

# Inspection of Morpeth Newminster Middle School

Mitford Road, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1RH

---

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

**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?**

Pupils and staff are proud to be part of the Morpeth Newminster Middle School community. It is a friendly place where pupils and adults consistently treat each other with kindness and respect.

The school provides an education that extends far beyond the academic curriculum. The vast majority of pupils take advantage of the wide range of extra-curricular groups and clubs that are on offer, including a vibrant range of creative arts groups.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will benefit from the opportunities the school provides. Pupils with potential barriers are supported effectively to achieve well and join in the full life of the school.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They move around the buildings calmly, showing consideration for others. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. The difference between bullying and 'falling out' is clearly understood by pupils. Pupils are confident that bullying is dealt with effectively on the rare occasions it occurs.

The vast majority of parents and carers have positive views of the school. A comment from one summed up the views expressed by many: 'Staff really care about my children and always go the extra mile to understand their needs and help them to succeed.'

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

There is a clear curriculum in each subject for what pupils will learn, and when. Senior leaders check that this is in place. Subject leaders meet regularly with local schools to make sure that what pupils learn 'joins up' as pupils move between them. This level of planning ensures that pupils achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Subject leadership is at its strongest where leaders engage beyond the school, such as with subject associations and networks of leaders of their subject. This helps develop leaders' thinking around curriculum and assessment. Where subject leaders do not engage as widely, the curriculum is sometimes not as ambitious as it could be, and pupils achieve less well.

Teachers carefully select, often with the support of subject leaders, the most appropriate ways to explain key concepts and ideas. Teachers are effective in assessing what pupils already know, and can do, and adjust their teaching to ensure that pupils are always building on secure foundations.

Pupils who are at the early stages of reading receive appropriate and well-delivered support. They practise sounds that they have been taught before, and are taught new sounds and how they can be used in spelling and reading.

Staff share a commitment that all pupils in school will study the full curriculum. Appropriate support is given to pupils with additional needs to allow this to happen. This is effective in allowing pupils with additional needs to learn well.

Pupils in all years have a rich and varied range of experiences related to careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG). These include events specifically designed to challenge stereotypes. For example, the 'Girls in Engineering' event challenges the perception that engineering careers are most suitable for boys.

Leaders identified that the previous personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum was not providing as strong an education as they wanted for pupils. They are developing a new curriculum that aims to build pupils' knowledge and understanding over time. This development work is ongoing, but the curriculum planned so far is well sequenced and is more effectively supporting pupils to develop their understanding of their place in the world around them.

Pupils experience a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Many of these opportunities have continued, with suitable adaptations, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the whole-school production of 'The Lion King' was undertaken virtually. Where pupils are not taking advantage of the additional opportunities, adults in school work with pupils, and families, to overcome any barriers that exist.

Leaders have carefully identified those pupils who have poor attendance which is unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have taken steps to improve the attendance of these pupils with some success. Leaders have identified that this is an ongoing priority.

Leaders have a measured approach to decision-making. For example, leaders identified that more pupils in Year 5 needed additional support than had been the case in previous years. Leaders carefully considered, along with a headteacher from a first school, how to best meet this need. As a result, leaders made some adjustments to the curriculum and timetable. This is supporting those pupils to learn effectively.

Staff well-being is a priority for leaders. They encourage all staff to identify 'pinch points' in their workload and identify tasks that are inefficient. Leaders take all reasonable steps to address issues raised by staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in school. All adults working in school have regular safeguarding training, including training in how to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders have ensured that there are systems in school that allow staff to pass on concerns efficiently. The school's designated safeguarding lead, and

their deputy, work effectively together to take appropriate action, when necessary, to protect pupils. They work effectively with outside agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn about keeping safe, including online. Pupils are confident that there is an adult in school who will listen and help them if they are worried about their safety.

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

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

- Curriculum thinking regarding appropriate levels of ambition and assessment is not as developed as it should be in some subjects. This limits the progress that pupils make. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive appropriate subject-specific continuing professional development to develop their expertise in these areas.
- The aims of the new PSHE curriculum, which is currently being developed, and the existing CEIAG provision are not clearly defined. This limits the ability of leaders to evaluate their effectiveness and make suitable adjustments to enhance the provision. Leaders should ensure that the goals of the programmes are clear, and that mechanisms are put in place to evaluate their effectiveness.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137748
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200688
<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	547
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Colin Pearson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Kinninment
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://newminster.the3rivers.net">newminster.the3rivers.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 March 2018

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Three Rivers Learning Trust.
- The school has a local governing body called the academy council.
- The school has a lower-than-average proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals
- The school has a broadly average proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs and/or disabilities support.

## 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with: the headteacher; the deputy headteacher; the leader in charge of careers, information and guidance; leaders in charge of extra-curricular provision; the leader in charge of the PSHE programme; the special

educational needs coordinator; curriculum and pastoral leaders; the chief executive officer of The Three Rivers Learning Trust; and a group of members of the academy council.

- Inspectors analysed 97 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to teachers, teaching assistants and support staff over the course of the inspection, and considered 40 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils, spoke to others informally during the inspection and reviewed 48 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentary information, including school policies, school self-evaluation, records of behaviour, minutes from governing body meetings and documentation regarding safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school and looked at pupils’ work with curriculum leaders. Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, languages, technology and history. In addition, inspectors explored reading across the school.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Wren, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Knox	Her Majesty’s Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022