

Inspection of a good school: Gosforth East Middle School

Harewood Road, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 5JT

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Outcome

Gosforth East Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Gosforth East Middle School is a warm and caring community where everyone shows respect for each other. Relationships between pupils and adults are very strong. Pupils feel confident to ask for help and support when they need to. This could be about their learning or other issues. Pupils are confident that they will get the help they need. Bullying is uncommon. When it happens, pupils are confident it will be dealt with effectively. Pupils feel safe and enjoy attending school.

Pupils work hard in lessons. They are keen to succeed. The atmosphere around school is calm. Behaviour in, and outside of, lessons is positive. Where issues do arise, they are dealt with appropriately and effectively.

The school's impressive personal development programme enriches the education that pupils receive. Pupils benefit from opportunities to attend an extensive range of clubs and curriculum trips. Pupils undertake significant leadership roles, working with others in school and in the wider community. For example, Year 8 sports ambassadors expertly organised the whole-school sports day. Pupils promote their ideas articulately, and demonstrate resilience and 'on-their-feet thinking' when undertaking these leadership roles.

Pupils study curriculums that are carefully planned and skilfully taught. They achieve well across the full range of subjects and are very well prepared for the transition to high school.

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

Leaders, including governors, are relentless in their desire for all areas of the school to improve. They actively seek out ideas, guidance and support that will help them to provide the very best education possible for pupils. Staff feel valued and supported. They work hard, but staff know they are only asked to do things that make a positive difference to pupils.

Subject leaders have clearly identified what they want pupils to learn, and when, in each subject. They work closely with staff from local first schools to ensure that learning in Year 5 builds on what pupils have learned previously. Links with the local high school have also been made, to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education in each subject. While these links are in place, this collaborative work is not as far advanced. Leaders are working on developing these links further.

Subject leaders support teachers' subject-specific development effectively through subject team meetings and, where appropriate, working individually with staff. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and support pupils to learn effectively. Teachers provide frequent, and varied, ways for pupils to practise recalling and using previous learning. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned in the past.

Leaders supplement learning with carefully considered school trips and visits. For example, pupils recently visited the coast as part of a geography unit on coastal erosion. The teaching that took place on this trip strengthened pupils' learning about coastal erosional processes, and the way these shape the coastal landscape.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their learning is strong. They talk confidently about what they have learned, using subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils achieve highly in national assessments at the end of Year 6.

Leaders have ensured that reading has a high profile in school. The curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils read a wide range of interesting texts that inspire pupils' own reading choices.

In some subjects, leaders have not broken down more complicated ideas into small enough sections to be taught, and practised, before being pieced together. Where this is the case, pupils' learning is less secure.

There is a determination that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will study the full curriculum. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to the way they teach and, where appropriate, careful adaptations to the resources they use. Learning support assistants understand what is being taught and how to best support each individual pupil. This helps pupils with SEND to be successful with their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff know the risks that pupils may face. They are clear about signs that indicate pupils may be at risk. They know the importance of raising any concerns they have, no matter how small. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to secure the necessary support for pupils and their families, if this is needed.

Pupils are taught important information about growing up, and about how to keep themselves safe. They know how to report any concerns to adults. Pupils are confident that they will receive help and support if it is needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Further thought should be given to how pupils master complicated skills or develop a deeper understanding of particular themes and concepts. Currently, in some subjects, opportunities for pupils to learn systematically and to build on prior learning are underdeveloped. Leaders should review and refine the curriculum so that pupils, in all subjects, learn new skills or ideas by practising regularly and building on what has gone before in a systematic and deliberate manner.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 108521 |
| Local authority | Newcastle upon Tyne |
| Inspection number | 10240428 |
| 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 | 517 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Paul Patterson |
| Headteacher | Tim Stout |
| Website | www.gosfortheast.newcastle.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 4 and 5 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of Gosforth Schools' Trust, a group of ten first and middle schools that work closely together.
- As a result of new housing developments, the school will expand, on a temporary basis, to take in six forms per year group in September.

Information about this inspection

- 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 designated safeguarding lead and other leaders, including the SEND coordinator, over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentary information, including school policies, school self-evaluation, minutes from governing body meetings and information regarding safeguarding processes.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives into mathematics, English and geography. In each deep dive, they spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff undertaking a range of roles in school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, and considered the responses to the pupil survey.
- An inspector considered the responses to the parent survey and spoke to a number of parents present at the whole-school sports day.

Inspection team

Steve Wren, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Linkins

His Majesty's Inspector

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