



Glendale Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122352
Local Authority Northumberland
Inspection number 281240
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector John Dunne

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary	School address	15 Brewery Lane
School category	Community		Wooler, Northumberland
Age range of pupils	9–13		NE71 6QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01668 281470
Number on roll (school)	183	Fax number	01668 281210
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sue Burston
		Headteacher	Miss Ruth Bull
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Glendale is a smaller than average middle school and is set in a small rural town. It takes pupils from a very wide area, approximately 200 square miles. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is less than the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with only a small number coming from minority ethnic groups. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry is average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This friendly and caring school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has many strengths, and some outstanding features, but it also has a few areas requiring improvement. Pupils generally start and finish school with average standards although results are much better in mathematics and English than in science. Recent improvements to teaching and learning, led by the effective headteacher and newly strengthened senior team, have quickened the rate at which pupils make progress. This is uneven, and weak science results have not been tackled successfully. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The best lessons are characterised by a brisk pace, challenge for pupils and planning that meets their individual needs well. The purpose of lessons is explained clearly and pupils know what they should learn. However, some management roles and responsibilities have yet to be properly defined, including those relating to assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, checks on the impact of new initiatives, as well as the system for setting pupils' targets and checking on their progress are not widespread enough. For example, robust learning targets have been set only for pupils in English and mathematics.

Pupils' enjoyment of school and good personal development are reflected in their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are mostly mature and well behaved; poor behaviour from a small minority has been challenged vigorously. Attendance is satisfactory. Most parents are supportive of the school, and particularly value the hard work of the staff and the extra-curricular physical education (PE) and other enriching experiences offered. All pupils enjoy these activities, despite many of them living a long distance from the school, and they make an outstanding contribution to the pupils' healthy lifestyles. Teachers go to considerable lengths to extend pupils' experiences beyond those found in the local community and as a consequence, pupils' understanding of society and other cultures is well developed. In turn, pupils contribute greatly to the school and wider community, for example by providing lunch club activities for senior citizens.

The school provides satisfactory value for money. The areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report have been dealt with satisfactorily. The school shows a similar capacity for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in science.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation and include middle managers more.
- Ensure that pupils and teachers know how well pupils are doing in every subject.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that achievement and standards are satisfactory. Standards on entry to the school are average and remain broadly average

overall by the end of Key Stage 2 and by Year 8 when pupils transfer to high school. However, they are much lower in science than in mathematics and English. There has been a rising trend for pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science, but again improvement is better in mathematics and English than in science. In lessons visited by inspectors, pupils made good progress in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, English, mathematics and geography, partly reflecting better teaching and use of assessment in these subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the excellent care and focused attention they receive from teachers, teaching assistants, and through the school's work with outside agencies and partners.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and there are many outstanding features which the school has worked very hard to develop. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is demonstrated by their good attitudes to learning. The outstanding array of extra-curricular sporting and other opportunities makes a significant contribution to pupils' development and are highly valued by them. The majority of pupils choose to take these opportunities, an example being the Christmas production in which every pupil is involved. Pupils are taught successfully to adopt healthy lifestyles. Opportunities to contribute and become engaged with the community are extensive and pupils enjoy these and benefit greatly. Pupils' literacy, ICT and numeracy skills are developed well. They are given an impressive range of experiences which has enabled them to develop very good economic understanding and enterprise skills. The overwhelming majority of pupils are well mannered, well behaved and demonstrate mature attitudes and a respect for adults and each other. Good learning experiences in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and other subjects engender a clear sense of right and wrong, understanding of other cultures and outstanding spiritual and moral development. Attendance is satisfactory although a minority of parents take holidays during term time, which means their children miss out on important lessons. A small group of Year 8 boys do not always behave as well as they should.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The best lessons are characterised by a brisk pace, challenge for pupils and planning that meets their individual needs well. The purpose of lessons is explained clearly and pupils know what they should learn. Teachers use effective questioning and demonstration, for example constructing a 'mountain' of books in a geography lesson to illustrate contour lines. Pupils are independent and think for themselves. Many teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to enhance pupils' learning. The increased number of teaching assistants

is particularly benefiting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are making good progress. Assistants are well deployed and training is helping them to be even more effective in supporting pupils in lessons. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in science because pupils are not given the opportunity to discuss their findings and they are set work that is too easy. More generally, not all pupils know how well they are doing in every subject or what they need to do to improve. Overall, recent initiatives to strengthen teaching and learning are improving the rate of pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Appropriate time is now given to religious education and significant improvement has been made to the provision of ICT since the last inspection. Work in science, PE and PSHCE promotes healthy lifestyles. Stronger links between subjects are developing. The reorganisation of pupils into sets for mathematics and English is raising standards because work matches abilities better. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are included in all aspects of the curriculum, and good access allows pupils with disabilities to participate in all activities. A wide range of visits and visitors, including local people, enhances pupils' experience of school subjects, for example, by performing alongside working musicians. The outstanding range of after-school clubs is very well attended. Residential visits for older pupils provide opportunities to learn and achieve outside the classroom. There are strong links to the world of work, which prepare youngsters well for adulthood.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils know they are cared for and this is because families are well known to the school and supported when necessary. There are good arrangements in place for child protection, health and safety and to prevent bullying. Pupils are confident that there are adults they know and can trust. The majority of pupils and their parents feel that the school deals with issues concerning bullying effectively. A new system to check on pupils' progress regularly is beginning to have an impact on raising standards in English and mathematics. The quality of marking is variable. The best identifies what pupils need to do to improve but this practice is not widespread enough. Links with outside agencies are good and support pupils well, for example in behaviour management. Staff show real concern for pupils and, as one parent stated, they are 'caring teachers who always give that little bit extra'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following an unsettled period, many new teachers and leaders have been appointed. This has strengthened leadership and

a firm direction for improvement is beginning to emerge. Challenging initiatives have recently been introduced to improve learning, such as working with first schools to identify gaps in pupils' learning then using this to plan lessons. Management systems for using data to monitor how well pupils are achieving are being introduced steadily. There is some way to go before pupils and teachers understand them fully and are able to use them to improve the progress made by pupils in all subjects. One of the challenges now faced by the school is to improve the frequency and rigour of checks on teaching and learning and to include middle managers more in the process. The chair of governors is passionate about the school and leads a team which understands the school well and supports the way it is developing. However, governors have not always challenged school leaders enough about known weaknesses, for example, standards in science.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Glendale Middle School

15 Brewery Lane

Wooler

Northumberland

NE71 6QF

3 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work. You were grown up and polite in the way you spoke with each of us and we enjoyed listening to your views. You told us how much you enjoyed the many sports and other activities on offer and how lessons had improved recently.

The things we liked most about your school are:

- you are growing up as sensible and courteous young people
- you get on well with each other
- all of the adults who work in the school look after you and care for you very well
- you get good teaching from hard working staff.

The staff know what needs to be done to improve things further. This includes:

- improve how well you learn in science
- do more checks on teaching and learning to find out where they are working well and where they need to improve
- make sure you know how well you are doing in all your subjects and that you know how to improve.

Yours sincerely

John Dunne

Lead inspector