

# Morpeth Chantry Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137747
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	388439
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	John Paddick

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>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	498
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of Directors
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Vaughan
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Paul Lawrence
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

John Paddick  
Jim Hall  
Peter Harrison

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed parts of 21 lessons taught by 21 different teachers. Two of these were joint observations with the executive headteacher and the head of school. Inspectors held meetings with members of the board of directors, the executive headteacher, members of staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school development plan, safeguarding policies, the homework policy and an analysis of students' progress. They analysed 53 questionnaires from parents and carers, and others completed by staff and students.

## Information about the school

Chantry is an above average-sized middle school. Students are mostly of White British heritage. Few are from minority-ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The school meets the current floor standards set by the government for attainment and progress. From September 2009, the school became federated with another middle school and a high school in the locality to form The Three Rivers Learning Trust Limited. It converted to academy status in December 2011. The executive headteacher leads the two middle schools. Recently, the school gained the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key Findings

- Chantry is a good and rapidly improving school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching and students' achievement are good rather than outstanding.
- Students make good progress and achieve well. When they join Year 5, their skills in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average yet by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is well-above average. All groups of students, including those with disabilities or who have special educational needs, make better progress than similar groups nationally.
- Good teaching underpins the good progress that students make and an accurate tracking system soon identifies any who are not learning quickly enough. Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding but just occasionally merely satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers present their topics in an enthusiastic and compelling manner and maintain fast rates of learning. However, in the satisfactory lessons, teachers concentrate more on what is to be taught rather than ensuring that all students make best use of the time available. The marking of students' work is satisfactory rather than good.
- Behaviour is good and relationships between students and members of staff are excellent. Students cooperate well in class and behave in a sensible manner when they are moving around the school and when they socialise at breaks and lunchtimes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students respond very positively to the wide range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides.
- Good leadership and management at all levels are effectively focused on raising attainment and improving teaching. There is no complacency because staff morale is very good and all members are keen to play their part in ensuring that higher targets for students are met. The management of performance is good. Self-evaluation is accurate and robust. Review and monitoring of targets in development plans ensure that intended improvements materialise on time.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - increasing the pace of learning in the small number of satisfactory lessons to at least good
  - using examples of outstanding teaching to set the standard for the quality of all lessons
  - providing more opportunities for students to learn independently
  - improving the consistency and quality of written feedback to students when their work is marked.

## Main Report

### Achievement of students

Students of all ages say that they are making good progress. Parents and carers express the same positive view and evidence from the inspection supports this. When students join the school in Year 5, they are keen to learn and soon begin to thrive in response to the good teaching they receive. They immediately make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and build on this to reach above average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. Progress accelerates through Years 7 and 8 so that, by the time they transfer to the next stage in their education, students' attainment is well-above average in all basic skills and they are well-placed to start on GCSE work. This is particularly evident in their attainment in mathematics and the quality of their extended writing for a range of audiences.

The school's most recent assessments in Year 6 and Year 8 show that progress for all groups of pupils, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, is substantially exceeding national average rates. Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of written work recently completed by students and confirm that the school's above average assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science are accurate. Observations of lessons provided inspectors with many examples of good progress and high standards. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, outstanding teaching enabled students to solve quite complex problems on ratio and proportion with considerable speed and confidence. Work scrutiny showed that the highest ability students in Year 8 have very good numerical and algebraic skills. Students in the current Year 8 are producing work in writing and mathematics which is characteristic of that more usually produced by students at least a year older. There is no difference between the progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals and that of other students.

The school puts considerable emphasis on ensuring that all students develop their reading skills well. During the inspection, inspectors asked to hear students read during the lunch break. They can confirm that overall standards in reading rise to above average by Year 8. Even the weakest readers can make sense of text and understand what they have been reading. Students say that they have plenty of opportunity to practise and develop their skills in using computers. For example, by Year 8 many are confident in their ability to construct a website.

## Quality of teaching

The school's effective focus on the quality of teaching has identified good practice and elements of lessons that can be improved. The result has been more good quality lessons and a faster pace of learning throughout the school. Parents and carers recognise the good quality of teaching and students say that many lessons have improved swiftly since the arrival of the executive headteacher. Typically, teachers plan lessons well and ensure that there are clear pathways within them for students of all abilities to make good progress, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Lessons themselves are generally characterised by clear explanations, a fast pace and the full engagement of interested pupils who are keen to tackle the wide range of activities that their teachers prepare for them. When students do not make expected progress, particularly in reading, the school provides extra effective tuition in small groups to enable them to catch up.

