



Corbridge Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122326
Local Authority Northumberland
Inspection number 292371
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Brian Dower

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

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|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type of school | Middle deemed secondary | School address | Cow Lane |
| School category | Community | | Corbridge, Northumberland |
| Age range of pupils | 9–13 | | NE45 5HX |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01434 632191 |
| Number on roll (school) | 312 | Fax number | 01434 633735 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Philip Latham |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Margaret Henderson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2003 | | |

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Corbridge Middle School is a popular school and about a third of the pupils live outside the catchment area. There is little social or economic deprivation in the immediate locality and most pupils come from advantaged backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school is average but the full ability range is represented in each year group. The pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Corbridge Middle is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents are supportive and many families from outside of the catchment area send their children to the school. Standards are above average and pupils' progress and achievement are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make the same progress as others. Pupils have good literacy and numeracy skills and the personal qualities for success in their future lives. The relevance of what is taught in the classroom to the world of work is not highlighted sufficiently, however, to prepare them thoroughly for future employment. Pupils make good use of computer technology in their learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school, feel safe and secure and are exemplary in their adherence to a healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is good and pupils say that there is no bullying in the school. 'We all get on together and help each other', was a comment reflecting the respect pupils have for each other. The few pupils who have difficulty adjusting to classroom disciplines are well managed. Attendance is above average and there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils enjoy being involved in a variety of projects in the community and the older ones watch over the younger ones sensitively during free time and when they are on visits out of school. There are good opportunities to influence school improvements through the work of the school council. Pupils know right from wrong and they have good social skills. Their spiritual and cultural awareness is good. All pupils receive the care and support they need. For example, the school makes very good use of outside agencies to help those youngsters who are vulnerable in any way.

The school has an effective system for monitoring pupils' progress but there is inconsistency in its use to inform pupils about how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is good overall. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and the very good working relationships with staff contribute significantly to the above average standards pupils attain. The school's curriculum is good and the provision for enrichment activities and extracurricular activities is outstanding. The take-up for these is high. This is particularly so in music and sport, which do much to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem and to foster creativity and enjoyment. The school is working to improve provision by developing the way the curriculum is monitored.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is committed to equality of opportunity through the provision of high quality care and education. She is well supported by able colleagues and knowledgeable governors. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection. The school's capacity to improve further is good because there is a clear understanding of what is working well, what needs to be better and how to make it so. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the use of assessments to inform pupils how well they are doing and what they must do to get better.
- Improve pupils' understanding about the world of work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average. Pupils' performance in mathematics and science has been particularly strong, maintaining well above average standards over recent years. English results have fluctuated but improved significantly in 2006 to above average. The end of Year 7 assessments and the quality of work seen now in Year 8 confirm that such standards are being maintained in English, mathematics and science and that progress is good for both boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well. In 2006 the school met its statutory end of Year 6 targets in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and in the use of information and communication technology are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils' behaviour is good in class and around school and they report that there is no bullying and that the few instances of poor conduct are dealt with quickly and effectively. As a result pupils feel safe and secure. They enjoy coming to school and participate fully in the excellent range of extracurricular activities, particularly music and sport. Attendance rates are above average and there is no unauthorised absence. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about learning to live together and taking responsibility for younger pupils, for example when on the Derwent Hill residential trip. All pupils make a good contribution to the local community through charity work and fund raising for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils express their views articulately in a range of forums, including the school council. Year 6 pupils developed their personal skills through contributing to discussions at a conference on human rights and Year 8 pupils have subjected visiting MPs to robust questioning. The way in which pupils adopt healthy habits is excellent. Many pupils take part in sporting activities, eat healthily and understand the importance of emotional and social well-being. Pupils have the basic skills and personal qualities to make the most of the next stage of their education and to provide for their future economic well-being. Opportunities are missed to make links between what is taught in the classroom and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive and encourage pupils to want to learn. As a result pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and have good study skills. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, learn from role play and enjoy practical and experimental work. They have a good knowledge of their subjects and plan their lessons well. In the best lessons pupils are challenged to think for themselves and talk about their learning. For example, in an outstanding Year 8 lesson on the causes and course of the Spanish Armada the pace was brisk and the tasks challenging. Pupils were eager to say what they thought and give their opinion of others' views. Time is not always well managed and in some lessons the main learning task has to be condensed because too long is spent on a starter activity. There is good use of computer technology as a learning aid and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Appropriate assessments of pupils' work are undertaken regularly but are not always used effectively to inform pupils how well they are doing and what they must do to get better. The excellent practice in mathematics is an example of how it can be done.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The provision for the teaching of citizenship has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Effective provision is also made for personal, social and health education. Enterprise activities help develop pupils' basic skills well. A great strength of the school is the excellent range of activities outside lessons, which are very well attended. Music and sports are particularly strong and often involve parents and pupils working together. Together with educational visits and visitors to the school, these activities make an outstanding contribution to extending the curriculum, to pupils' enjoyment of learning and to their personal development. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated with full access to all subjects and activities. The school has rightly prioritised arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum as a development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's atmosphere is calm and purposeful. There is effective liaison with a range of outside agencies to provide good care and support to vulnerable pupils. The school's procedures for child protection are in place and arrangements to keep pupils safe follow current national guidelines. Appropriate health and safety checks are carried out efficiently for in-school activities and when

pupils are out on visits. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and that they are well supported by trusting relationships with adults. Staff support pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities well. Individual education plans are detailed and ensure that these pupils' make good progress. There is good tracking of pupils' progress within subjects but this data is not used consistently enough to guide individual pupils in how to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her senior colleagues have a clear vision for the school's future direction. They have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve. Forward planning is good and the priorities for development are appropriate and centre on raising standards through high quality care and education. The pace of improvement would be even faster if the monitoring and evaluation of change was carried out more regularly. The action being taken to eliminate a budget deficit constrains the management time spent on this. All who work in the school are committed to equality of opportunity for every pupil and the removal of any bar to their personal and academic development. Governance is good. The governors know the school well and play a full part in shaping its future direction. The school is well staffed. There is an appropriate range of good quality resources to support pupils' learning and they are used well. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection and the school's capacity to improve further is good.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 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? | 2 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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

Corbridge Middle School

Cow Lane

Corbridge

Northumberland

NE45 5HX

30 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the welcome you extended to us during our recent visit and the time many of you gave to talk to us about your school. You impressed us with your courtesy and the way you work well together. You are confident young people and enjoy your work and take full advantage of the excellent range of activities outside of lessons. We wish we had had more time to listen to your music and watch your sporting events. It is excellent that you do everything you can to adopt a healthy lifestyle and that you understand the importance of emotional and social well-being. That is one reason why you take such good care of each other.

You are attaining above average standards and you are making good progress. There are many things in your work to be proud of. You have the skills and personal qualities which will enable you to succeed in your education. You behave well, work hard and show consideration for others. You tell us that there is no bullying and that everyone is made to feel valued.

There are two things to work on to raise standards further. Every pupil needs to understand how well they are doing and what they have to do to get better. That is not always the case and you can do your part by asking your teachers when you are unsure about your work and how to improve it. Working relationships are good and teachers will make time to explain things to you. Members of staff want to know how well changes are working, for example in developing the curriculum to make it more interesting and relevant. We feel that more time needs to be spent on this monitoring process.

Thank you again for showing your school off to us. We wish you all every success.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Lead Inspector