

Gosforth East Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108521
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	377771
Inspection dates	30 April 2012–1 May 2012
Lead inspector	Ann Ashdown

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	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Snaith
Headteacher	Tim Stout
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
School address	Harewood Road Gosforth Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 5JT
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown
Peter Harrison
Shirley Fall

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 27 teachers teaching 29 lessons of which three were joint observations with senior staff. In addition, they visited specialist sessions teaching literacy and numeracy, looked at reading records and listened to students read. Meetings and discussions were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and school staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at students' books, progress data, safeguarding information, and other documentation. They took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey, analysed 211 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from students and staff.

Information about the school

This middle school is well below the average size of most secondary schools. A below average proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average, including those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have all been appointed to their posts since September 2011. The school has gained Healthy School status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Recently appointed leaders and managers have a very clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. Their good leadership of teaching, sensitive management of staff performance and closer tracking of students' progress are instrumental in building the school's good capacity for further improvement. The school is not yet outstanding because teaching is good rather than outstanding and the roles of middle managers are not yet fully developed.
- Students enter Year 5 with attainment which is broadly in line with that expected for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school so attainment is above average when they leave Year 8.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their students well and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust. In the best lessons teachers ask challenging questions, activities are varied, and students have ample opportunities to work independently and take risks in their learning. However, this good practice is not yet widely shared across the school. In slower paced lessons students are sometimes asked to listen for too long and have fewer opportunities to work independently.
- Students' behaviour is typically good and they say they feel very safe in school. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They are respectful to each other and to staff and welcoming to visitors.
- Students' achievement is accelerating because senior leaders and managers are acutely aware of the progress students are making and extremely skilful in ensuring they receive high quality, sharply focused and timely intervention in their learning when extra help is needed. However, although middle leaders are beginning to take more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the work of their departments and making use of assessment data to plan learning, their roles remain underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so all lessons are at least good and more are outstanding by:
 - ensuring all lessons have a good balance of teacher-led and student-initiated activities
 - asking more complex, open ended questions which challenge students to think deeply
 - allowing students more opportunities to take risks in their learning
 - sharing good practice more widely across the school.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders and managers by:
 - ensuring they are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of their areas of responsibility
 - further developing their expertise in analysing assessment data and using this to plan learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons students answer questions readily, work hard and concentrate on the task in hand. In an English lesson younger students were seen making good progress as they confidently selected a range of suitable adjectives, such as 'bleak', 'angry' and 'deserted' to write a negative description of a park. Most parents and carers, rightly, feel that their children are making good progress and the school is helping them develop good basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Students' good progress and above average attainment in reading was confirmed when inspectors scrutinised reading records, listened to students read and talked with them about the books they enjoyed. Students' interest in literature was clearly seen when they asked well-informed and perceptive questions of an author who was visiting the school. Work in students' books and that on display in classrooms confirmed the good progress that all groups of students are making. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, students who speak English as an additional language and those who need extra help to reach challenging targets all receive timely and sharply focused help from teachers and teaching assistants which enables them to make the same good progress as their peers.

From broadly average starting points, students achieve well. After two years in the school, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 and also above average when they leave the school after Year 8. Although results in national tests were slightly lower in 2011, the school's detailed tracking system indicates that the progress of students in all year groups is now accelerating and they are on track to achieve challenging targets this year.

Quality of teaching

In most lessons teaching is good and never less than satisfactory. Of the high proportion of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire most agree that their children are taught well. Students respond well to the teaching they receive. In the best lessons they relish the challenging questions, demanding tasks and varied learning opportunities that teachers provide. Year 5 students greatly enjoyed the opportunity to make good use of laptop computers to research information about volcanoes and earthquakes. They then developed good social and teamwork skills by working together to write an explanatory text before presenting and displaying their information in varied and attractive ways. In a history lesson older students were asked challenging and complex questions about the way in which Elizabeth I presented herself through portraits which made them think deeply and greatly extended their understanding. This good practice within the school is not yet fully shared. In some lessons teaching, although well planned and highly structured, does not allow students opportunities to make maximum progress by learning independently, taking risks and making mistakes. In these lessons teachers' questioning does not demand students to think deeply enough. Work is marked regularly and students receive good pointers on how to improve their work. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported both in class and in specialist teaching sessions for smaller groups of students which enable them to make the same good progress as their peers. Teachers implement the planned curriculum well and take every opportunity to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students have good opportunities to explore other cultures and religions particularly during the recent 'diversity days' when differences between people were celebrated.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students typically behave well. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour in lessons. Inspectors followed up these concerns rigorously and found, both from observation and the scrutiny of records, that behaviour over time both in lessons and around the school is good. Students speak knowledgeably about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and show a sensible attitude to risk and a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They say they feel very safe in school and are confident that any rare incidents of bullying will be quickly and firmly dealt with by staff. Students are proud of their school, speak appreciatively of their teachers and clearly enjoy learning. Attendance is consistently above average and students are punctual to school and to lessons. The school provides good support for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Several parents and carers commented at length on how well the school has supported their children who are disabled or have special educational needs. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers say that their child feels safe at school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leadership team have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and an equally clear view of what needs to be done to further raise students' achievement. They have clearly communicated this to members of the governing body and all staff who share their firm focus on improving the school. In

the short time they have been in post they have ensured that assessment data are very well used to rigorously track students' progress. They have regularly and accurately monitored the quality of teaching, managed performance well and put in place high quality professional development to allow staff to improve their skills. These actions have had a significant impact on accelerating students' progress over time and are contributing significantly to its good capacity to improve further. With very good support from senior leaders, middle managers are now making much greater use of data to plan learning and are monitoring the work of their departments more closely; this in turn is having a positive impact on students' learning. However, this work is not yet fully developed and remains an area for improvement. Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school and are kept well informed about students' achievements. All groups of students are given good equal opportunities to succeed and any gaps between the attainment of different groups of students are narrowing rapidly. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the views of all individuals, both students and staff, are equally valued. Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and staff are well trained and highly aware of child protection issues.

The curriculum meets the needs of students well. It maintains a clear and successful focus on ensuring students are equipped with good basic skills while also providing a range of enrichment activities and courses which add greatly to students' enjoyment of learning. Students speak enthusiastically about high quality art work they have produced, dramatic productions in which they have taken part and a wealth of trips and visits they have enjoyed. They were equally enthusiastic about visits to national landmarks such as the Olympic stadium and the Houses of Parliament as those to local museums and churches. Thought-provoking assemblies, personal, social, and health education lessons and a rich variety of extra-curricular activities all promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Gosforth East Middle School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 5JT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we inspected your school. A particular thank you to those of you who read aloud to us and shared your views with us by filling in the questionnaires and telling us so much about your school. Please thank your parents and carers who also filled in the questionnaires.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Yours is a good school.
- Your behaviour is good and we agree with your view that you are kept safe in school.
- Your achievement is good because you make good progress and attain above average standards.
- We agree with your view that the teaching you receive is good.
- The way your school is led and managed and the curriculum you follow are good.

This is what we have asked your school to do to help it improve.

- Make your lessons even better by asking your teachers to:
 - ensure that you have opportunities to learn by both listening to your teacher and working on your own
 - ask you challenging questions and give you opportunities to take risks in your learning and learn from your mistakes
 - share their best ideas for teaching really good lessons.

We have also asked your teachers to keep checking on the quality of the school's work and make good use of your test and assessment results to help plan your learning. All of you can help your school become even better by working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Ashdown
Lead inspector

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