

# Whytrig Community Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122335
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	340128
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Georgiana Sale

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Hillman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pamela Watts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Western Avenue Seaton Delaval Whitley Bay NE25 0EB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2371402
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2371830
<b>Email address</b>	admin@whytrig.northumberland.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and saw all staff teach. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and talked with some parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, assessment information, policies and samples of pupils' work. Information about safeguarding was evaluated. Inspectors also took into account the views of staff and pupils expressed in questionnaires. They received and analysed 38 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what is the standard of leadership across the school, including the governors, and how is it driving improvement in both key stages?
- how well areas of underperformance are correctly diagnosed and how effective is the action taken to address these issues?
- how effectively does the school use information about the pupils to plan lessons so that they make good progress?

## Information about the school

Whytrig is a middle school for pupils aged nine to thirteen serving three semi-rural village communities on the Northumberland border. It became part of a federation with Seaton Sluice middle school and Astley high school in September 2008. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. There are very few minority ethnic pupils, including those whose first language is not English. The school is a specialist school for mathematics and computing.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Whytrig School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school has been successful in creating a supportive and caring community which is evident in the good relationships between adults and pupils, and the latter's good behaviour and attendance. The vast majority of parents, carers and pupils support the school and think it provides a good education.

The attainment of pupils is similar to that found nationally and their learning and progress in the classroom are satisfactory. This is so for all groups, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils enjoy school and the level at which they achieve is satisfactory. While teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the pupils and lessons are not always sufficiently challenging or stimulating for them.

Inspectors found the pupils to be positive and articulate and the atmosphere in the school is friendly. The level of care and support for the pupils is good. They are proud of their school and take an active part in the life of the school and the local community. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe. They say they enjoy school and most join in enthusiastically with the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. They are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles with a high proportion involved in sporting activities and many taking a healthy school lunch.

The headteacher, increasingly helped by all levels of leadership, is setting a clear direction for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and plans in place to tackle areas of weakness are showing signs of being effective. The increased capacity brought by the federation, together with a supportive and increasingly challenging governing body, ensures the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, the accountability of all levels of leadership and their role in monitoring and evaluation performance are too variable and are slowing the rate of school improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase accountability and share leadership across the whole staff by:
  - involving subject leaders more in monitoring performance, supporting lessons and coordinating intervention strategies
  - using clear criteria to measure the impact of leadership on pupils' academic and personal development

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- having clear and robust lines of accountability between the governing body, the senior team and all middle leaders.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that the vast majority of teaching is good by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment data and National Curriculum levels in core subjects to plan challenging lessons to match pupils' learning needs
  - systematically sharing the areas of good practice, focusing on the impact on pupils' achievement.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enjoy their learning and apply themselves well in lessons. They have good self-discipline and there are warm and supportive relationships between the pupils and with staff. Pupils work well as individuals, in pairs and in groups. They know how to listen to each other and know how to work well in teams.

When they start school, the level of children's skills varies but overall it is broadly in line with expectations. Most pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stages 2 and 3 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those very few from minority ethnic backgrounds leave with attainment which is broadly average. An increasing minority of pupils make good progress, evident from improving performance in the Key Stage 2 tests over the past three years, especially in English. The school's tracking of the pupils' attainment and the progress observed during the inspection in lessons also show an increasing proportion of pupils of all ages making good progress.

Pupils show their good social and moral development in the way they support and empathise with each other and in their self-discipline in and around school. However, their spiritual and cultural development is less rapid. Despite their average standards of literacy and numeracy, pupils develop many social skills which, with their good attendance, will enable them to make effective use of opportunities in their future life.

Pupils have a good understanding of what to do to stay healthy and safe. They enjoy their practical lessons about how to grow vegetables and then cook them in technology. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of risks associated with using the internet and other modern technologies. They use information and communication technology (ICT) well for learning.

Pupils contribute well to the school community. They act as mentors, 'buddies' and sports leaders for other pupils, raise money for charities, have regular 'jobs' and responsibilities that help the day-to-day working of the school and some sit on the local parish council.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are positive relationships in the classroom and as a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Where learning is most effective, teachers set a brisk pace and quickly get the pupils doing challenging work with different tasks for different abilities. In some lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not high enough and they fail to ensure that they all make good progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory. In some lessons there is little differentiation in the learning activities offered to pupils of different abilities. This exacerbates the lack of challenge and contributes to pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress. The curriculum is enhanced by many extra-curricular clubs and 'off timetable' days where pupils can explore a topic in-depth or work with other organisations such as 'Playing for Success' to find different ways to tackle literacy issues. The school's specialism ensures that ICT provision is good which contributes to the pupils' good achievement in the subject by the end of Year 8.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The school provides good care and support for all pupils to make them feel safe and protected. Good work is done in school and in partnership with other professionals to give timely, targeted support when necessary for behavioural, medical and social problems. The school works well with first schools, parents and carers to provide good support to ensure a smooth transition to the high school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have put in place strategies to raise attainment and improve achievement. As a result, the proportion of pupils making good progress in English and mathematics is rising. However, the evaluation of the impact of these strategies and the monitoring of improvement plans is weaker and middle leaders are not made accountable enough for the teaching and learning within their departments. This is limiting the impact of the plans on pupils' achievement. Systems for target-setting to raise academic achievement are improving, with better use of data to highlight areas of underachievement and more effective intervention strategies in place to ensure pupils are brought back on track. Although the quality of teaching is evaluated by the headteacher, a more thorough analysis, followed by a systematic and regular way to share the areas of good practice which are raising achievement, is needed.

The establishment of the federation with a joint governing body serving all the schools has strengthened the capacity and skills available to the school and has resulted in strong partnership work, especially on transition to the high school. The governing body fulfils all statutory duties, knows the school well and offers good support. The school provides support to individuals so that all groups of pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. The school, therefore, promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily. Safeguarding procedures are secure, including measures for child protection. Safe working is evident in daily routines. The staff have developed a strong school community where pupils have a developing awareness of global issues but have a more limited understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity in the United Kingdom. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to the promotion of community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

One in five parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The very large majority of those said that they felt the school kept their children safe, that their children enjoyed school and that they were pleased with the school overall. They thought the teaching was good and that the school catered for their children's needs; inspectors agreed that the school provides good care for pupils, but found teaching to be satisfactory. Inspectors also agreed with the small number of concerns about progress being insufficiently rapid.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whytrig Community Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	43	20	48	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	50	20	48	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	40	24	57	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	43	21	50	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	50	21	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	24	30	71	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	19	27	64	7	17	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	26	25	60	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	31	23	55	2	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	31	26	62	2	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	19	28	67	2	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	14	33	26	62	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	38	23	55	2	5	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



29 June 2010

Inspection of Whytrig Community Middle School, Whitley Bay, NE25 0EB

Dear Pupils

We really enjoyed visiting your school and I am writing to thank you for two very interesting days. Your thoughts and views helped us to make our judgements. We found your school to be providing you with a satisfactory standard of education.

We judged that:

- you enjoy your lessons and behave well in and out of lessons
- you are polite and well mannered
- you are well cared for by all the adults in the school.

The most important things we have asked school leaders and staff to do are listed below:

- Making sure that your school and the governors expect the best from you all and carefully check your learning and progress.
- The teachers in charge of a subject should make sure that they know how well all pupils in the school are progressing and make sure that all lessons in that subject are good.
- Your teachers give you more demanding work to do in class.

You have a very important part to play in improving your school and improving your chances of achieving well. You can do this by having a go at any more difficult work your teachers give you and attending school every day.

Yours sincerely

Georgiana Sale

Lead inspector

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