

Inspection of a good school: Gosforth Central Middle School

Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 1UN

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Outcome

Gosforth Central Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning at this vibrant and welcoming school. Pupils are taught about kindness and how to show care and respect to one another. They speak positively about what they have been taught about equality and are very clear that everyone is equal. Pupils say that staff are helpful and supportive. They know they can talk to staff if they are worried about anything. Pupils are safe here.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils listen attentively in lessons and are encouraged to participate. They work well together, often sharing their ideas. Pupils typically behave well. There is a purposeful and calm atmosphere in classrooms.

Pupils are proud of the contributions they make to the school. They enjoy helping others in their role as playground buddies and representing pupils' views as school councillors. The school council is a particular strength. Pupils are proud that they have shaped aspects of their school through this work. Pupils benefit from attending a vast range of activities that enhance their talents and interests. These include Spanish dance, robotics club and choir. The school ensures that pupils with SEND are supported to access extra-curricular activities.

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

The well-ordered curriculum begins at the start of Year 5, where the school has thought about the essential knowledge that pupils need to build upon from first school. There are renewed curriculums in place in many subjects. Across key stages 2 and 3, pupils experience a carefully designed curriculum that is delivered in a logical order. Staff teach using appropriate and well-chosen resources. Teachers use questioning well to check what pupils know and remember within the current units of work. However, following recent changes in the school's curriculum, the school is at an earlier stage of development in how teachers check that pupils are remembering more knowledge over time. In some subjects, retrieval and recall is not used consistently to check what pupils have learned.

As a result, pupils' prior knowledge is not sufficiently checked. This limits the depth of knowledge some pupils secure in these subjects.

The school is aspirational for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are supported well. Teaching is adapted to meet their needs. This means that pupils with SEND learn well and progress through the curriculum alongside their peers.

The school has implemented an effective reading programme. This starts in Year 5 where the gaps that pupils may have are accurately identified. There is a phonics programme for pupils who need support to decode. This has been carefully considered. Teachers assess pupils regularly to ensure they build their reading knowledge well. Pupils become fluent readers because of effective interventions. Staff have the expertise they need to teach reading effectively. The school ensures that pupils practise their reading regularly, both in school and at home. Pupils enjoy the books their teachers share with them. A love of reading is fostered by regular visits to the school library and teachers reading a range of books to their classes, including texts chosen by pupils.

Pupils behave respectfully towards each other and staff. Low-level disruption to learning is rare and any incidents are quickly dealt with. Pupils understand the importance of the school values. Effective systems are in place to manage pupils' attendance. Leaders work closely with families to identify any barriers that may exist and have put in place strategies to support families where attendance needs to improve.

The school places importance on pupils' wider development. Enterprise lessons are used effectively to enhance pupils' understanding of careers and the world of work. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to their community by collecting for local foodbanks. Pupils enjoy taking on leadership responsibilities across the school. They take their positions of responsibility seriously. Every pupil in this inclusive school is a member of the school council. They talk confidently about what British values mean. Pupils understand about healthy relationships. They know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils are well prepared to contribute positively to society as responsible, active citizens.

Parents and carers value the wide range of clubs and activities that are on offer. Staff are very positive about the school. They work closely together and support each other well. Staff appreciate the steps that the school takes to support their well-being and workload. They are proud to work at the school. Relationships between staff, pupils and governors are extremely positive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The consistent use of retrieval and recall strategies is still being developed in some curriculum subjects. It is not yet used well enough to assess that pupils have remembered the prior knowledge they have been taught. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well enough over time. The school needs to ensure that assessment strategies for recall and retrieval are used effectively to ensure that pupils have depth of knowledge.

Background

When we have judged 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2015.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	108519
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10313215
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	582
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jayne Thorpe
Headteacher	Deeanne Smith
Website	www.gosforthcent.newcastle.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	16 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with the school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed behaviour as pupils moved around the school, during lessons, in the outdoor play areas and in the dining hall.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' behaviour and attendance records and minutes of meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's survey for staff.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Downs

Ofsted Inspector

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