

# Wellfield Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108649
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	288148
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Johnson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	312
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Wendy Burke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Collinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Kielder Road South Wellfield Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 9QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2529486
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2513206

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Wellfield middle school has 312 pupils aged 9 to 13. It receives the majority of pupils from the first school that shares the same site. The school is situated in an area of average prosperity. There are very few looked after children. The proportion of pupils of White British heritage is well above average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average.

## 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 and improving school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They enjoy school and their attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school as a community and describe it as 'one big family'. Pupils show care and respect for each other and their teachers and behave in a mature and sensible way. Pupils' positive attitude to school is reflected in good attendance figures. There are very few exclusions and bullying is rare. Pupils are keen to help others and often offer advice and friendship to classmates who are upset. Achievement and standards are good. In mathematics and science pupils reach very high levels in test results at the end of Key Stage 2 and make excellent progress. In English, the standards of pupils work are high; however the test results of more able pupils are disappointing. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and this puts them in an excellent position to achieve well at high school. They make good progress in most other subjects as is reflected in the quality of their work. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and have very high aspirations for their children. However, some would like to be kept better informed about how recent issues relating to staff absence are being resolved. Members of the school council talk animatedly about their lessons, clubs and the positive atmosphere of the school. They play an important role and are very positive about the way in which the headteacher listens and responds to their suggestions.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and pupils share high expectations of each other. Challenging targets are set and usually met. In the best lessons pupils are given a variety of interesting tasks and are keen to contribute. In the small number of less successful lessons, teachers use too many worksheets and pupils are less motivated. Pupils' work is assessed in terms of National Curriculum levels. Targets and current levels of performance are well understood by pupils. Marking is generally of a high quality, however teachers are not consistent in the approach they take to the marking of spelling and handwriting. Pupils benefit from a good curriculum. It helps them not only to make a contribution to their community, but expands their horizons, giving them a better understanding of the wider world. Sports, drama and musical activities are very popular and pupils look forward to performing and representing their school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and the school makes effective use of extra-curricular activities to develop these pupils' confidence and motivation.

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support. It has worked closely with the local authority to ensure that all relevant health and safety policies are in place. The school prides itself on its family atmosphere and pastoral care is of a high quality. Effective systems are in place for tracking how well pupils are doing in individual subjects, but greater sharing of information and consistency would allow the school to become sharper in taking action in cases where pupils are not reaching their full potential.

The school is well led and managed. At the time of the last inspection this was a good school and the appointment of the new leadership team has maintained and enhanced its success. Parents feel that the school has become more approachable and their views are listened to more carefully. The self-evaluation process provides an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school has good capacity to improve and gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the English test results of more able pupils in Year 6.

- Ensure that the marking of literacy is done consistently well by all teachers.
- Improve the consistency of the tracking of pupils' academic progress.
- Ensure that parents are kept well informed about the arrangements that are in place to cover staff absence.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average and pupils make good progress. Results in national tests at age 11 are higher than national averages. Pupils make good progress from 9 to 11 and this is particularly impressive in mathematics and science. Pupils from this middle school do well in English, mathematics and science when they move on to local high schools, and their results at age 14 suggest good progress from tests taken at age 11.

In the lessons observed, boys and girls of all ages were making good progress. Pupils were keen to show the inspector their books and take pride in their work. Displays of work are of a high standard, for example the biographies produced by pupils in Year 6 English were well developed and interesting. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others. In mathematics and science, more able pupils progress very rapidly but, this pace is not matched in English. Challenging targets are set by teachers which are usually met by pupils

