

# Berwick Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122354
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	359232
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2010
<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margaret Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Mulholland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lovaine Terrace Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 1LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01289 306140
<b>Fax number</b>	01289 306140
<b>Email address</b>	admin@berwick.northumberland.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty five lessons were observed involving nearly all teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and a number of senior and middle leaders and managers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documents including assessment and tracking data, work in pupils' books, monitoring and evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and documents relating to the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Inspectors also took account of the views of parents and carers as expressed in 97 questionnaires that were returned. The views of staff and pupils were also taken into account.

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

- how well pupils progress from Year 5 to Year 8, and what accounts for the rise in performance in English in Year 6 tests
- how well developments to the curriculum and care, guidance and support have contributed to outcomes for pupils
- the extent to which changes to the school's staffing structure have improved the school's capacity to identify the correct priorities for improvement.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average secondary school. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, though the school has a high proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school is a designated resource provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and hearing impairment. At the time of inspection there were no hearing impaired pupils at the school. The number of pupils on roll has dipped since the previous inspection because of a demographic decline in the area that the school serves; this has led to a considerable restructuring of staff. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy School status and Sportsmark.

**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?**

**4**

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

**4**

## 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 requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to safeguarding procedures, and to aspects of senior leadership and management.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because of shortcomings in the school's provision for safeguarding the well-being of pupils. During the inspection, a number of issues were identified that require urgent attention by the school. Despite this, the outcomes for pupils are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6, and by the end of Year 8 an increasing number of pupils exceed the expected level for their age. Their achievement and progress are satisfactory overall.

Teaching is satisfactory, and ranges from outstanding to a small minority that is inadequate. This wide variation prevents pupils from making good progress because staff do not have consistently high expectations of them. The school's senior leadership does not do enough to capture and share the best practice in teaching for the benefit of all pupils. A good curriculum ensures pupils acquire sound basic skills, and develop their talents and interests through a good range of enrichment activities. Pupils develop strengths such as confidence, good social skills and a concern for others as a consequence. For instance, they make a good contribution to their own and the local community through sports leadership roles and musical performances. They are keen fund-raisers, aware of the needs of others and willing to help. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, and in some lessons where they are fully engaged it is outstanding. Again, the school does too little to iron out variations in behaviour which reduce the quality of learning. While care, guidance and support are deemed inadequate because of the safeguarding concerns, pupils trust adults in the school to help them with problems and their relationships with teachers are good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate because the headteacher does not give clear enough direction to the work of the school, or set ambitious targets for school improvement. Staff morale is low and commitment to improvement is uneven. Nevertheless, there is evidence of good and outstanding leadership and management among subject and pastoral leaders, who are hampered in taking action because they have too little time away from the classroom to fully discharge their duties. Their work is not coordinated nor is good practice captured and shared. School self-evaluation is inaccurate and action to bring about improvement does not result in a concerted effort by all staff. The school has not made enough progress since the previous inspection and does not have the capacity to improve at present. Governance is inadequate because the

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governing body has too little knowledge of the school and is not able to challenge it over such matters as safeguarding procedures.

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

- Take urgent action to fully meet all requirements for safeguarding pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of senior leadership and management so that:
  - - there is clear vision and direction for school improvement that is shared with all staff
  - - roles and accountability are delegated and made clear to staff, with recognition of the time needed away from classroom duties to monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- Improve the governing body's knowledge of the school through regular monitoring so it improve its capacity to guide improvement.
- Capture and share good practice in teaching and learning so that all pupils benefit from consistently good quality provision.

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

**3**

Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make expected progress during Key Stage 2, from broadly average starting points. The few pupils who have moderate learning difficulties are well integrated in lessons and make similar progress to their peers, especially when they have intensive one-to-one support to help them master basic skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages. Evidence from this year's national tests show that performance in English improved well on previous years, and exceeded the school's targets. This was due to accurate identification of pupils who needed extra support to reach their targets and by providing personalised support for the lower-attaining pupils in the group. Pupils' progress increases in Key Stage 3 and their attainment rises more quickly, so that school data show more of these pupils exceeding the expectation for their age by the time they leave, than do so at the end of Year 6. This is especially the case in mathematics, where progress seen in the lessons of higher attainers was rapid, leading to outstanding achievement. However, there is not enough of this quality of learning across the school so that overall, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory.

There is quite a variation in how well pupils enjoy their learning. They are keen and willing learners for the most part, though their interest wanes rapidly when they are expected to be passive rather than active learners. Where pupils are appropriately challenged and expected to work independently they become fully involved, give of their best and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Again, there is not enough of this kind of learning across the school, especially in Key Stage 2. Behaviour is satisfactory, though it varies widely from outstanding in some lessons to poor in a few, when learning is disrupted, making some pupils feel uncomfortable. On the whole, pupils feel safe in school; although a few did express concerns about this, the majority have confidence in teachers to look after them and respond to any problems. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They take plenty of exercise in the many sports clubs that are available and most follow a sensible diet. Their contribution to the school community as sports leaders

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and the wider community through music and the arts is good. Attendance rose to above average in the last year. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

*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>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is too variable. It ranges from outstanding to sometimes inadequate. These variations in the quality of teaching and learning are holding back better progress across the school, because sometimes pupils are learning at a rapid rate and at other times this slows to barely satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, teachers use good subject knowledge and their understanding of what pupils need to learn next to provide challenging activities, with pupils working against the clock to complete tasks on time. These lessons buzz with excitement and pupils feel they are having fun rather than working as hard as they do. In satisfactory and weaker lessons, teachers spend too much time on lengthy explanations, so that pupils are passive and lose interest. Learning intentions are not clear or well matched to pupils' needs. Too often in such lessons, behaviour deteriorates and is not well managed, so that time is lost and learning is disrupted. Teachers' use of assessment follows the same pattern of variation. For some classes it provides an excellent match to pupils' needs; in others it has little impact on ensuring successful learning. The time and skills of teaching assistants are largely underused in lessons.

