

Tweedmouth Community Middle School

Billendeane Terrace, Spittal, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2DJ

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are relentless in their ambition to transform the quality of education provided by the school. They have raised pupils' aspirations and improved their outcomes successfully.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and teachers value the opportunities they have had to develop their professional skills.
- Teachers have high expectations for their pupils. Most lessons are intensely interesting. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to capture pupils' curiosity with activities that are pitched at just the right level.
- Middle leaders monitor carefully the quality of teaching and learning and hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils.
- The curriculum is well designed and inspires pupils to learn. Leaders ensure that learning is used to broaden pupils' horizons, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils, through trips and visits.
- Pupils love to read. They read widely and often and are confident, fluent readers. All groups of pupils make very strong progress in reading.
- Teachers ensure that teaching assistants are well deployed and provide valuable support in lessons. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write across a range of subjects and this develops their confidence and enthusiasm. The quality of pupils' writing is good.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate of others. They are proud of their school and attend regularly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A culture of care, tolerance and respect underpins pupils' good behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- New governors are ambitious for the school. Already, leaders are benefiting from sharing expertise across the two schools in the federation. This is helping them to further improve this inclusive school community.
- The progress made by pupils in mathematics is good but not quite as strong as in other subjects. This is because there is more variability in the quality of teaching in mathematics than in other subjects.
- The most able pupils make very strong progress in reading but weaker progress in mathematics. This is because the level of challenge is lower in mathematics and time in lessons is not always used well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of education in mathematics, by:
 - refining the mathematics curriculum so that each year of study builds carefully on the previous year
 - reducing the remaining variability in the quality of teaching
 - refining planning in mathematics, so that there is a greater deepening of pupils' understanding and a higher level of challenge
 - ensuring that the most able pupils gain greater confidence and are consistently challenged, so that they make good progress and reach high standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team are relentless in their ambition to improve the quality of education for their pupils. They have grappled with the difficulties of being physically remote from other schools and brought about real improvement. They have forged partnerships over large distances, in order to access the expertise needed to bring about change and improvement.
- Leaders know their pupils and use additional funding well. Pupil premium funding enables disadvantaged pupils to make good progress. Cultural trips and visits enrich their knowledge and widen their experience. Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to help pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics.
- The special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable and astute. She ensures that pupils' barriers to learning are carefully identified. Working with parents and carers and pupils, she develops strategies to help pupils with SEND to learn successfully. Pupils are given just the right amount of support in lessons to develop their confidence and independence skills and, as a result, they make good progress.
- Middle leaders are strong and confident. They have benefited from high-quality professional development opportunities. Leaders value highly the time given for working on planning with other leaders across the school and, increasingly, across the federation. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects and hold staff to account for the progress of pupils.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through regular, high-quality training. They have designed a system for monitoring progress that is developing and helping to inform teachers' planning.
- Leaders believe that reading is the cornerstone of learning. They devote significant time to reading each day. Pupils love to read widely and often. Reading enriches their lives, extends their vocabulary and develops a deep understanding of language. As a result, all pupils make strong progress in reading and develop as confident, enthusiastic and fluent readers.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well to enrich and broaden the sports curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of sports that are available and understand well the importance of being physically active.
- Pupils have a developing understanding of British values. Tolerance of difference and respect for the views and opinions of others are particularly well understood. Teachers use every opportunity to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The curriculum is well designed, broad and balanced. Music is heard across the school. Pupils' work in art is impressive. Pupils' love of learning across the whole curriculum is tangible.
- Leaders have enhanced the mathematics curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils now have regular opportunities to solve problems and apply their reasoning skills. However, the overarching plan for study from Years 5 to 8 lacks precision and challenge. Sometimes, pupils are given work that repeats earlier work without

broadening or deepening their mathematical understanding further. Expectations are somewhat unclear, and this hinders teachers' planning. The most able pupils do not consistently develop their skills as effectively as they should.

- Leaders are acutely aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are moving quickly to further improve the quality of education in mathematics. Firm plans to do so are already in place.

Governance of the school

- The new governing body has established quickly a shared vision for their schools that will further improve the quality of education, through collaboration and sharing of expertise.
- Governors are ambitious for their pupils. They want them to have the very best start in life and the best possible opportunities to learn and broaden their experiences.
- Governors have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They provide appropriate challenge and support to the school's leadership.
- Governors understand their responsibility to ensure that additional funding is used appropriately to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Governors have already begun to carry out checks for themselves on the quality of education in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks made on all staff, governors and volunteers meet legal requirements.
- Leaders ensure that staff are trained regularly, so that they are able to identify warning signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They report concerns promptly.
- Leaders act quickly to make sure pupils receive the support and protection they need.
- Leaders have established a caring and proactive safeguarding culture. They have a good understanding of the risks faced by pupils in the local community. For example, they ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they are near the coast and at the sea.
- Leaders take care to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of dangers, including when using mobile technology.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. Positive, caring relationships characterise all classrooms. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high. They routinely use assessment information about pupils' learning in order to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' capabilities and interests. As a result, pupils make good progress across the year

