

Monkseaton Middle School

Vernon Drive, Monkseaton, Tyne and Wear, NE25 8JN

Inspection dates 16–17 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Rates of progress and achievement are too variable in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, including for the most able. As a result, attainment is not high enough at the end of Year 6.
- Expectations of what pupils of all abilities and ages can achieve are not consistently high enough.
- Teaching requires improvement. There is an uneven level of challenge in pupils' learning. This is because tasks are not always well enough matched to their abilities using the available progress information.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement.
- Not enough opportunities are provided in subjects for pupils to practise their speaking, listening, reading, spelling and writing skills.
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 is not closing fast enough.
- Teachers' written guidance for improvement in books does not consistently add to the level of challenge in pupils' learning.
- Governors do not hold senior and middle leaders to account robustly enough to ensure a fast rate of school improvement to reverse the slip in achievement and attainment since the previous inspection.
- The positive action taken by senior leaders to strengthen teaching has not had enough time to impact, especially in reading and writing in Key Stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors are fully committed to ensure that underperformance and underachievement is diligently tackled.
- There is a more consistent pattern of good progress and achievement, especially in mathematics in Years 7 and 8.
- Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through a thought-provoking range of activities and visits.
- An interesting curriculum engages all pupils well.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour are mirrored in their above average attendance.
- Pupils feel safe and are well protected. High quality care and support are provided for pupils, especially those who are potentially vulnerable or with high levels of anxiety.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons, including four paired observations carried out with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Work scrutiny was also undertaken with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and around the school in order to check on the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, staff, governors and a local authority officer.
- The inspectors 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 the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alexandra Hook

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This middle-deemed secondary school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- A broadly average proportion of the pupils are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for support from 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 school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day for pupils.
- Currently, three dual registered pupils attend Moorbridge, the local authority pupil referral provision.
- The school has experienced a significant turnover of staff at senior and middle leadership since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure a consistent and sustained pattern of rapid progress and high achievement by:
 - raising expectations even higher of what pupils of all ages and abilities can do and achieve
 - constantly using available progress information to shape and adapt activities to the right level for each pupil
 - taking full advantage of the opportunities that exist in all subjects to practise pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing
 - making certain that corrections are always completed after marking and that guidance for improvement constantly adds to the level of challenge in pupils' learning.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - establishing a rigorous and effective system of checking the progress and achievement that each pupil makes to enable leaders and managers to more accurately check school performance
 - sharpening the checking and analytical skills of senior leaders so that they have an accurate view of school performance and ensuring improvement planning is more precisely informed
 - harnessing the experience and skills that exist in the governing body to hold leaders and managers fully accountable for school performance
 - ensuring that the impact of all improvement action that is taken is accurately measured and evaluated.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Following the previous inspection school performance slipped, particularly in the pattern of achievement and attainment of pupils in Years 5 and 6. The strengthened senior and middle leadership team is improving the quality of teaching. As a result, the drop-off in performance is being addressed as pupils' progress quickens and achievement rises more consistently. Nevertheless, additional action is required to increase the pace of improvement further.
- Systems to check pupils' progress and achievement are insufficiently robust. As a result, inconsistencies in school and pupil performance are not always identified accurately and precisely enough. Additionally, the impact of the action taken to improve is not measured accurately enough. Opportunities are missed to inform planning even more precisely.
- Middle leaders are increasingly confident in deploying their skills to check robustly the performance of pupils and in addressing any inconsistencies in their drive to improve learning in their subject areas. Nevertheless, they are not consistently rigorous enough in checking the impact of the actions that they take.
- Teaching and learning are competently led and managed. Staff training and specialist support from the local authority has been helpful in raising achievement and attainment. Performance management ensures that pay progression is not automatic. However, opportunities are missed to ensure that measurable performance milestones, derived from pupils' progress checking information, are embedded firmly enough in the targets for each member of staff.
- The interesting and at times stimulating curriculum is thoughtfully shaped to match the experiences and interests of all pupils. Inspirational elements help to boost aspirations and self-esteem extremely well, for example the initiatives in science and technology to capture the interests of girls and engage them in science and engineering. The experiences provided really help to extend the pupils' grasp of the cultural diversity that exists in modern Britain. Helpful careers guidance and information prepares pupils well to transfer to secondary school. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes overlooked to practise essential skills, such as in literacy, in all subjects.
- The school's strong ethos and secure values are firmly supported by the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, acknowledged British values of tolerance, fair play, equality and respect for difference prepare pupils successfully for their next stage in education.
- The school is strongly committed to make certain that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. Any form of discrimination is not tolerated. Despite the strengths in the school's commitment, not all pupils exceed equally well.
- The pupil premium funding and the catch-up funding in Year 7 are being used increasingly effectively to close the wide attainment gaps that were apparent in recent national tests. Although gaps are closing, they are not closing quickly or consistently enough, because their progress requires improvement.
- Positive links with parents and the wider community help to broaden pupils' personal development and well-being.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively to enhance staff coaching skills, promote healthy lifestyles and encourage more advanced skills in a variety of sports, such as judo. Participation rates in sport are good and this includes in clubs and teams.
- Safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Effective practice is firmly established in day-to-day routines. Assured approaches are adopted in the care and protection of pupils, especially those who are potentially vulnerable. This includes ensuring those pupils educated in the pupil referral provision attend regularly and are kept safe.
- The local authority has an accurate and insightful view of school performance and challenges and supports in equal measure. It provides strong support for the collaborative working across local schools which is a developing strength, improving the quality of transition between the schools. It also provides good quality specialist training and support, such as in literacy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has demonstrated much commitment in its push to improve the quality of education that the school provides. Governors bring much experience and expertise to their role. They are well aware of the value of linking staff pay progression with classroom performance and ensure that this is followed. They frequently check the quality of teaching, pupil performance information and the effectiveness with which pupil premium funding is used and the impact that it has on pupils' achievement and attainment. They are familiar with strengths and weaknesses in school performance, including in the quality of teaching. However, they do not provide a sharply focused enough level of

