

Alnwick Lindisfarne Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122347
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	314273
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Walker
Headteacher	Dr Lynn Rose
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Lindisfarne Road Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1AX
Telephone number	01665 602534
Fax number	01665 605994

Age group	9–13
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Lindisfarne Middle School is located in a rural market town and many students come from above average social and economic backgrounds. The school gained Specialist Technology status in September 2008. Nearly all students have English as their first language and there are very few from minority ethnic groups. There are fewer students with a statement of special educational need than usually found and the number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lindisfarne is a good school which has steadily improved since the last inspection. Capacity to improve is good and the senior leaders' evaluation of its performance is accurate. The school recognizes that self-evaluation by subject leaders needs to be more rigorous and is taking action to improve quality.

Achievement is good and standards are above and sometimes well above average. All groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. Test results at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly since the last inspection, except in 2008 when challenging targets were not met. Swift and effective action was taken to improve results and school predictions for 2009 indicate they are back on track. It is too early to judge the impact of the school's specialist status.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment has improved and the school recognises there is more to be done, for example, by providing more consistent feedback to students on how they can improve their work and tracking individual performance in all subjects more rigorously.

Attendance is well above average and behaviour is good in lessons. The curriculum is good and the range of extra activities and local educational visits is a strong feature. Personal development, care, guidance and support are good. A parent's view was typical of many when saying, 'My children have flourished at the school'.

Leadership, management and governance are good. Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher is making sure the school continues to move in the right direction. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion and resources are effectively deployed to achieve good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of self evaluation and tracking of individual student progress by subject leaders
- Provide more consistent feedback to students on how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average and higher by the time students leave at the end of Year 8. One parent reflected the views of many when saying, 'I am pleased with the school and the progress my child is making'. Standards when pupils start at the school have risen in the last two years from average to above average.

Students make good progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There was a dip in the 2008 test results, largely because boys writing was not as good as it could be. Swift action was taken and Inspection evidence confirms the school is on track to meet challenging targets in 2009.

Achievement and standards have significantly improved since the last inspection despite the dip in test results in 2008. Inspection evidence confirms standards are rising and the trend of improvement is continuing. Writing has improved significantly in Year 8, particularly with the

most able students. Students make good progress in other subjects and standards are highest in music, design and technology, art and physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good and students enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes towards learning and confidently communicate with adults and their peers. Attendance is well above average. Students collaborate well in group projects and when engaged in independent study and research. Communication skills are well developed and students are able to explain clearly and justify their ideas to their peers.

The behaviour of students and their attention to staying safe when supervised in lessons is good. Students sometimes become more boisterous at break times when there is less structured supervision or organised play activities. Despite the school's best efforts to prevent it, bullying by a small minority of students, which extends beyond school, causes concern amongst students and parents. Recent evidence shows the number of incidents is now reducing significantly.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have many opportunities to explore and participate in the local culture. Alnwick Castle and Holy Island provide particularly rich learning resources and are used to develop students' appreciation and understanding of art, geography, history and religious education. They gain an understanding of the importance of healthy eating through these activities, for example, gardening at the castle. This compliments the good work of the school which encourages students to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Students are active within the local community. For example, Years 7 and 8 sports leaders coach younger pupils from the first schools and Year 8 pupils recently developed web pages for their local football club. All students take part in democratic elections to select their school council. They raise funds for a school in Africa which provides an education for disadvantaged and orphaned children. Preparation for working life begins early with activities ranging from financial modelling using information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 5 and 6 to working in development teams during enterprise week in Year 8. Good standards of literacy, numeracy and skills in ICT provide students with a firm foundation to continue developing work place skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good. Quality has risen since the last inspection. The proportion of good teaching has increased and the amount of satisfactory teaching has reduced. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to enhance learning. In the best lessons, students enjoyed and were fully engaged in challenging tasks, especially when working independently and in groups. Where teaching did not always meet the full range of individual needs, work was insufficiently structured in difficulty and the same tasks were set regardless of ability. ICT is well used, for example, in mathematics, science and music, but its use to enhance learning across all subjects is not consistent.

Good relationships between students, staff and parents help learners to succeed. Classes are well managed and good behaviour is encouraged. This contributes to the interesting variety

of tasks given to the students and helps them make progress. Marking in the best lessons helps students understand how they could improve but is not consistent across all lessons and subjects. Self-evaluation and tracking of individual progress by all subject leaders is insufficiently well developed to impact further on achievement and standards. Teaching assistants are well deployed. For example, in a mathematics lesson they were able to help students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities understand difficult concepts.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students enjoy school and achieve in their work as a result of the good curriculum. It makes good use of the local environment to enhance learning. Good links with other schools and providers help students to progress well across the key stages. There are innovative ways of teaching subjects together through themes that contribute to students' enjoyment and their personal development.

A large number of students take advantage of the range of sporting and musical opportunities available in the school at lunch-time and after school. Opportunities to develop skills in independent learning, enterprise and ICT prepare students well for their future working lives. Those students who do not speak English at home or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given additional help in lessons and extra support to help them make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for all of its students. Child protection procedures are in place and arrangements for safeguarding are well established. Students are taught how to stay safe across a range of areas, including access to the internet and coastal safety. Arrangements for safeguarding students are in place and meet legal requirements.

Work is regularly marked, although the quality of helpful feedback students receive is not consistent across all subjects. Reports to parents provide information regarding progress but do not report the level at which a student is working or their target levels.

Relationships between students and staff are good and students feel confident about approaching staff if they have concerns. Subject leaders identify those at risk of under achieving. Action plans and intervention programmes are built around individual needs. Preparation for transition into Year 5 and from Year 8 is carefully planned, thoughtful and sensitive to individual needs. A parent says, 'My child has settled well and become more confident, enjoying all aspects of school life'. This reflects the views of many.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good and the headteacher provides a clear vision for the school. School leaders know the strengths and weakness of the school and take account of the views of parents and students. Challenging targets to promote progress are realistic and are being used effectively to target areas of under-achievement. The school recognises the need to extend monitoring to all groups of students through subject self evaluation and is

taking the right action to make improvements. Subject leaders are increasingly using tracking data on students to respond more effectively to individual needs. The degree to which all subjects evaluate and review their work is not sufficiently consistent to be fully effective.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are very complimentary about the teaching, care and support provided. Good links with other providers and services, such as partner schools, increase access to opportunities in technology, music and sport. Equality of opportunity for different groups is promoted well and, as a result, all groups of students make good progress. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge to the school, especially through the introduction of a local federation of schools designed to promote improvements in transition arrangements between schools and the curriculum.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion based on a realistic analysis of students' needs in a rural area. The school recognises there is more to do in raising students' understanding of other national and international communities. Resources are well used and the school provides good value for money.

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Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Alnwick Lindisfarne Middle School, Northumberland, NE66 1AX

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Lindisfarne is a good school which has steadily improved since the last inspection.
- You achieve well, make good progress and standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Attendance is well above average and you behave well in lessons.
- The curriculum is good and the range of extra activities and local educational visits is a strong feature.
- Your personal development is good and you are well cared for.
- Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher and the governors is making sure the school continues to move in the right direction.

Your teachers and the staff want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- track your progress in all subjects more rigorously
- provide you with more consistent feedback on how to improve your work.

I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock HMI