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The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Basic skills are soundly developed. Good provision for personal, social and health education supports pupils to have a good understanding of their own needs and the needs of others. The school's effective partnerships with neighbouring schools and local business bring in good opportunities for careers education, enterprise and leadership skills, which contribute well to pupils' personal development. Staff give willingly of their time during the lunch break to provide a wide range of enrichment activities, ensuring that pupils who travel long distances to the school can take part. There is a very high level of take-up of these activities, and pupils speak enthusiastically of the many opportunities to take part in competitive sports and music in the community, which develop good levels of confidence and independence.

Care, guidance and support are not satisfactory because safeguarding procedures are judged to be inadequate. Nevertheless, there are some strengths in this aspect of the school's work. Pupils, and their parents and carers, trust staff to look after them and are confident that they will listen to and act upon any concerns. Effective action by heads of year has seen attendance rise in the past year. Teachers take time to get to know pupils as individuals and are alert to any changes in their mood or behaviour. The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and personal development so that any weaknesses are picked up and acted upon. Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are supported well to integrate in classes and learn alongside their peers. The school's systems for managing the behaviour of pupils are not robust enough for all staff to have confidence that behaviour issues are consistently well managed.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is not providing enough direction, drive and ambition to improve the school at the rate required. There has been too little improvement since the previous inspection because delegation of responsibilities is weak, leaving some aspects of the school's work without leadership. As with the quality of teaching, there is a variation in the quality of leadership across the school, so that improvement is inconsistent and good practice is not routinely captured and shared for the benefit of all. Where there is excellent leadership, as in mathematics and science, this is reflected in effective systems for tracking learning, managing staff and driving up standards. Elsewhere, some good subject and pastoral leadership is successfully evaluating provision and identifying areas for improvement. The impact of these strengths is reduced by a lack of coordination and a lack of dedicated time away from the classroom for staff to carry out these duties.

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Members of the governing body rely too heavily on reports about the school, rather than challenging the school and gathering first-hand information through planned visits. They have not ensured that the school meets safeguarding requirements. They do ensure that the school promotes equal opportunity and that all pupils have equal access to an appropriately adapted curriculum. A recent high level of turnover in membership of the governing body provides an opportunity for governors to make much needed changes to how they monitor key aspects of the school's work. Good partnerships with other schools and local businesses bring in new expertise and opportunities which extend pupils' learning and ambitions. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has evaluated its local community and has set about establishing links with schools overseas, though it has yet to develop links with schools nationally that would provide pupils with opportunities to learn about the diversity of their society.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<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>4</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>2</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>4</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**

Parents and carers are supportive of the school and are pleased with how well their children settle. A number of parents praised the school for the approachability of staff. One comment echoes that of several, 'The staff are very supportive and approachable. They really go that extra mile.' Inspectors found that relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and supportive. They also noted that staff give much time to extra-curricular activities to develop pupils' confidence and new skills.

A significant minority of parents and carers have concerns about the progress that their children make and the information they get about how well their children are learning. As one parent put it, 'I would prefer it if the school informed me more of how my child's progress is going rather than just a once a year parent–teacher meeting.' The inspection found that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and that this increases in some

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subjects in Key Stage 3. Inspectors found that the school does not provide information about pupils' progress as regularly as in most schools. However, the school has responded to parental concerns and has increased the frequency of information going to parents and carers from this term.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Berwick 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 368 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	37	65	60	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	46	56	51	3	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	24	64	59	13	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	26	68	62	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	33	65	60	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	20	68	62	15	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	31	68	62	5	5	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)	35	32	68	62	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	28	69	63	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	31	62	57	6	6	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	20	71	65	8	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	28	70	64	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	39	57	52	6	6	1	1

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](http://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"><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 pupils' 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.**



6 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Berwick Middle School, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1LA**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently, and a special thanks to those who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk with us. While we found that your school gives you an acceptable standard of education so that you make satisfactory progress, we found some safeguarding matters that need quite urgent attention because they are linked to your well-being while you are in school. We also found that teachers need clear direction from the headteacher about how to improve the school. For these reasons, we have given your school a notice to improve. This means that your school will be visited again to check that these weaknesses are being dealt with quickly.

We saw that you work hard and enjoy learning when teachers set you tasks you can share with a partner and learn from each other. We agree with some of you that there are not enough lessons like that yet. We noticed that when you listened for too long you became bored and some of you misbehaved. We have asked your school to share all the best ways of teaching so that you learn quickly all of the time and do not have time to misbehave. We could see that you get on well with your teachers and that they look after you, especially by running so many clubs for you to join at lunchtime. Your curriculum also provides plenty of trips and visits out of school so that you learn in different ways from different people.

Your school helps you to develop some good personal qualities such as knowing how to stay healthy and fit, and care for others and help them by being sports leaders, and raising funds for different charities. We agree with those of you who said that pupils should have more say about what needs to improve in the school. Perhaps you will get the chance to develop your ideas about class rules when the new school council is elected.

The last thing we have asked your school to do is to arrange for governors to make more visits to see how you are learning and listen to your ideas for what could be better. We know you will help your school improve because you are proud to attend and are keen to get involved. All good wishes for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector

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