

Bellingham Middle School and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122350
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359231
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trish Taylor
Headteacher	Dafydd Jones
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed 10 part-lessons which involved a total of nine teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors met and talked with pupils in lessons and around the school. They observed the school's work and looked at 43 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others from pupils and staff. Pupils' work and school documentation such as safeguarding information and records of pupils' progress were examined.

- How far the overall effectiveness of the school has improved since the last inspection.
- How effectively the governing body challenges the school and holds it to account through more accurate self-evaluation.
- The progress of underachieving boys.
- The extent of improvement in assessment procedures and practice.

Information about the school

Bellingham is a small middle school located in a rural part of Northumberland which has specialist status in sport. It received a Notice to Improve at the time of the last inspection and a new governing body and headteacher have since been appointed. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and the number with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language and there are very few from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. This was a parallel inspection event, in which the inspection of the childcare provision took place at the same time. A separate report is published on the Ofsted website.

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

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

Bellingham middle is a satisfactory and improving school. It has moved forward since the last inspection and the changes put in place are continuing to drive improvement. For example, leadership, management, governance and capacity for sustained improvement were inadequate and are now satisfactory. The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. It has rightly made holding leaders to account a high priority and the school knows there is more to be done. Specialist status is enhancing provision and resources are effectively deployed to achieve good value for money.

Attainment is rising and there is a secure trend of improvement. Standards of attainment in English and mathematics were above average in national tests at Key Stage 2 in 2009. The school's view that achievement and learning are good is confirmed by inspection evidence. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and underachieving boys are making good progress. Pupils say they particularly enjoy learning when they are constantly challenged and provided with good support.

Teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. The school recognises pupils are not always fully challenged by the teaching and is taking effective action to further raise quality. Assessment procedures and the tracking of individual pupil's performance have improved; for example, all subjects are routinely recording pupils' level of attainment on the school's system. Pupils say they feel safe in school and the care, guidance and support they receive are good. This is reflected in their good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The school strategy to promote community cohesion is satisfactory and the school recognises wider involvement of national and international communities is an area to develop.

Partnerships make a positive contribution to the good curriculum. Attendance is average and the school works closely with partners to make improvements. Relationships with parents and carers are developing well. For example, a new reporting system on individual pupils' progress has been introduced. Pupils' have a strong sense of spiritual, moral, social and cultural responsibility and equality of opportunity is promoted well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring lessons fully stretch and challenge pupils at all times.
- Ensure the rate and pace of school improvement continues by monitoring outcomes rigorously and holding all leaders fully to account.

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- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of pupils' learning and progress is good because pupils are keen to do well and they are motivated by activities which meet their needs and challenge them to think. They readily ask questions when they do not understand and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils learn at a brisk pace when they are stretched by work which is well matched to their individual interests. The school is making the right improvements to make learning more rapid and consistent, for example through more frequent monitoring to make sure the level of challenge is maintained.

Pupils' attainment when they start at the school is below average. All different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Underachieving boys are making better progress as they move through the school. Inspection evidence confirms challenging targets are being used more effectively to drive progress and achievement. Attendance is average and pupils say they feel safe. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils regularly take part in physical and sporting activities and have a good awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle. Their sense of spiritual, moral social and cultural responsibility is effectively developed and they are well prepared for their future lives, particularly through using information and communication technology (ICT) equipment. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and community life, for example, through the pupil forum which raises funds during the year for charities.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. Inspection evidence confirms the proportion of good teaching is rising and the school has made this a high priority in order to further raise achievement and improve progress. The best teaching constantly challenges thinking and increases individual understanding at a good pace. Pupils understand their targets and have a clear view of their own achievement. The quality of teaching is not as high when work is insufficiently well differentiated to cater for all needs and pupils spend too much time listening and not working.

Assessment practice has improved because teachers check progress more frequently and the best practice provides clear steps for improvement. The good curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities with support from the school's specialist sports status. Work with partners to support learning and vulnerable pupils is a strong feature of the good care, guidance and support provided by staff. Pupils settle in quickly when they come from their first school due to the good transition arrangements.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Governance has significantly improved and the governing body is challenging the school more effectively because it has accurate information about the school's performance. Members of the governing body and the new headteacher are taking decisive and successful action to make sure the school continues to improve and capacity to sustain improvement is secure. Systems of accountability are much stronger and effective action is being taken to tackle any weaknesses. Ensuring the rate and pace of school improvement continues by monitoring outcomes rigorously and holding all leaders fully to account is rightly a high priority.

Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements. The vetting procedures for adults working in school and for the identification and support of pupils who are most at risk are satisfactory. Child protection procedures are in place and work with a range of agencies ensures the safety of more vulnerable pupils. Barriers to learning and all forms of discrimination are effectively tackled through the satisfactory promotion of equal opportunities. The school is in the process of identifying where further improvements can be made and developing strategies to tackle them. Community cohesion is effectively encouraged and the school is seeking to expand national and global links. Resources have been well used to improve the learning environment. Relationships with parents and carers are strong and the school works well with a wide range of partners.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said the school keeps their children safe. The responses from the vast majority agreed that the school is well led and they are happy with their child's experience at the school. There were no particular trends in the small number of concerns received. They were investigated during the inspection and evidence confirmed that pupils are achieving well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bellingham Middle School and Sports College 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	49	19	44	2	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	25	58	18	42	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	44	19	44	3	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	40	18	42	4	9	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	20	47	20	47	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	37	20	47	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	44	23	53	1	2	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)	12	28	26	60	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	37	23	53	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	53	18	42	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	35	24	56	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	37	21	49	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	49	18	42	4	9	0	0

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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleague. 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.

- Bellingham is a satisfactory and improving school.
- You achieve well and make good progress.
- The new governing body and headteacher are making the right improvements to help you achieve even more.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is growing.
- You feel safe and well cared for, guided, and supported.

Your headteacher and the staff want to make further improvements to the school. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- build on and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
- ensure the rate and pace of school improvement continues.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

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