

Monkseaton Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108637
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	324811
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Elaine Colquhoun

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)	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carole Russell
Headteacher	Mrs Christina Black
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
School address	Vernon Drive Monkseaton Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 8JN
Telephone number	0191 2008715
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Age group	9–13
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector seconded to Ofsted and another two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Monkseaton Middle School serves a mixed socio-economic catchment area. The school caters for pupils from Year 5 to Year 8. This means pupils join the school half way through Key Stage 2 and leave after their first two years in Key Stage 3. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or whose first language is not English. A very small number of the pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has gained numerous awards including Sportsmark, Healthy Schools and Artsmark Gold. The senior leadership team of the school was restructured in 2006 and the current headteacher joined the school in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Monkseaton Middle School is a satisfactory school which is improving. It gives satisfactory value for money. In the last year the rate of improvement has increased and the school's capacity for further improvement is good. Senior staff and governors know the strengths of the school and the areas where further improvement is needed. They have put in place appropriate strategies. However, some of these have not been established long enough to have a significant impact.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average when pupils start at the school and when they leave at the end of Year 8. All pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and the proportion making good progress has increased. In 2008, standards improved after a dip the previous year. Standards in 2008 were average in English and mathematics but below average in science. The unvalidated Key Stage 2 test results for 2008, show improvement in all three subjects. The school is aware of pupils who are not doing as well as they should and is acting decisively to raise achievement.

The curriculum is good and is a strength of the school. The provision of extra-curricular opportunities is extensive and enjoyed by the pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school identified this as an area for improvement and has put in place strategies to improve teaching to raise pupils' achievements. However, these changes are at an early stage of development and have yet to impact fully on raising standards in all subjects. The school knows that improving the quality of marking and feedback on how well students are doing is an important element of its strategy and is taking action on this.

Care and support are good and contribute effectively to students' enjoyment and well-being. Parents and carers are complimentary about the school, particularly the students' good personal development. The school has the well-being of all the pupils at the centre of its work. The pastoral support for vulnerable students and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good.

The school is well led by the headteacher who is supported effectively by senior staff, middle leaders and the governing body. They make sure the school is moving in the right direction. This is evident, for example, in the current focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning. It is also seen in the recent introduction of systems to keep track of students' progress so teachers are better placed to target support and interventions. This is helping to improve pupils' progress. The way teachers mark pupils' work and set targets is inconsistent across the school. Consequently, not all pupils know what they have to do to improve. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have many good opportunities to participate in the local community which contribute well to their personal development and self-esteem. The school has very recently linked with a school in Africa to enhance opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on recent improvements to further raise standards and improve progress in Key Stage 2 and in science across the school.
- Improve the marking of pupils' work and setting of targets for pupils so they have a greater understanding of how to improve their work.

- Improve the quality of teaching so a greater proportion is consistently good or better by effectively sharing the best practice across the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils join the school in Year 5 with standards that are broadly average and leave at the end of Year 8 at an average standard. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, and science dipped sharply in 2007 to below the national average. Results recovered in 2008, improving in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age was close to average in both English and mathematics, with a significant improvement in the proportion reaching the higher Level 5. Improvement in science was more modest and results remained below average. Currently, information on pupils' progress and evidence of work seen in lessons and in their books shows that the school is on track to consolidate these improvements, particularly in mathematics and English. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory overall progress in English and mathematics during their four years at the school but inadequate progress in science. However, their rate of progress is not even. It is best in Years 7 and 8. In mathematics, pupils make good progress in these years in response to teachers' higher expectations and the challenge of early entry for Year 9 national tests. Recently, the school has not met its ambitious targets set for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Raising standards remains a priority.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils display understanding and empathy and maintain positive and effective relationships with their peers and adults. Attendance is good. Pupils say that they enjoy school, feel safe and know who to go to if they have a problem. They are proud that there are very few incidents of bullying or racism. The school council represents the views of pupils well and provides a means for them to contribute to decisions and developments in school. For example, the introduction of a salad bar at lunchtime which helps them to eat healthily when at school. Pupils commented that that they take part in physical education and enjoy the extensive range of school clubs available for sporting activities. They adopt safe practices, for example, following the one way system conscientiously when moving around the school. The pupils' enjoyment of lessons where they are challenged and engaged in their learning is obvious. Even when they are occupied with more mundane tasks they are cooperative, and bring positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils willingly respond to questions and contribute to discussions well. They are able to work confidently as individuals and co-operatively in small groups. They are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They contribute well to assemblies, for example, exploring themes such as compassion and sacrifice and the importance of festivals and celebrations. Pupils experience a range of visits, including an annual trip to France, which enables them to experience another culture. Pupils make a positive contribution

