

# Morpeth Chantry Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122314
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	327696
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 September –1 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Moira Fitzpatrick

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 (total)	512
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Gowing
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Mitford Road Morpeth Northumberland NE61 1RQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 512874
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 513395

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average middle school. Pupils are from predominantly White British backgrounds, with very few who speak English as an additional language. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are above average and the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Since the last inspection the school has had some turbulence in staffing, which has resulted in changes of teacher for a significant number of pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and has some good features. Standards are average by the end of Year 6, and by the end of Year 8 pupils' attainment is above what is expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils make expected progress overall from their broadly average starting points in Year 5. The exception is in mathematics at Key Stage 2, where a minority of pupils do not make the expected progress by the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have declined since the last inspection from well above average to average. Some instability in staffing has contributed to this dip in standards.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are well prepared for the future through a range of experiences which help them develop sound basic skills, good leadership qualities and the ability to work well together. Pupils enjoy school, as their good attendance testifies. They are tolerant and caring, and make an outstanding contribution to improve the quality of life for local and wider communities. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. They feel very well cared for in school because teachers know their personal needs so well. They receive satisfactory guidance overall for their learning and in some lessons this is good. Teachers' use of assessment information to guide learning is inconsistent so that pupils' progress varies. The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. A significant minority of parents raised concerns over the amount of information that the school provides on their children's progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are some examples of good and outstanding teaching. Pupils learn best when they are well challenged and given the opportunity to learn through doing. Not enough lessons provide the correct level of challenge and in some pupils are too passive because they have to listen for long periods. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils have very varied learning experiences. The curriculum is good and takes account of pupils' interest well. The provision for music, sport and extra-curricular activities is excellent and is very much appreciated by pupils, who dedicate a lot of time to out of school clubs and activities. This is undoubtedly an area of school life that gives pupils a buzz and they do appreciate the time given by staff to help them develop so many skills and interests.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The headteacher has ensured that there has been good development for the curriculum by supporting staff to create a more exciting and varied curriculum. School self-evaluation is satisfactory, though it does not involve middle managers enough to give a sharp picture of the school's effectiveness in all aspects of its work. This has led the school to overestimate its effectiveness in some areas. Staffing instability has had an impact on standards and progress since the last inspection. Staffing is now stabilised and the school is in a stronger position than it has been since the last inspection to tackle known weaknesses and improve in future. This is evident from the many high quality curriculum developments, which have been led by some staff relatively new to posts. Consequently, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- Extend school evaluation to include middle managers in regular monitoring of the school's work and ensure that they are accountable for raising standards and improving provision.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching and learning.
- Respond to parents' concerns about the information they receive on their children's progress.

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**

Standards are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 8 pupils' attainment is above what is expected for their age in English and science and broadly in line with expectations in mathematics. School data and inspection evidence suggests that pupils' progress accelerates in Years 7 and 8 in all subjects. The results of national Key Stage 2 tests in 2007 were disappointing for the school and showed the impact of some staffing instability during the previous year. The results marked a decline in standards from well above average to average overall for English, mathematics and science. Targets in English and mathematics were narrowly missed. This year's provisional results in national tests were closer to the school's targets. In English, targets for the higher level were exceeded but in mathematics they were narrowly missed. Standards in music are very high throughout the school and many pupils are involved in regular performances.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and well-being are good. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award and pupils are aware of the importance of eating healthily. They participate enthusiastically in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities offered. Pupils socialise well and behave in a safe and responsible manner around the school. They say that they enjoy their education and feel very safe in school. Attendance is good. Attitudes in lessons are satisfactory, and in classes where there are high demands, pupils' attitudes are very good. There are few instances of bullying and serious misbehaviour and these are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, and their charitable fundraising is outstanding. There is a well-established school council and pupils are involved in a variety of environmental projects around the school. Some pupils are trained to act as peer supporters for vulnerable pupils, and older pupils report that this has had a positive effect on relationships. Links with local industries, such as farming and pharmaceuticals, give pupils opportunities to develop team and enterprise skills. Pupils feel that they receive good guidance and support and they are well prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. During the inspection some very good and outstanding lessons were seen, indicating a wide range in the quality of learning experiences for pupils. Since the last inspection the school has developed its use of new technologies to increase the pace of learning and give pupils better access to computer based learning facilities. These are having a positive impact on learning and pupils report that they are well motivated by these opportunities to learn independently and at their own best rate. The use of assessment information for learning is another aspect of teaching that has been developed since the last inspection. The impact of this varies from class to class. Where teachers make good use of their