challenge to senior and middle leaders. This is because their expertise is not deployed effectively enough to have a full impact on holding staff to account and driving improvement at a faster rate. Consequently, they have an overgenerous view of school performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. At times, the behaviour of older pupils in classrooms and social areas is very commendable. Pupils are prepared to work hard and as a result, classrooms are busy, ordered and happy places in which to work. Relationships between pupils and with adults are sometimes excellent. Routines, including at lunchtime and in the breakfast and after-school club, are well established and well understood by pupils.
- Pupils report that disruption of any kind is infrequent; although now and then their concentration does slip, it does not slow the pace of learning appreciably. This is because the boundaries that are set for pupils' conduct are well understood by the pupils. Any inappropriate behaviour is promptly resolved by staff.
- Pupils are friendly, considerate and engaging. They are happy to take responsibility in the classroom, such as when conscientiously tidying up at the end of a lesson. Pupils are responding positively to the extra demands staff are making of them to improve the accuracy and layout of their work in books. Consequently, they show increasing pride in their work and the achievements of the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are sensible, trustworthy and thoughtful. They are taught how to recognise risk and danger and be safety conscious, such as when using an electric hob to cook pasta in boiling water. First-class care and support are provided for pupils, especially those who are potentially vulnerable.
- Pupils are well informed about bullying in its various forms, including cyber-bullying. In discussions, pupils confirm that mean, inconsiderate or unkind behaviour is infrequent. They observe that staff are always on hand to share a worry or concern.
- Absence rates are low, reflecting the good level of pupils' enjoyment of life in school, the robust checking systems the school has in place and the positive support of parents. Thorough checks are made to ensure that pupils attending off-site provision are safe, behave well and attend their placement regularly.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, because at times its impact over time is uneven. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not making fast enough progress, especially in their reading and writing. Achievement and attainment are not rising fast enough in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils of all abilities and needs. When pupils' rate of progress is variable and achievement too low:
 - expectations of what each pupil can achieve, regardless of starting point, are not high enough
 - insufficient use is made of available pupils' progress information to shape and adapt tasks to encourage learning at a fast and consistent pace
 - questioning does not constantly check and stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding enough
 - insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their reading and writing skills.
- In those activities when expectations and demands are higher, staff use their detailed insight of pupils' abilities and interests to good effect to plan activities that capture and hold pupils' interests. This is the case in Years 7 and 8 where pupils' knowledge and understanding are challenged effectively. As a result, they achieve well. In the best learning, pupils are expected to think critically, reason and justify their ideas and solutions. Consequently, interest is captured and held, and opportunities used to enhance pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills continually.
- In activities when achievement is higher, activities are better matched to pupils' abilities and accordingly progress is accelerating at a faster rate and achievement is rising. For example, a group of Year 8 pupils were observed, engrossed finding two unknowns in simultaneous equations. Excellent use by the teacher of interactive technology ensured that pupils were able to find the unknowns using graphical methods. Questioning constantly checked pupils' understanding, with the teacher insisting upon correct terminology to explain their solutions.

