan is thorough and has clear targets and timescales. As a result, leaders have successfully tackled the significant weaknesses identified during the last inspection, together with further issues identified during monitoring visits.
- The school now has very robust systems to check the achievement of pupils. Senior and middle leaders make good use of information about pupils' progress and attainment. Middle leaders are fully accountable for the quality of teaching and for pupils' attainment and progress in their areas.
- The quality of teaching has improved because of careful monitoring linked to effective advice and support where teachers need to improve. All staff have worked tirelessly to improve and, as a result, the quality of teaching is now good and improving strongly. Weak teaching has been eradicated through the application of clear performance management standards linked to pupils' progress and the quality of classroom teaching.
- Strong promotion of equal opportunities means that all groups of pupils do well. Pupil premium funding has been successfully used to provide additional support and teaching resources. As a result, there are no significant gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others throughout the school.
- The leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very effective. The special educational needs inclusion manager identifies what additional help pupils need and regularly tracks their progress to make sure it is working. As a result, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Effective use of the additional sport funding has raised the profile of physical education across the school. The number of sports clubs has increased and there is a wide range of physical activities and games for pupils to enjoy during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils take part in more competitive sport, both within the school and with other schools.
- The school recently moved to a more primary model of teaching for Years 5 and 6, where pupils are taught by fewer teachers. This has enhanced pupils' core skills in reading, writing and mathematics and, in turn, improved the standard of pupils' work in a range of subjects. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enhanced by a wide range of activities, clubs, visits and competitions.
- Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons are a strong feature of the curriculum and are effective in raising pupils' awareness of important issues including drug and alcohol abuse, e-safety, risky behaviours and careers education. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is skilfully embedded into the curriculum. Assemblies and displays of work reflect contemporary affairs and ensure that pupils are aware of British values.
- Safeguarding and child protection requirements are very thorough and meet statutory requirements. Senior leaders ensure that all staff have attended appropriate training and are fully aware of their responsibilities.
- The school has drawn very successfully on external support for leadership and teaching through the other schools of the Alnwick Federation and through the Whitley Bay High Teaching School Alliance. The local authority has provided effective monitoring and support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works well to both support and challenge the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. The governors' steering group has been very effective in supporting the executive headteacher to drive the improvements necessary to raise the quality of education the school provides. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They have ensured that pupils' progress data is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay.
 - Governors receive detailed information about the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for increased participation in sport.
 - Governors ensure that systems for safeguarding pupils meet all statutory requirements. At the time of the inspection, the school met all government requirements in relation to safer recruitment.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively as a team to establish clear guidelines and have high expectations of all pupils in the school. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, when moving around the school and when having lunch and socialising. In a small number of lessons, where weak teaching does not challenge or engage pupils, there is some poor behaviour that disrupts learning.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a variety of roles, including acting as sports leaders and contributing to the active and effective school council. This makes a good contribution to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils attend school regularly; attendance is average and rising. The attendance of pupils with persistently high absence has substantially improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils persistently absent is now well below average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school and enjoy their lessons. They say that the school is a very friendly place. Behaviour in school has improved since the last inspection. Teachers and other adults apply the school's rules consistently and fairly. Any incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and followed up swiftly.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and, if it happens, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are aware of different forms of prejudice-based bullying. They are polite and respectful to adults and each other.
- The school has ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of what makes an unsafe situation. They are able to explain the school's extensive work to promote e-safety clearly and are very aware of the potential dangers of social media.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and are reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the governing body. All staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior and middle leaders have continued to build on the improvements in teaching noted in recent monitoring inspection reports. Teaching is now good across the school, with only a few remaining areas of weakness. This was confirmed by observing teaching and learning, through examining the work in pupils' books and by the school's checks on the quality of teaching and records of pupils' progress. Effective teaching results in all groups of pupils making good progress during their time in the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and their behaviour. They use accurate assessments of pupils' learning to plan activities that meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Pupils enjoy lessons and say that 'learning is hard but fun'. In a Year 7 science lesson, for example, pupils investigated the effects of acid rain. They understood how burning fossil fuels affects the world around them and reflected on the outcomes of their own actions, for example when travelling in cars. In a Year 5 design technology lesson, pupils learned about the different materials used to make shoes in ancient Egypt and were able to confidently discuss why the Egyptians chose the materials they used.
- Reading is taught very effectively throughout the school. Writing is taught well, with an increased emphasis on opportunities for extended writing. Pupils enjoy writing in a variety of styles in different subjects across the curriculum.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Numeracy skills are securely developed, and pupils are increasingly encouraged to apply these skills to solve practical problems in real-life contexts.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants work well together, especially in the provision of extra help for those pupils who have special educational needs. The additional skilled help provided in lessons enables these pupils to make the same good progress as others. At other times, pupils receive additional support outside lessons; one Year 5 group read confidently and accurately, and answered challenging questions enthusiastically. Effective questioning encouraged pupils think for themselves and allowed them to learn from their mistakes.
- The presentation of written work has improved and teachers now insist that pupils set their work out neatly. The majority of marking is now of good quality; it provides better support and guidance than that observed at the time of the previous inspection.

- Classrooms and shared spaces, including corridors, are bright, colourful and attractive and are used to both celebrate pupils' achievements and show the high expectations of a number of curriculum areas.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school in Year 5 with levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that are broadly expected for age. They make good progress from their starting points and reach standards in these subjects that are above the expectations for their age by the end of Year 8.
- The school's excellent tracking system rapidly identifies any pupils who are underachieving. This enables teachers and other adults to support these pupils with carefully-targeted work.
- In the national Key Stage 2 tests in 2014, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected levels in reading and in writing were significantly above the national average. Attainment in mathematics was broadly average. Overall, pupils' attainment was one term ahead of other pupils nationally and, in writing, pupils were two terms ahead.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 achieved levels in reading, writing and mathematics which were around two terms behind other pupils in the school. In comparison with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils was around two terms behind in mathematics, one term behind in reading and at the same level in writing. The school's assessment data and evidence in pupils' books indicate that these gaps will close this year. Disadvantaged pupils in the school now make progress that is at least in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' reading skills are very well developed. They have opportunities to read regularly and are taught well. Pupils' writing skills have improved since the previous inspection. There are now more opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length in a variety of contexts in different subjects.
- Pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge are rapidly improving because of very good leadership and improved teaching. They have strong numeracy skills which they apply and use well to solve problems in real-life situations.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, they are not always given work that is challenging enough to enable them to make the best possible progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well. Their needs are identified accurately and they receive high quality support both in and out of lessons to enable their achievement to be as good as other pupils.
- Observations of teaching, evidence from pupils' books and discussions with pupils confirm that they are making good progress in subjects across the wider curriculum, including science, humanities, physical education and design technology.

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	122347
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	455513

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	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lalage Bosanquet
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Morton
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2013
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