

# Bellingham Middle School and Sports College

Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EN

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is a very positive and purposeful place to learn. It is well thought of in the local community and its reputation is well deserved.
- Students' achievement is good and has improved rapidly over the past three years.
- Teaching and learning throughout the school are good and some is outstanding. Students enjoy their lessons and there are good relationships between students and adults.
- The behaviour of the vast majority of students is good and this plays a major part in them learning well.
- The school helps to promote students' love of reading well and this is reflected in rising standards in reading.
- The school is led well and this has been a key factor in the school's improved success.
- The headteacher and his senior leaders set high aspirations for both staff and students.
- Teaching has improved through focused checks on how well individual teachers help students to learn and make progress.
- Checks on progress are carried out regularly and this information is used to help students to catch up if they fall behind.
- Students are given many opportunities to broaden their personal development through a wide range of visits and visitors.
- Governance is good and this has helped the school to make the improvements that it has.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not use information about what students can and cannot do to set work that stretches all of them.
- Sometimes teachers do not guide students well enough so that they do not always know how well they are learning or how to improve their work.
- Best practice in teaching is not shared often enough among staff at present.
- The school's website does not contain the most up-to-date information to allow parents to be fully informed about the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine teachers teaching 11 lessons. One observation was conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and carried out analyses of students' books and other work.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, development planning, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and information about teachers' professional development.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, students and a representative from the local authority.
- The 15 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted on-line survey, and the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.

## Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school serves a remote rural area and is much smaller than the average size school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, is lower than average.
- Almost all students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students supported by school action, by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school has specialist status in sport.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school federated with the adjoining first school in September 2012 and they now share the same governing body.
- Separate childcare provision shares the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and was not included in this inspection. A report of its quality may be found on the Ofsted website.

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

- Ensure that more teaching is outstanding to raise achievement further by:
  - always using information about what students can and cannot do to set work that is appropriately challenging for all students
  - providing students with clear criteria for success so that they can judge for themselves how well they are learning, and encouraging them to use these criteria during lessons
  - giving students consistently high quality feedback so they know how they can improve their work, and checking that they respond to this advice.
- Improve aspects of leadership and management by:
  - effectively sharing with all teachers what works best in lessons so that teaching improves further
  - ensuring that all the required information is on the school website and is up to date so that parents are fully informed about the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter in Year 5 with attainment that is generally slightly below average. They make good progress and leave in Year 8 with attainment that is securely average in English and above average in mathematics.
- Students' attainment has improved greatly over the past three years because of good leadership and management and better teaching.
- Progress is good in English in each year group, including in reading and writing, and it is good or better in mathematics. Any previous underachievement is being tackled well so that pupils are catching up quickly.
- During the inspection, achievement in almost all lessons seen was good and in some lessons it was outstanding. Students are keen to rise to challenges. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, students made outstanding progress in using the value of  $\pi$  to one or two decimal places when calculating mentally the circumference and area of circles.
- Progress in reading is good and rapidly improving because all staff follow the same approach. Students enjoy reading every day, often during their tutor time at the beginning and end of the day. The inspector saw many reading journals where students had written good descriptions of the books they read and why they enjoyed them.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress in line with that of other students. This is because of the good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants to help them understand and access their work. Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium also make good progress.
- Students' literacy, numeracy and communication skills are good and this prepares them well for their future. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in many lessons, for example in research. During the inspection, Year 5 students thoroughly enjoyed using a computer program where they had to identify which character was the 'spy'.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes it is outstanding. This was confirmed in lesson observations during the inspection.
- Relationships between adults and students are good and teachers use a wide range of interesting activities that students get involved in eagerly. Students told the inspector that one of the things they liked best about school was that learning was fun.
- In the best lessons information about the levels students are working at is used well to give them tasks that gets the best out of all the students, whatever their ability, for example in a Year 6 technology lesson. Occasionally this does not happen and sometimes work is set that does not stretch all students.
- In most lessons teachers make sure that students know how they can be successful in a lesson and they can tell how well they are learning. This is not yet the case in all lessons.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in many lessons. There is time for students to think deeply and reflect on life in different times, such as when Year 8 students debated the advantages and disadvantages of poorhouses in Victorian times.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning to ensure that students, including those who have specific needs, understand their work. This was seen in many lessons, including a Year 5 food technology lesson where each student was able to explain the importance of hygiene and safety when making a fruit salad.
- The marking in books is generally good with some helpful specific comments on how students can improve their work. However, there is some marking that does not do this as well, nor are there enough instances of students acting on teachers' guidance to make improvements to their

work.

- Responses to Parent View showed that parents agree that their children are taught well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The vast majority of students behaves well in lessons and around school. Parents and staff agree that behaviour is good and this was evident during the inspection.
- Students are very keen to get on with their work and they are eager to do well. They enjoy working on tasks together and do this often, for example in French and physical education.
- Students shared their views willingly with the inspector who was most impressed by their confidence and maturity. They said that they felt that it was very important to help their local community and they do this in many ways, including planting flowers in the village.
- Students rate behaviour as eight or nine out of 10. Older students confirmed that behaviour has been good for some time. They really appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions, which they see as fair. They understand well different forms of bullying and say that the very little bullying that does occur is sorted out quickly.
- Students told the inspector that their school is a very safe one. They have a good understanding of safety issues, such as e-safety, and they worked safely in practical lessons during the inspection.
- Attendance is routinely above average for all groups of students.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and his leadership team are bringing about improvements very quickly. Three years ago the school was given a notice to improve. It was re-inspected one year later and was judged satisfactory. Now two years on it has been judged as good.
- Leaders know the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved very well. Expectations of the staff and the students have been raised and there is a definite 'can do' attitude. The progress that students make is checked regularly and rigorously. Any students found to be falling behind are helped to catch up quickly through one-to-one tuition and small-group work.
- Checks made on the quality of teaching and learning have improved the quality of teaching and thus the progress that students make. Each teacher knows the areas for development in their teaching and these have been systematically followed up and improved. However, the best ways of teaching and learning in lessons are not being shared well enough among staff at present.
- There is very little difference between the progress that different groups of students make because the school does a great deal to help each individual student to do their best. This means that the school does well in promoting equality of opportunity.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the students well. Opportunities to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are many and varied, and include working with local musicians and artists. There is a wide range of activities that help students to develop good leadership and teamwork skills, such as sports leaders working with first school pupils or fieldwork at the Kielder Water Forest Park. This is a good example of the impact of the school's specialism in sport on students' personal development.
- Staff questionnaires indicated that most staff are very positive about all aspects of the school. All are proud to work there.
- Parents agree that the school listens to and acts on their concerns. However, the school website does not contain the required information to allow parents to be fully informed about the work of the school.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements well.
- The local authority provides very effective support for the school and this has helped the school

to move forward.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body works very closely with the school, holding it to account well in all areas. Governors undergo training and their understanding of facts and figures relating to the students' academic achievement is good. They play a major role in the allocation of the budget, including the funding for students eligible for pupil premium and they also link teachers' pay and promotion to the quality of their teaching. There is no doubt that they have been instrumental in the improved success of the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122350
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	406086

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Trish Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dafydd Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01434 220235
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