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school life and are very proud of their school. Attendance is consistently above the national average for secondary schools. Pupils told the inspector that bullying was very rare and teachers offer good advice and support about how to deal with such problems. They have responded very positively to the implementation of a policy to discourage unhealthy eating. Extra sporting activities are well supported. One of the most significant improvements to the school has been the change in pupils' spiritual, social, and moral attitudes. A significant number of pupils help others through the recently introduced 'playground buddy' system. Pupils participate in a wide range of charitable events and a recent dance marathon raised a considerable sum. Teachers and pupils are well aware of the importance of safety and appropriate risk assessments are in place. School visits abroad have been used successfully to enhance pupils' cultural awareness. Children develop good computer skills. The school works well in partnership with local high school to ensure pupils receive good quality advice and guidance on subject options and their future career.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers set pupils understandable targets that allow them to move from one national curriculum level to the next. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of methods to make the work relevant and enjoyable. For example, in a science lesson, basic principles were translated into an activity the children were familiar with and enjoyed. Teachers use their subject knowledge to develop pupils thinking and understanding, for example, project work was used well to produce a short piece of African music and introduce a range of concepts from across the curriculum. In a small minority of lessons pupils complain about the overuse of worksheets. The school introduced a new more effective method for assessing pupils'

learning in November 2006. However there is still work to be done on the consistent application of this approach across all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants that enables them to reach their potential. Some classrooms are rather cramped and this makes the organisation of small group work difficult. School planners are used well to reinforce good work and communicate this to parents. However, they are not always used to best effect when pupils' work falls below the expected standard.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils benefit from a good curriculum. Residential activities and outdoor activities are used particularly well to improve pupils' confidence and motivation. Pupils respond well to health education and citizenship lessons. Pupils participate in a wide variety of sporting activities and extra-curricular activities. Clubs at lunchtime and after school are varied and well supported. Drama, music and creative arts are particularly popular amongst pupils. The school has recognised that in some areas, for example, design technology, the introduction of more specialist resources would improve provision further. The school has placed literacy and numeracy at the heart of the curriculum and teachers recognise there is a shared responsibility to develop these skills. Pupils with learning difficulties have personalised programmes that meet their needs and allow them to make good progress.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Teachers know pupils and their families very well and pastoral care is of a very high quality. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. There are very good partnerships with external agencies that provide good specialist support. Year 8 pupils are particularly well supported in the transition to local high schools. The school has worked closely with the local authority to ensure that all relevant health and safety policies are in place and governors are very aware of their responsibilities in this respect. The school recognises that some aspects of the tracking of pupils' academic progress are less effective and is developing more consistent approaches that will enable staff to produce a more complete picture of pupils' achievements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Leadership and management were judged to be good at the last inspection, since then the senior leadership has changed. These changes have enabled the school to go from strength to strength. The school self-evaluation is accurate and the development plan accurately focuses on key issues for improvement. Simple and direct actions, such as the effective mentoring system, have been established to bring about improvement. The limited accommodation has been well managed to ensure disruption to pupils' learning has been kept to a minimum. The school has recently improved its approach to lesson observation through a greater focus on learning. The new behaviour policy is more effective because of its focus on rewarding good behaviour. Governors are supportive and very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They challenge managers where necessary. They are rightly focused on ensuring that arrangements to cover for absent members of staff do not affect the continuity or quality of pupils' learning.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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### 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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wellfield Middle School, Whitley Bay, NE25 9QW

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and was particularly grateful for the way in which your school council contributed to the inspection. Can you also thank your parents for the views they expressed in the questionnaires which I took careful note of.

You told me that you think Wellfield is a good school, or to use your words 'a canny school' and I agree. The main strengths I identified were.

- The high standards you achieve in lessons, particularly in science and mathematics.
- The good behaviour of pupils both in lessons and around the school that allows everyone to learn.
- The caring responsible atmosphere as reflected in the 'buddy' system.
- The good teachers who make your lessons fun and work hard and give you a wide range of extra activities.
- The headteacher and senior managers who are very committed to making the school even better.

There are still some things that could be improved and I have listed these below.

- The test results in English in Year 6.
- The way in which some teachers give you hints and tips on how to improve your spelling and handwriting.
- Better sharing of information between teachers on how well pupils make progress.
- The communication to parents and pupils about why some classes have had supply teachers.

I am sure that the headteacher, staff and governors will work very hard to put these matters right. Overall you should be proud of your school.

With best wishes for the future

Andrew Johnson HMI