- Although frequent, helpful marking informs pupils what they have done well, corrections are not always demanded and written improvement guidance in pupils' books is not always consistently provided to add to the level of challenge to their learning. The accuracy and layout of pupils' work in books is improving, although opportunities are sometimes missed to improve the level of accuracy and refinement even more, such as when constructing two dimensional figures, in graphs and diagrams.
- There are individual examples of good quality targeted help and support for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs. This enables pupils to participate fully in lessons and make good progress. For example, signs and symbols were observed being used highly effectively by both adults and classmates to support the very few pupils who are profoundly deaf. This included in a busy, practical cooking lesson.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils start in Year 5 with skills that are typical for their age, although cohort skills can be variable on arrival. At the end of Year 8, despite pupils' attainment being normally above that typical for their age, the progress and achievement of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, requires improvement. This is because their rates of progress and achievement are too variable over time, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014, attainment was below average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. Too few pupils make good progress and too few pupils reached Level 5 and above in mathematics, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Positive action has been taken by senior leaders to address underperformance and improve the quality of teaching in order address the slip in performance since the previous inspection. The demands made of pupils are rising. The impact of the action taken can be seen in the emerging higher achievement in mathematics and science. A more even pattern of good progress in most subjects is evident in Years 7 and 8. However, pupils' achievement remains too variable in Years 5 and 6 in their reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Specialist literacy training and support for staff is having a positive impact as the rates of progress in spelling, grammar, punctuation and extended writing pick up. A determined drive to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve to improve achievement and attainment in mathematics is also paying dividends. In the current Year 6, attainment in all subjects is predicted to be broadly average. This is confirmed by inspection evidence, including work scrutiny. Nevertheless, the rate of improvement is still not yet fast enough, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- The most-able pupils respond positively when their learning is inspiring and holds their interest well, such as in science and technology. Despite improvements, most-able pupils do not achieve the highest levels consistently enough in all subjects throughout the school.
- Overall, those pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This includes those educated off-site. Staff work hard to provide the right kind of support, but there are times when pupils' intervention and support programmes are not focused sharply enough upon their specific learning needs.
- Staff work conscientiously to narrow the attainment gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils. At the end of Year 6 in the 2014 national tests, pupils were between four and six terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Similar gaps were apparent when compared with the attainment of their classmates, in reading, writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Attainment gaps in mathematics were just over two terms.
- In the current Year 6, gaps in comparison with others nationally are predicted to be reduced in all subjects. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils' progress is quickening as a result of the improving teaching, underpinned in the case of literacy by specialist training. The positive impact of Year 7 catch-up programmes is helping to close attainment gaps in Years 7 and 8.
- School staff are working diligently promoting a whole-school drive to foster a love and enjoyment of reading and providing time for pupils to read, for example, using registration time to enable pupils to read more widely and often. Younger pupils, display increasing levels of confidence and fluency in their reading, although skills are not yet high enough. Older pupils are enthusiastic discussing their favourite books, authors and themes. Progressively pupils, including the boys, are reading more extensively, but opportunities are not always used fully to enhance their speaking, listening and reading.

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	108637
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	461696

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	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Pia
Headteacher	Karen Charlton
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
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