knowledge of pupils' learning, pupils are clear about what they are doing and they know how to improve their work. Pupils report that lessons with well timed and varied activities produce the best learning; and that listening for long periods 'makes you switch off'. Inspectors agree that where teachers give lengthy explanations, pupils' interest wanes and their progress slows. Where teaching is good or better, there is a brisk pace to learning, pupils take responsibility for keeping track of their targets, and both they and the teacher have high expectations of hard work and good standards.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, with some outstanding aspects. All pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and ensures that pupils take responsibility for their personal safety and well-being. Provision for mathematics is satisfactory; for English it is good because of recent changes, which are raising standards in writing at both key stages. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision is good; recent initiatives such as the on-line learning facility are having a positive impact on the pace of learning. The school has successfully developed the curriculum since the last inspection so that it is now more creative and meets the needs and interests of pupils more fully. Pupils particularly like the theme days and Friday afternoon project which give them opportunities to work on specific topics that interest them.

Pupils of all ages speak enthusiastically of the excellent range of extra-curricular activities on offer to them, particularly those linked to music and sport, which are outstanding. Participation rates in these activities are very high. Other opportunities which extend pupils' knowledge of the world and themselves include trips such as the debating visit to the Houses of Parliament and the opportunity for a residential visit in every year group.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The pastoral care and support that pupils receive is very good and a strength of the school. It ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and know where to turn for help. It is underpinned by very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Parents agree that their children are well cared for and safe in school. Arrangements for health and safety and safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. More effective and rigorous systems for monitoring the progress of these pupils and ensuring that they have adequate support for their learning are currently being established. These are already improving the provision for these pupils. Guidance to improve pupils' learning has been a priority for the school in the last year. In some classes it is used very well to help pupils track their learning and decide how they can improve. In others it is too restricted to target setting without making clear to pupils the small steps by which they can reach these targets. Arrangements to inform parents or carers of the progress their children make are satisfactory and meet statutory minimum requirements. Parents' questionnaires indicate that a significant minority would like more information about their children's progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher is a determined leader with a vision for continually improving provision. He has been well supported by staff in developing and enriching the curriculum since the last inspection. However, middle managers are not involved enough in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school because insufficient time is allocated to these duties. This has meant that some good initiatives have not been monitored closely enough to identify where they are working well and where staff need additional support. This has contributed to a degree of over optimistic self-evaluation, which has focused more strongly on provision than outcomes. Inconsistencies in teaching and learning and variations in the progress of pupils in different subjects are not well enough known to middle managers for them to bring about rapid improvement. Self-evaluation currently focuses on what the school provides rather than on outcomes for pupils, and hence does not clearly identify how standards can be raised. For example, the school has not taken effective action to tackle lower standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2.

Governors have close links with the school and are aware of the impact that staffing changes and instability have had on the school since the last inspection. They monitor the work of subject areas and challenge the school over standards and provision.

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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	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
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 learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

2 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morpeth Chantry Middle School, Northumberland, NE61 1RQ

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school recently. Thanks too for the help you gave us to find out about your school and your views of what happens there. Please pass on our thanks to you families for the questionnaires they returned which helped us know their views. A significant minority of your parents would like more information about the progress you are making. We agree that they could have more and have asked the school to consider ways of improving this.

Your school provides a satisfactory education; you mostly reach the standards of which you are capable and your achievement is satisfactory. A few of you don't do as well in mathematics as you do in English and we have asked the school to help you do better. You told us that you enjoy school, especially the out of school clubs. You have many more of these than we usually see – good for you for taking part in so many exciting things. It was good to see how well you look after and care for each other. In doing this you follow the excellent example of your teachers who know you very well and quickly spot when you need help and support. This is why you feel safe and secure in school.

You clearly enjoy taking on responsibility and we were impressed by the way you organise improvements inside the school, raise funds for people less fortunate and give your time as peer supporters and buddies. You have good personal qualities and a good sense of citizenship, which help prepare you well for the future.

You told us that you like learning best when you have plenty of activities and work together to solve problems. We agree that you make the best progress when you learn like this and have asked your school to share all the best ways of teaching and learning with all teachers so that more of your learning is like this. You might notice that your classrooms are visited more often by teachers who are trying to find out what works best in your school so that they can make it even better. You can help by working as hard as you do now and continuing to develop those fine personal skills.

All good wishes to you for the future!

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector