

Morpeth Chantry Middle School

Mitford Road, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1RQ

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection fully. The quality of teaching and the progress pupils make remain too variable.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, have not supported and held teachers to account effectively enough. They have not checked the quality of teaching thoroughly to ensure that it is good in all subjects and classes.
- Leaders have not checked that professional development has had the intended effect on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too variable. Work set is sometimes not well matched to the needs and abilities of lower-attaining pupils and the most able pupils.
- Teachers' assessment is not precise enough across a range of subjects. As a result, learning activities do not always build on what pupils know, understand and can do. This limits the progress some pupils make.
- At times, teachers' questioning is not skilful enough to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not sharply focused on how actions taken will improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum has been taught well in Years 7 and 8. The pace of learning in French and Spanish is slow and there are inconsistencies in other subjects. Too many pupils are not developing their skills and confidence in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make stronger progress in Years 5 and 6 as a result of better teaching. Across the school, pupils make stronger progress in reading and mathematics than in other subjects.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and are safe. There are good systems to support pupils' well-being. Attendance is above average and behaviour is good.
- Pupils, parents and carers are very positive about the wide range of extra activities provided by the school. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well.
- Governors have appointed more senior leaders to increase the school's capacity for improvement. There are signs that the new leaders are beginning to have a positive impact on the school's effectiveness.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in all subjects and classes and pupils make good progress, by making sure that:
 - the work set by teachers matches the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils
 - teachers' expectations are consistently high and pupils' work is adjusted quickly when it is too easy or too hard
 - questioning is used skilfully by teachers to deepen pupils' understanding of what they are learning
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length across a wide range of subjects and in English
 - assessment is used skilfully and accurately to identify clearly what pupils should do to improve their learning and make faster progress.
- Increase the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management by making sure that:
 - senior and middle leaders check the quality of teaching thoroughly to ensure that the school's priorities are being addressed and, as a result, the progress pupils make is improving
 - leaders take swift and effective action when they identify inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - plans for improvement are crystal clear about how actions will improve the quality of teaching and the outcomes pupils achieve
 - the curriculum is effective in supporting good learning, particularly in French, Spanish, history and geography, especially in Years 7 and 8
 - disadvantaged pupils catch up quickly in Years 7 and 8 across a wide range of subjects
 - the areas for improvement identified during this inspection are addressed fully by the time of the next inspection.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not made sure that all the areas for improvement identified in the school's previous inspection report have been fully addressed. They have not made sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. This is especially the case in Years 7 and 8. As a result, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, do not check the quality of teaching thoroughly enough. At times, they do not act swiftly when inconsistencies in teachers' practice are identified. Leaders' efforts have been more successful in key stage 2 and, as a result, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making stronger progress and achieving better outcomes.
- Senior and middle leaders have not checked the impact of the actions they are taking to secure improvement thoroughly enough. For example, in Years 7 and 8, leaders have not checked that the quality of pupils' writing is improving quickly enough and that there are regular opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length.
- The school's improvement plan identifies appropriate actions but does not show how much the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, are expected to improve. This limits leaders' ability to check the impact of their actions and hold teachers and other staff to account for the work they do.
- Leaders and the academy trust have provided a wide range of professional development to improve teaching and strengthen leadership. Staff morale is high. There are well-planned opportunities for staff to work with good and outstanding schools and work together to improve teaching. This has supported improvement in teaching and the progress pupils make in some classes and year groups. However, school leaders have not checked the effect of this work well enough. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make remain inconsistent.
- New leaders are setting about checking the quality of teaching more systematically. They have introduced a framework to support improvement in teaching and are starting to iron out inconsistencies in assessment in Years 7 and 8. Currently, the school's assessment information still shows too much variation in pupils' attainment across subjects. However, it is providing leaders with more reliable information for them to act on.
- Overall, additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. These pupils are attaining increasingly well in Years 5 and 6 and, across the school, their attainment has improved over time. However, leaders have not made sure that disadvantaged pupils are doing as well as other pupils in Years 7 and 8. Importantly, additional funding has been used well to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils study many subjects and have a wide range of additional opportunities. The curriculum encourages pupils' good personal development and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. All pupils attend a residential activity, participate in sport and have good opportunities to take part in cultural activities. Pupils are being well prepared to become good citizens. The curriculum encourages pupils' enjoyment of reading and good achievement in some subjects. However, the quality of teaching

needs improvement to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. In particular, inspectors noted that pupils' learning is inconsistent in French, Spanish and a number of other subjects, such as history and geography.

- Physical education and sport funding is used very well. Pupils participate in competitive sport and are very successful. Pupils say that there are many competitions between schools in the local sports partnership. They participate in team-building activities and martial arts, learn from professional sports coaches and have access to a wide range of sports.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is being used well to help them engage fully in the life of the school.
- The academy trust has supported the school well in improving the quality of teaching in some classes and year groups. In Years 7 and 8, it has supported improvements in mathematics, reading and several other subjects. The academy trust has identified clear priorities for school leaders. However, further work is needed to make sure that school leaders are thorough and taking the action needed to secure consistently good teaching and good progress across the school.

Governance of the school

- The academy council and the board of trustees contribute well to the leadership of the school. The council and trustees have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use external support to check the accuracy of the information they receive from leaders. Governors meet leaders, including middle leaders, to hold them to account. However, some information provided by leaders has given governors an overgenerous view of the school's performance and this has impeded swift action being taken.
- Governors are ambitious for pupils and passionate about all of them achieving well. They know about the good work being done to support pupils' personal development and welfare and they recognise that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved. One of their priorities is to make sure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils. Currently, this work has not had enough impact on the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- Governors have reviewed the school's leadership arrangements and, as a result, have wisely increased the size of the leadership team to add greater capacity for improvement.
- Governors have a good range of expertise in finance, education and the law. They use national and local expertise to support their training and development. Governors recently commissioned a review of their work to give them an external view of the effectiveness of governance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to make sure that pupils, especially the most vulnerable pupils,

are safe and protected from harm. Safeguarding records are well kept and indicate a strong commitment to keeping all pupils safe. Governors make sure that all checks on staff and volunteers working with pupils are carried out and recorded meticulously.

- Staff have regular training to make sure that they are up to date with the most recent safeguarding guidance. They are vigilant and clear about their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable across the school, especially in Years 7 and 8.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not consistently high across a range of subjects. At times, work set is too easy and it is not swiftly adjusted to add the greater challenge that some pupils need. For example, the most able pupils are sometimes asked to repeat work which does not increase their fluency and accuracy in mathematics. This slows the pace of their learning.
- Similarly, the work set for lower-attaining pupils is sometimes too hard. At times, lower-attaining pupils move on to new work before misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge and understanding have been tackled. Again, this slows the pace of their learning and limits the progress they make.
- Some teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils to explain their ideas and understanding. Overall, questioning is not used well enough by teachers to check how much pupils have learned and to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Too often, teachers accept short responses to questions and pupils are not expected to give an extended answer which shows deeper understanding.
- The work in pupils' books shows inconsistencies in the progress they make across a range of subjects. The quality and standard of pupils' work vary widely between subjects and classes. In some subjects and classes, pupils make fast progress because the work they are set is developing their knowledge and skills and deepening their understanding. On other occasions, the most able pupils are set work which is too easy and lower-attaining pupils move on to new work before they have secured their knowledge and understanding.
- Despite leaders prioritising pupils' ability to write at length in a range of subjects, teachers are not giving pupils enough opportunities to develop their writing skills and show a deep understanding of what they are learning. Staff are not diligent enough in checking spelling and grammar and this does not support the development of good writing.
- Across the school, work is assessed regularly and there are times when teachers make sure that pupils respond in depth to improve their work. However, teachers' assessment is inconsistent overall. There are times when assessment does not identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work. Too often, pupils respond briefly or do not take care to improve their work well enough, especially in writing.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and welcome opportunities to speak with adults. They are polite and listen to each other's points of view. They treat each other and adults with respect. They are courteous and hold doors open for adults.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoy school and feel safe. They know who to speak to if they have any worries and are confident that they will be listened to by an adult and action will be taken. Pupils are well cared for by staff and other adults, such as a counsellor, who are available to support pupils' emotional well-being.
- Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles such as house captains, sports leaders and peer mentors. They vote for their school parliament and gain a good understanding of democracy, liberty and the law through a well-organised citizenship programme. Pupils know how to stay fit and healthy and enthuse about the many sporting opportunities they have and the wide range of visits and cultural activities they take part in.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare and they are confident that it is dealt with quickly. They are clear about how to stay safe when using the internet. Leaders have provided workshops for parents to help them learn how to keep their children safe when using the internet at home.
- Pupils take pride in their work and engage well in class. Occasionally, some pupils are too easily satisfied when work is too easy for them and, at times, they do not look for greater challenge or additional information to make faster progress.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about the world of work. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to work with scientists and technologists, and to visit local universities to work with students and lecturers.
- Parents and staff who made their views known are confident that pupils are well looked after and safe. Parents appreciate the wide range of activities provided by the school to support their children's personal development and welfare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to their lessons. Attendance has improved since the school's last inspection and is above average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved quickly over the past year and is close to the national average. The number of disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent from school has reduced quickly because of good links with parents and leaders' determination to make sure that pupils attend regularly.
- Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Conduct in lessons is good, with examples of excellent engagement when pupils are challenged by their work. When teachers' expectations are lower, there are a few occasions when pupils lose

concentration and their behaviour slips. However, the flow of lessons and pupils' learning are rarely interrupted.

