



# Ponteland Middle School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122329  
**LEA**  
**Inspection number** 281233  
**Inspection dates** 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mary Sewell

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|                                    |                         |                           |                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Middle deemed secondary | <b>School address</b>     | Callerton Lane                     |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community               |                           | Ponteland                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 9 to 13                 |                           | Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed                   | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01661 824853                       |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 605                     | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01661 860020                       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body      | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mr Mike Sadler                     |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 1 June 2000             | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mrs Caroline Pryer                 |

|                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>9 to 13 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>19 October 2005 -<br>20 October 2005 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>281233 |
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Ponteland is a larger than average middle school. It serves mainly the Darras Hall area and the great majority of pupils come from affluent homes. Most pupils are white British and enter school with standards well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whose first language is not English, or who take free school meals is well below average. The school has had a period of staffing disturbance; the headteacher took up her post this month.

## **Key for inspection grades**

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  |
| Grade 2 | Good         |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   |

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features and which gives good value for money. The new headteacher has got to know the school very quickly and is already having an impact on pupils' learning. The decline in standards at the higher level in English in 2004 has been recognised and addressed. Closer links with the first schools are needed. The vast majority of pupils make good progress and attain standards which are well above average. Pupils enjoy being at the school and are mature and articulate. They work hard but do not always know what they need to do to improve in all subjects. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school; this is reflected in the good attendance rates and the practical help they give. The school knows itself well and its view of its own performance matches the inspectors' evaluation. The excellent governing body, headteacher and leadership team have set a vision for improvement which is enthusiastically embraced by the staff. The school has been slow to address the issue from the last inspection. However, effective systems for monitoring individual pupil progress are now in place and are impacting on standards. The formation of the new leadership team, combined with overwhelming staff support, means that the school has a good capacity to improve still further.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the practice of sharing assessment criteria with the pupils to establish a common framework for learning across all subjects.
- Liaise more closely with feeder first schools to ensure continuity and progression of learning.
- Continue to raise achievement at the end of Year 6 particularly in mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with standards well above average. In 2004, staffing difficulties resulted in the test results for pupils aged 11 dipping significantly and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. However, this was recognised immediately and remedial strategies were put in place. Pupils have met challenging targets and inspectors found that standards in the current Year 8 are now improved and are in line with expectations based upon their previous test results. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 8, their standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science, which represents good achievement from Year 5.

In 2005 results improved significantly and were close to the 2003 levels although standards in mathematics were slightly lower than in science or English. Last year's results also showed an increase in the number of pupils obtaining the higher levels.

Pupils in the present Year 6 have already exceeded their challenging targets and an even higher proportion of pupils is on target to obtain the higher levels. Standards in the basic skills of numeracy, literacy and use of information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average. Achievement is good for all pupils including those who require extra support for learning and language development.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes. Attendance is above average. Their behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They show respect for their teachers and for each other. They feel safe in school, and on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, they say it is quickly dealt with. The school encourages the pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle through sensible eating; this is reinforced in science and food technology lessons and through the encouragement of sporting activities. The comprehensive personal, social and health education programme, which makes good use of professionals such as a nurse, teaches pupils about the dangers of smoking and substance abuse and covers sex education well. Links with a school in Gambia help them to appreciate other cultures. Pupils make valuable contributions to the community through charity fund-raising events, links with local clubs for the elderly and the Rotary and Lions organisations. The school prepares pupils well for adult life through good careers guidance, links with local industry and participation in events such as Young Enterprise Day as well as the promotion of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school council and peer-mentoring scheme give pupils the opportunity to take some responsibility.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are very well planned and carefully structured with a range of activities to promote effective learning. Teachers make excellent use of classroom displays and electronic whiteboards to enhance the learning environment. Good teaching is characterised by a brisk, lively pace and challenging work to which pupils respond enthusiastically. Questioning is used effectively to promote sound learning, but sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils to explain their thinking and to explore different ways of tackling a problem. Learning is less effective when pupils have not fully understood the task or when they are asked to apply concepts they have not fully grasped. Teachers use assessment well both in class and through the regular setting and marking of homework. In English, mathematics and science pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve, but this is not the case in all other subjects. Pupils' very good behaviour, application and pride in their work contribute significantly to their good learning and progress. Relationships are invariably good and this contributes to pupils' enjoyment of lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provision is good and meets all statutory requirements. In addition, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 have lessons in drama and French. All the pupils study a very good programme of personal, health and social education, which includes citizenship lessons. It is enriched by opportunities for business enterprise and curriculum links with local industries which help to prepare pupils for the world of work. Year 6 pupils' awareness of other cultures is enhanced through music, drama and story-telling, through the annual African day and through the school's link with a school in Gambia.