groups.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan activities that are intensely interesting and creative. Opportunities for pupils to work together, share ideas and help each other are a regular feature of lessons. Pupils enjoy investigations and practical lessons and are also able to work quietly on their own. They become increasingly independent learners as they progress through the school.
- Teachers regularly use questioning to check pupils' understanding of key concepts and to identify misconceptions. Questioning is used well to encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. Pupils are willing to contribute their ideas and respond to teachers' questions. Their active participation makes a strong contribution to their good progress.
- Teachers plan and adapt activities carefully so that pupils with SEND make good progress. Teaching assistants provide effective support, and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic, confident and keen to learn.
- The teaching of reading is very strong. Pupils are encouraged to read a wide variety of texts and read regularly for pleasure. The teaching of writing is increasingly effective. Pupils learn to write for different audiences and purposes across different subjects. Every opportunity is exploited so that pupils develop strong writing skills in a wide range of different contexts.
- There is some variability in the quality of teaching in mathematics. Occasionally, lesson time is not used well. As a result, pupils do not always have enough time to practise new skills or grapple with problems. Some teachers do not plan how to teach new concepts carefully enough and pupils become confused. The most able pupils are not always challenged and sometimes, they shy away from more difficult work because they lack confidence. This variability is seen in pupils' books and explains why, overall, progress in mathematics is not quite as strong as it is in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Strong, caring relationships permeate the school. Pupils are kind to each other, friendly and articulate. They are interested in learning, listen carefully to their teachers and take pride in their work.
- Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are well supported and cared for. This helps them to develop resilience and to learn successfully.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to work together and share ideas. As a result, pupils are confident and self-assured. Pupils love to read and enjoy the wide range of books available.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy. They delight in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities and value the specialist coaching they receive. They told inspectors that they enjoy opportunities to play in competitions and tournaments. All pupils readily take part in physical exercise every day and run 'the daily mile' with

gusto.

- Pupils care for their environment and proudly told inspectors that some pupils were about to travel to London. They will visit the Houses of Parliament and collect the school's prestigious regional award for encouraging sustainable forms of transport to and from school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well developed. They have raised funds for local, national and international charities and have a strong understanding of community and citizenship. Pupils greatly enjoy the many trips and visits to local and regional centres. These are carefully planned to enrich pupils' learning, expand their horizons and widen their experiences.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are adamant that bullying is very rare. If it does occur, they are confident it will be dealt with swiftly. Pupils understand there are different forms of bullying, including homophobic and cyber bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do in the event of trouble.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils value their education and are proud of their school. They are considerate of others, respectful, polite and well mannered. They keep their school tidy and free from litter. They move carefully around the school, particularly where corridors are narrow. Behaviour on the playground is good and pupils enjoy their time playing together.
- Leaders work closely with families to improve pupils' attendance. Attendance has improved during the year and few pupils are now regularly absent from school.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. They respect the views of others and listen carefully to instructions. They help each other and rarely distract others or misbehave.
- A very small minority of pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Despite leaders' strategies to help them to improve their conduct, they choose to misbehave. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions has risen this year, although over time, exclusions are below average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are good. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined has improved considerably since the last inspection and, in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was above average.
- Progress in reading by the end of Year 6 was well above the national average in 2018 and in the highest 20% of all schools. Progress in writing and mathematics was broadly average overall. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard was average in reading but below average in writing and mathematics.
- All groups of pupils currently in school, including pupils with SEND, continue to make strong progress in reading as they move from key stage 2 into key stage 3.

- Progress in writing, for all groups of pupils, is quickly catching up with pupils' well-developed reading skills. Inspectors saw strong progress in pupils' written work across the whole curriculum in all year groups. This is because in all subjects, teachers work together to ensure they have consistently high expectations of pupils regarding the quality, depth and presentation of written work.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress is improving, and current pupils are making good progress. Even so, across the school, progress is still not quite as good as it is in reading and writing. This is especially so for most-able pupils. Some pupils' books show that expectations are not high enough and time is not well used. Pupils do not move on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- Progress over time in science is strong. In lessons, pupils thrive as high expectations are the norm and well-planned activities capture pupils' interest. Lessons build on pupils' prior learning and, as a result, they make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in their other subjects. For example, in music, Year 8 pupils were observed enjoying playing a variety of instruments. They relished helping each other to improve their performance. In French, they were seen to be making good progress in the use of adverbs and working together on improving their spoken language. Pupils in Year 6 were totally absorbed in learning about rivers, made rapid progress and challenged each other with their own questions.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good, both at the end of key stage 2 and for pupils currently in the school. This is because pupils are well cared for and well supported.
- Older pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders encourage them to think ahead about possible careers and especially about the courses they may take in the future.

School details

Unique reference number	122348
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10059053

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 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Shaw
Headteacher	Benjamin Hulbert
Telephone number	01289 307480
Website	www.tweedmouth.northumberland.sch.uk
Email address	admin@tweedmiddle.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 November 2016

Information about this school

- The governing bodies of Berwick Middle School and Tweedmouth Community Middle School formed a hard federation of the two schools under a new, single governing body in October 2018. This is known as The Three Bridges Federation.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized middle school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of The Three Bridges Federation and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with a local authority representative and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. Many of these observations and activities were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, analyses of pupils' performance, attendance and behaviour records, and child protection and safeguarding files. Inspectors also scrutinised the minutes of governing body meetings, as well as external reviews of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils from key stages 2 and 3. Inspectors spoke with pupils informally in lessons, and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- An inspector listened to some Year 6 and Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors considered the 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 23 free-text comments, the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire and six responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Janice Gorch, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sara Roe

Ofsted Inspector

Dimitris Spiliotis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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M1 2WD

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