- Pupils manage their behaviour well around school. They know what is expected of them and behave well. Very occasionally, behaviour can slip a touch. For example, when pupils are collecting work from their lockers, some can be inconsiderate towards others. However, pupils respond quickly when they are reminded about good behaviour by staff.
- The school is free from litter because pupils take care of their environment. The school is a purposeful place where pupils get on well together.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils are not making consistently good progress in all classes and year groups because of the inconsistent quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors analysed a considerable amount of pupils' work and found that currently, pupils are not making consistently strong progress in a range of subjects. In some subjects and classes, pupils are developing their knowledge and skills and deepening their understanding as a result of effective teaching. Pupils are using and applying their knowledge and skills, for example to reason and solve complex problems in mathematics, with increasing confidence. In other classes, the most able pupils' progress is held back because the work they are set is insufficiently challenging. Sometimes, lower-attaining pupils do not make fast enough progress because the work they are set is poorly matched to their level of ability. Too many pupils are not making fast enough progress in writing, especially in Years 7 and 8.
- In Years 7 and 8, disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as other pupils who have similar starting points. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is accelerating in some subjects and classes, especially in Years 5 and 6, but this is not consistently the case.
- Pupils are not developing a sufficient depth of understanding in a range of subjects across Years 7 and 8 to make good progress. This is particularly noticeable in French, Spanish, history and geography.
- Pupils eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding are supported well and are making faster progress than others to catch up, although their progress in writing is behind that in mathematics and reading. This extra funding is being used effectively to accelerate the progress of this group of pupils.
- Published information for pupils leaving Year 6 in 2017 shows improvements and above-average progress in reading and mathematics, with a good proportion of pupils attaining expected and high standards in these subjects. In writing, it shows average attainment, with boys' attainment behind that of girls and disadvantaged pupils still catching up. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils have caught up with other pupils nationally and, in reading, they have made good progress to be close to the national average.
- Inspectors found pupils' progress is stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 7 and 8. In Years 5 and 6, increasing proportions of pupils are achieving and exceeding the age-expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 7 and 8, this is not

consistently the case and disadvantaged pupils are not doing as well as other pupils, especially in writing.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making progress that is at least similar to others nationally. Their needs are clearly identified and new leaders check pupils' work regularly to make sure that staff refine it to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive good support to engage fully in lessons.
- Reading is encouraged exceptionally well by the school. Pupils enjoy using the well-stocked library to read for pleasure. There are regular opportunities for pupils to read interesting information in lessons and books of their choice in form time. Standards in reading are high. Pupils are keen to use computers to check their understanding of what they are reading. Parents told inspectors that the school's work with their children is very effective and generates a real interest in reading.

School details

Unique reference number	137747
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10036558

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	522
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Marion Stewart (academy council)
Headteacher	Simon Taylor (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01670 512 874
Website	www.chantry.the3rivers.net
Email address	simon.taylor@the3rivers.net
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils from nine to 13 years old. It is similar in size to the average-sized middle school. It is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Fewer than one in five pupils are disadvantaged. This is lower than the national average.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Exceptionally few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for their SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The school is a member of The Three Rivers Learning Trust. The trust has three other

member schools. They are King Edward VI High School, Newminster Middle School and Abbeyfields First School. Its local governing body is known as the academy council.

- There have been significant additions to senior leadership from September 2017.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- An initial inspection visit to the school took place on 28 and 29 November 2017. Two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors undertook a further visit to the school on 19 December 2017 to gather additional evidence.
- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning throughout the school. Several lessons were jointly observed with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders.
- During the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about their learning and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils’ work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils’ books. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- An inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the academy council and one other governor. An inspector had a telephone conversation with the school’s improvement adviser.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s review of its own performance, its development and improvement plans, a number of school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 115 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) posted during the inspection. They also analysed 50 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire and 40 responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Tull	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Suzanne Lithgow	Senior Her Majesty’s Inspector
Nick Whittaker	Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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