

# Inspection of Bellingham Middle School and Sports College

Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 2EN

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Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Bellingham Middle School (BMS) is an exceptionally caring school. Pupils say that staff really look after them well. Pupils have someone to talk to if they need help or advice. Pupils are very happy here and they say that they are safe. Pupils told inspectors that bullying almost never happens. If it does, staff sort it out immediately. Pupils have lots of opportunities to go on school trips and do extra activities. They really like the reward trips on offer. When pupils arrive in Year 5, they quickly make friends and settle into school life.

All pupils access the curriculum equally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support from staff. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils behave well. The behaviour policy is clear, and pupils say that it helps them to be good. Staff expect all pupils to aim high and achieve well.

Leaders at BMS are ambitious for pupils, and they want them to do well. Despite the recent turbulence during which a school closure notice was overturned, leaders are improving the curriculum. This is to help pupils know more and remember more. The plans for English and mathematics are ready. The curriculum is still developing in other subjects.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum is under review at BMS. Some subjects, including mathematics and English, are further on in this process. Pupils know more and remember more in these subjects. External exam results at the end of key stage 2 show this. This is because leaders design the curriculum so that pupils build on their prior learning in a logical way. However, in some subjects, such as music and French, pupils struggle to recall their knowledge. Work to improve wider curriculum subjects has begun. Early signs in science and art are that the new approach to the curriculum is helping. Pupils are beginning to build up and remember their knowledge and display their understanding.

Reading is really important at BMS. Pupils read a lot because they enjoy reading. There is a reading lesson each day. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that match their ability. There are lots of books to choose from in the library. Pupils' reading and vocabulary continue to improve as they read harder books.

Pupils at BMS behave very well. They are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and to each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good, and few pupils are regularly absent. Bullying rarely happens here.

There is a huge variety of extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils. These usually complement the curriculum. For example, pupils can do first aid, Spanish, drama or learn about the world of work. They can work in the wildlife garden or

bake cakes and sell them to the community. Pupils can go on many trips. They go to places such as synagogues, churches and museums. They have been to London and the Houses of Parliament, and a pizza restaurant.

Pupils learn about life in modern Britain and understand British values. These are taught during personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. Pupils also learn about careers and attend careers days. Outside speakers talk to them about different types of jobs.

Pupils with SEND learn alongside others. The school is fully inclusive. Staff adapt activities so that everyone can join in. Teaching assistants have excellent relationships with the pupils they support. This helps pupils with SEND to do as well as others. The special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable. She ensures that staff have the skills and training to support pupils with SEND.

The acting headteacher is passionate, determined and dedicated. She leads by example and is very clear that everything the school does has the best interests of pupils in mind. She is raising the profile of the school in the community. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about her. Staff are also very positive and say that she always considers their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) knows pupils well. School safeguarding training makes sure that all staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Safeguarding records are detailed. They show that the DSL perseveres to make sure that pupils get the help and support they need. Pupils say that they are safe, and parents agree that their child is safe in school. The DSL ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They are clear about how to stay safe online and how to stay safe when riding their bikes.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. Therefore, the transition statements have been applied to this inspection. However, it is clear from their actions in planning the English and mathematics curriculums and training staff in how to deliver these that leaders are in the process of bringing this about.
- Leaders should continue to plan and sequence the curriculum in the foundation subjects so that pupils know more, remember more and build on their prior learning. In particular, they must ensure that pupils understand the skills and knowledge needed in each area, for example the skills that a scientist, musician or historian needs in order to be successful in these subjects.

- Staff who are non-specialists should continue to access professional development opportunities to strengthen their knowledge of the subjects they teach. This could be made more specific, for example, by completing activities in key areas within subjects, for example forces in physics.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122350
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110579
<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Gundry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Samuels
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bellinghammiddle.northumberland.sch.uk/">www.bellinghammiddle.northumberland.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11–12 May 2017

## Information about this school

- Last year, the school was given a closure notice by Northumberland County Council. This was overturned on appeal.
- The current headteacher is an acting headteacher and she took up the post in April 2018.
- The school uses two registered schools for alternative provision. These are Percy Hedley School in Newcastle upon Tyne and Hexham Priory School in Northumberland.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized middle school.
- The school shares its site with Bellingham Primary School.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors undertook deep dives into the following subjects: mathematics, English, science and history. This involved a meeting with subject leaders, visits to

a sample of lessons in these subjects, work scrutiny of books, and discussions with teachers and with pupils from the lessons observed.

- An inspector visited additional lessons on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, the Northumberland County Council school improvement partner, and governors (including the chair of governors). Inspectors spoke with the pupil premium lead at Northumberland County Council.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, and safeguarding files and records.
- Inspectors took into account the 33 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Ten members of staff and 35 pupils completed Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. All of these responses were taken into consideration.

### **Inspection team**

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Aitchison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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