

Inspection of Monkseaton Middle School

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

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 December 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Monkseaton Middle School is a much-improved school. Most of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire recognise improvements have been made. The school is now providing a good quality of education. The curriculum is well planned. Teachers bring their subjects to life. Classrooms are bright and colourful. There are good resources available to help pupils learn.

Pupils behave well in lessons. The school is calm. Pupils apply themselves diligently. They enjoy contributing to lessons and take pride in their work. Pupils are considerate of one another. Older pupils take on many responsibilities, such as serving as Year 8 mentors, animal technicians or school librarians. They set a good example to younger pupils. The strong pastoral system ensures that bullying hardly ever happens.

There is a well-planned curriculum to support pupils' personal development. They learn about people who are different from themselves and the importance of respect and tolerance. The teaching they get about relationships is preparing them well for adolescence. Most pupils are developing a mature and responsible outlook on life. There is a broad extra-curricular offer to support pupils' interests. Clubs range from 'steel pans' to 'animal husbandry'. Around three quarters of pupils attend at least one club. Pupils value these opportunities. They see them as an important part of school life.

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

Leaders have raised the bar. They have improved the curriculum and strengthened the quality of teaching. The curriculum is now suitably ambitious. Topics taught in Years 5 and 6 match the ambition of the national curriculum. Primary teachers are skilled in linking different subjects together through the topics they have chosen. In Years 7 and 8, pupils now get more teaching from subject specialists. This is helping to ensure lessons are packed with subject knowledge.

Teachers have developed some effective approaches. In English and mathematics, lessons begin with pupils recalling prior knowledge. This is helping them to remember more detail. The approach is being used more widely in other subjects. In modern foreign languages (MFL), for example, pupils do 'refrenching' sessions to make sure they remember important vocabulary. Some teachers use ongoing assessment skilfully to check pupils have grasped the knowledge taught. However, some teachers do not always check pupils have grasped new knowledge before moving on to the next task.

Leaders have taken bold steps to make sure reading is promoted. They have given more time on the timetable to reading. Teachers are using well-considered approaches in reading lessons. Pupils are broadening their vocabulary and learning how to find more meaning within texts. Online meetings with authors are helping to inspire a love of reading. However, not enough is being done to help the handful of

pupils who join the school without a secure grasp of phonics. They are not practising phonics or reading from books that match their phonics knowledge often enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) generally receive good support in lessons. Teaching assistants understand their role. They support pupils to learn the same curriculum content as other pupils. Leaders make sure that these pupils have clearly written support plans. Occasionally, teachers do not act on these plans and ensure the right support is in place.

Behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection. Everyone recognises this. The behaviour system is well understood. Over time, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced. Less experienced teachers and trainee teachers all report no problems in managing classes. Pupils who have received sanctions are supported well and learn to manage their own behaviour better.

Senior leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the school. They have made good use of external support. They have built effective systems so that improvements can be sustained. One parent said, 'The school has coped extremely well to support students, carers and families, both academically, physically and mentally during the ever-changing pandemic.' The oversight provided by the governing body has also improved. They have supported leaders effectively. They check the school's work carefully and hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders have fostered a strong culture of safeguarding. They have ensured that all adults are well trained to spot the signs of abuse or neglect. Pupils at risk are identified quickly. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as social care and the police, to protect children. They push hard to make sure children get the care they need. Leaders have raised awareness about sexual harassment between pupils and have intervened appropriately when required. There is a tangible feeling of care and kindness in school. Pupils feel safe within this respectful school community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have improved the quality of the curriculum planning for the teaching of reading. Most pupils are benefiting from these changes. However, a small group of pupils who entered the school without secure phonics knowledge are not getting enough help. They need more frequent phonics practise and more opportunities to read phonetically decodable books. Leaders should ensure these pupils receive more intensive support that helps them to secure early reading skills more rapidly.

- The use of ongoing assessment by teachers is variable. There is some excellent practice. But some teachers do not routinely check pupils have fully understood the knowledge taught before moving on to the next step in the learning sequence. Leaders should monitor this aspect of teaching more closely and support teachers to develop this aspect of practice.
- Support plans for pupils with SEND have been sharpened up. They include specific targets and adaptations to help pupils access the curriculum. However, teachers are not consistently using this information. Leaders should check that teachers always follow the adaptations set out in SEND support plans, so that pupils' learning is not undermined.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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

Unique reference number	108637
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10200682
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Haynes
Headteacher	Kirsty Nichols-Mackay
Website	http://www.monkseatonmiddle.org/
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018, having been the head of school under an executive headteacher at the time of the last section 5 inspection. Several teachers have left the school and new teachers have been recruited. The governing body has restructured and reduced in size.
- The school has received support from a national leader of education and has received funding from the Department for Education's One Vision programme.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority and the national leader of education who has supported the school. An inspector also met the chair and vice chairs of the governing body.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical education and MFL. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects to look at how the curriculum was being delivered.
- Inspectors looked at the school's record of vetting checks made on adults who work in the school. Inspectors also discussed safeguarding arrangements with designated safeguarding leads, teachers and pupils.
- An inspector met with leaders who coordinate provision for special educational needs and checked the quality of support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parental survey, Parent View, and the responses to the staff and pupil survey. An inspector met some members of staff separately to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

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