All pupils take part in physical education three times a week, and there are excellent extra-curricular opportunities for sport. Almost one third of pupils learn to play a musical instrument and the school has a thriving choir, ceilidh band and orchestra. The school provides a wide range of additional extra-curricular activities which are highly valued by the pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care and support for pupils; this has a very considerable bearing on their well-being, academic progress and personal development. This is an inclusive school where pupils feel listened to and valued. They feel safe and secure as their problems are dealt with quickly and effectively. The youngest pupils are well supported in their transition from the first school.

Child protection procedures and requirements are clear and are understood by all staff. Pupils, particularly those at risk, are well supported by other professionals. The health and safety procedures are properly underpinned by risk assessments which enable pupils to take part in a range of activities.

The systems for monitoring all pupils' academic progress and personal development are in place, but over rely on embryonic technology and are not always used consistently. Teachers know their pupils well and they are very effective in identifying potentially vulnerable pupils. The school works well in partnership with parents in support of pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher provides inspirational leadership which is reflected in very high quality planning. Her vision is shared by staff and governors who recognise the need to provide more rigorous strategies to identify pupils who are not reaching their full potential. This process is being driven forward by the recently appointed deputy headteacher whose enthusiasm and commitment have already enabled some older pupils to improve significantly. The school's resources are well managed; recent emphasis on information technology has greatly enhanced the learning environment. Equality of opportunity is strongly

promoted and the management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good.

The school has a good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are all involved in the process of self-evaluation. A particularly effective example is the staff self-evaluation log which highlights what is working well. This process could be further enriched by more frequent analysis of pupils' work.

Governance is outstanding; governors observe lessons, assist in the running of summer schools and provide help and support with extra-curricular activities.

The leadership and management team has the full support of colleagues and is now well placed to effect further improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 3   | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage  | NA  | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes | NA |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 | NA |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 2 | NA |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 | NA |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 2 | NA |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 2 | NA |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 1 | NA |

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 2   | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected  | Yes | NA |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise  | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse   | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements                                   | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place  | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism                                | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them                   | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills  | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams                                  | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form          | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy               | NA  |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

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NE20 9EY

21 October 2005

Dear pupils,

Thank you all for helping us when we came to inspect your school with an especially big thank you to those who took the time to speak to us either in small groups or as we walked around your school. You will be pleased to know that inspectors found that your school is a good school with some very special and exciting things taking place. Your school is well led by a super headteacher who is helped by the school governors, teachers and by you the pupils.

We found that you are all learning well and reaching high standards. This is because your teachers teach you well. They take great care to plan interesting and exciting lessons and mark your work regularly. Most of you were able to show us how much you had learned from September. You told us that you enjoyed school and felt safe and happy. You know who to go to for help when you need it.

We were pleased to see that you take part in many exciting activities. We all loved your PowerPoint weekly news broadcast. I particularly enjoyed my visit to the choir and I do hope my singing did not put you off! We noticed that many of you take part in extra sports and choose healthy foods at lunchtime. This also told us a lot about your school and the way in which you are learning to make very sensible and grown-up choices.

The most important reason why you are doing so well is down to you and your parents. Your parents help wherever they can, with homework, talking to your teachers regularly, and running the library. You all behave very well and are polite and helpful at all times. It was pleasing to see how well you got on with your teachers and with each other. You all look very smart and businesslike, and most importantly, come to school ready to work hard and do well.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Sewell Lead inspector

Annex B