In most lessons, students learn quickly in response to compelling introductions and a fast pace skilfully generated by the teacher. Where learning drops to satisfactory rather than good, teachers tend to proceed with a more leisurely pace and provide lessons where students can listen and watch for too long rather than working independently or being involved in learning by doing and discussing. The marking of students' work is generally satisfactory. Teachers praise students with written comments when they have done well and indicate what they need to do to improve. However, the advice on improvement is sometimes imprecise and rarely leads to further opportunities for students to further develop competences or correct errors. Homework is set regularly, particularly in English, mathematics and science but it is impossible for parents to check on it with any accuracy because some is recorded in diaries and some is set electronically.

## Behaviour and safety of students

The school has high expectations of the way that students conduct themselves. The students themselves know what is expected of them and, because they fully respect teachers and their assistants, they respond very positively. Students enjoy very productive relationships with the adults who work with them and cooperate very well, whether they are in class or moving around the school. They are invariably polite and relate well to visitors. Exclusions and detentions for unacceptable conduct are very low. Incidents relating to bullying or racism are almost non-existent and students have confidence that if they should occur then members of staff would deal with them effectively. Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. Most parents, carers and students believe that the school tackles incidents of unacceptable behaviour well.

The school provides its students with a very safe and supportive environment for their education. Students say that they enjoy school and recognise that they are making good progress because they receive good teaching. They particularly value the opportunities they have to become involved in a very wide range of sporting and cultural activities, especially music and fundraising for charities. They also value the opportunities they have to make their views known. They say that they feel perfectly safe in school because there is always someone on hand to approach if they have problems. Students have an excellent understanding of the wide range of risks to

which they might be exposed from water, roads and railways to e-safety, drugs, alcohol and smoking. Considerable efforts are made to ensure that students attend school regularly. The effectiveness of these is reflected in their above average attendance.

### **Leadership and management**

The executive headteacher provides the school with a clear vision for improvement and effective leadership. He is ably supported by the head of school and other members of the senior leadership team, together with middle managers who have been keen to accept new responsibilities. Morale is very good and the vision for constant improvement is shared by members of staff at all levels of seniority. Staff respond readily to the professional development programmes. Governance provided by the board of directors and the school committee is very effective in ensuring that targets for students' rates of progress are challenging and shared by the three federated establishments. The school's self-assessment is accurate and informs good development planning which is clear about what is to be improved and how it is to be achieved. Central features of this planning relate to further improvements in the quality of teaching and substantial rises in students' progress rates. However, leaders recognise that there is a need for further opportunities for staff to share best teaching practice. Managers at all levels combine effectively to ensure that the monitoring of the school's performance and review procedures are robust and targets are met on time.

Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet all requirements well. The checking of everyone who has access to students is of high quality. A very strong commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities ensures that students from all walks of life do equally well in terms of personal development and academic progress. There is no evidence of discrimination of any description. The school can demonstrate clearly that any gaps in attainment between groups are detected and closed quickly. A well-designed curriculum provides students of all abilities and backgrounds with clear pathways towards making good progress in basic skills and the development of knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. It also very effectively underpins their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the promotion of higher attainment show that the school has very good capacity to move forward again.

## 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](http://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.**



25 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Morpeth Chantry Middle School, Morpeth, NE61 1RQ**

Thank you for making the team so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We particularly wish to thank you for filling in our questionnaires. This told us that you have very positive views about your school and that you think you are making good progress. We also wish to thank those of you who were so keen to discuss your work in class and those who came to read to us during lunchtime. We were really impressed by your good behaviour and keenness to learn.

Inspectors found that your school is improving quickly and provides you all with a good quality education. Teachers and their assistants care for you well and know exactly how much progress you are making. When you need extra help there is always someone on hand to provide it for you. Chantry is a very welcoming school which provides you with a good environment for learning and good teaching. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school and that you recognise the improvements made since the executive headteacher arrived.

Your school can still improve further and we have asked the board of directors, school committee, executive headteacher and staff to make some changes to enable you to learn even more quickly. These are to:

- improve the overall quality of satisfactory and good teaching to outstanding
- ensure that marking gives you a clearer idea on how to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to behave well and work hard.

With every best wish for the future,

Yours sincerely

John Paddick  
Lead inspector

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