to the community by raising money for charities and being involved with local schools through sport and music. Through these activities pupils develop the ability to collaborate with others beyond the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides a wide range of opportunities for all pupils. There is an excellent balance between subjects on the timetable and additional enrichment opportunities provided. For example, pupils access physical education in school and take part in outdoor education, including residential visits to an outdoor education centre. A particular strength is the outstanding range and extent of extra-curricular clubs and activities in music, sport, foreign languages, including Japanese and the arts. The school's work in personal, social and health education and in citizenship education is well organised. The curriculum is flexible enough to meet the different needs of groups of pupils and to respond to local circumstances. The well attended breakfast club encourages pupils to be aware of healthy eating and together with the range of physical education and sports on offer encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. All of this contributes well to pupils' enjoyment, health and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. The school offers a good level of care and support for pupils. The academic guidance given is satisfactory as it is inconsistent across the school. Systems for the care and welfare of pupils are established which ensure that staff, parents and professionals contribute effectively to this. Pupils commented on the value they place on being able to approach adults for care and support. This includes the school nurse who offers a weekly 'drop-in' session. In addition, the provision of mentors is seen as a valuable and positive resource.

All statutory requirements regarding the care and safety of children are in place.

The school is fully inclusive and provides well for the care and support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disability. The school has worked closely with a local special school to develop systems and knowledge to provide for these pupils.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The comprehensive school data system, used to track pupils' progress, is beginning to have positive impact, both in identifying individual pupils in need of additional support, and in targeting groups for intervention because they are doing less well than they should. However, not all pupils know their targets or the small steps they need to take to reach them. Marking is inconsistent and does not always point out what pupils need to do improve. A significant minority of parents stated that they would like more information about their child's progress to support them at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with significant strengths. The headteacher communicates her vision for improving standards of education and care effectively and provides clear direction for the actions needed to achieve it. She is well supported by a team of senior leaders and by managers at all levels. The system for providing structured support and challenge for leaders works effectively and contributes to the generally good quality of management and self-evaluation.

Leaders and managers monitor the work of the school carefully and follow a regular cycle of self-evaluation and planning. This helps them to know the school's strengths and weaknesses and to take action to bring about improvement where it is needed. For example, when the Key Stage 2 test results dipped in 2007, an extensive range of strategies was put in place to raise standards. These include high quality staff training and targeted intervention classes for those students who needed additional support. This resulted in improved standards in English and mathematics and improving standards in science in 2008. The school has plans to develop these strategies further to embed the systems and continue to raise standards. However, some initiatives are too recent to have borne fruit.

Governance is good. Governors know the school well and provide good support for the headteacher. Finances are carefully managed and resources have been used satisfactorily to provide, for example, the recently refurbished information and communication technology room. The recent improvements in standards and pupils achievement, along with the headteacher's clear vision and commitment of staff, show that the school's capacity for improvement is good.

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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?	3
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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?	3
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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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?	3
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	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**

2 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Monkseaton Middle School North Tyneside, NE25 8JN

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

Your school is a satisfactory school which is improving. These are its strengths.

- The school is a happy place to be and you enjoy being there.
- You work hard and are making improved progress in your work.
- You do well in your personal development and your behaviour is good.
- The curriculum is good and you enjoy the many activities the school provides including the after school clubs, particularly in sport.
- You have the chance to mix with pupils from other schools and people from the local community. This will help you to be more confident when you go into new situations.

The headteacher and the senior team know how to improve the school. I have asked them to:

- raise the standards you reach and the progress you make particularly in Years 5 and 6 and in science
- improve teaching so that more lessons are interesting and challenging for you; and
- improve marking and your understanding of your targets, so that you have a better knowledge of how you can improve your work.

You can help them by continuing to do your best and making the most of all the opportunities the school provides for you.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Colquhoun AI

Lead inspector