

Ovingham Middle School

Ovingham, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6DE

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) and at the end of Year 8, when they leave the school.
- The pupils make good overall progress during their time in school.
- Teaching is good and helps the pupils make good progress.
- There is a high level of mutual respect between staff and pupils, which makes the pupils feel valued and safe in school.
- Behaviour is good.
- The headteacher leads the school very well, and has the full support of all staff and governors.
- The headteacher, staff and governors know the school's strengths and areas for further development, and are jointly taking decisive action to make continuous improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some differences in the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Not all teachers take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment to provide lesson content that challenges all abilities.
- Some lessons provide too few opportunities for the pupils to work independently of the teacher.
- Some lesson activities provide too little time for the pupils to consolidate and reflect on their learning.
- Some weaknesses in the plan that the school uses to make improvements mean that staff and governors are not able to accurately assess the rate of progress that the school is making at different times over the life of the plan.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 part lessons, which included every teacher in the school. Almost all teachers accepted the offer of feedback from inspectors. The headteacher joined inspectors for two observations and was in full agreement with the judgments made. Almost all subjects were observed during the inspection.
- The lead inspector looked at the Ofsted on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View', prior to and during the inspection. In total, there were 70 responses at the conclusion of the inspection. The main findings from these responses were shared separately with the headteacher, and at the formal feedback meeting at the end of the inspection.
- A range of documents was read and meetings held with the headteacher and other members of the senior management team within the school, four members of the governing body, including the Chair, and an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with a significant number of pupils and staff during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors read eight paper-based questionnaires returned by staff at the school.

Inspection team

Brian Blake, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Peter Harrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ovingham Middle School, deemed secondary, caters for pupils from Years 5 to 8. This means that it is significantly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their education through school action or school action plus is well below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals, those who have been in care for more than six months, and those whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces are eligible for additional funding called the pupil premium. The proportion of these pupils currently in school is lower than average.
- The school uses the local authority Education Other Than At School service (EOTAS) to support targeted pupils, partly in school and partly at a local library.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and been in post for the past three years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least consistently good, but more often outstanding, by:
 - making sure that teachers' regular assessment of pupils' current standards is used to provide lesson activities that are well matched to all abilities in the class
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to work independently of teachers.
- Improve the quality of the school development plan by:
 - identifying milestones (i.e. different times) to help senior leaders, staff and governors check the rate of progress being made over the life of the plan
 - making clear how the evidence of progress will be collected (i.e. evaluation strategies)
 - identifying more clearly, how more staff and governors can take individual or shared responsibility for checking the progress of actions within the plan.
- Develop the governing body's role in evaluating and monitoring the use of the pupil premium funding by assessing its impact on individual pupils.
- Develop further the procedures for performance management to ensure that there is full use and understanding of the nationally published teachers' standards of professional competency.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils has some outstanding features.
- The overwhelming majority of Year 5 pupils start at the school with standards that are above average in English and mathematics.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils achieve well above that expected for similar aged pupils at both the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6), and when they leave the school at the end of Year 8. The progress of the pupils is best in mathematics, followed by reading and then writing.
- Although the overall progress from when the pupils were in Key Stage 1 to them finishing at the end of Key Stage 2 is currently below what it should be in English, the pupils make good or better progress in all the core subjects during their time at the school.
- The performance of girls is above that of boys in reading, writing and mathematics, with the gap closing across all three but not yet to a level where both genders achieve equally well.
- Those pupils who receive the additional pupil premium funding to help boost their performance, generally make progress equal to that of other pupils in the school, except in mathematics. The average point score for the pupils' attainment is above the national average for similarly aged pupils in receipt of free school meals.
- The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is the same as that achieved by other pupils in the school, with the exception of those at school action plus, where their progress is slower and more in line with that seen nationally.
- The school makes good use of the local authority EOTAS service to help targeted pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher and his senior staff are well aware that the school must close the gap in performance between some groups of pupils and others in the school. The school's targeted interventions are already making a difference, but staff know that this focused work needs to continue.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because it helps the pupils make good progress in their work.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons with a range of activities that engage the pupils' interest and their desire to learn. One history lesson, for example, provided the pupils with a range of different resources to discuss a moral and social dilemma around witchcraft in the 16th century. This resulted in good quality collaborative working, with pupils eager to put forward their personal views.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills are taught effectively throughout the school.
- Teachers provide the pupils with many opportunities to improve their reading and in the best lessons there are frequent opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing.
- Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly but there are occasions when too many activities, at too fast a pace, are directed solely by the teacher for all pupils in the lesson. This means that there is insufficient time for the pupils to consolidate and reflect on their learning, and too few opportunities for independent work that is directed more by the pupils than by the teacher.
- Teachers' marking has improved considerably since the previous inspection because of the focus given to it by all staff throughout the school. As a result, the pupils appreciate that they know their work will be marked regularly and that they will receive advice on how to make it better. In the very best examples of marking, pupils are consistently invited to respond to the feedback that they receive from the teacher. Senior leaders are aware that not all marking consistently reaches this standard.
- The school collects a lot of very useful information about the achievements of the pupils in all

subjects. However, not all teachers use this information sufficiently well to take account of the different starting points of the pupils. In some lessons, a similar content and level of expectation does not challenge pupils of all abilities sufficiently well.

- The school uses computers to help the pupils enjoy their learning, and to make it more relevant to their experiences outside of school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour and safety of pupils has some outstanding features.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is invariably good or better, and is always very well managed by staff.
- The pupils respond very positively to the strong emphasis that the school places on behaving well, showing respect and being polite. As a consequence, the pupils' moral and social development is excellent.
- The pupils believe, as do those parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, that behaviour in school is usually good.
- The pupils value the support they receive from class buddies, peer mentors and the school council. All pupils who spoke with inspectors feel that there is always someone they can talk to if they have a problem.
- The pupils say they feel safe in school and are well cared for by staff. They speak knowledgeably about bullying and that any rare incidents are dealt with very quickly.
- The pupils are confident, friendly and articulate. They greet visitors to the school, such as the inspectors, courteously and with respect.
- Fixed-term exclusions are very low and there have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are ready to start lessons promptly and they work successfully as individuals, in pairs, groups or in whole-class plenary sessions. Occasionally, in less effective lessons, the pupils' attention occasionally wavers and they become slightly disengaged and chatty.
- Although good or better in many aspects, the behaviour management by staff is not making a strong enough contribution to the exceptionally positive climate for learning in the school. This means that pupils have insufficient opportunities to take responsibility for some aspects of their learning, independently of the teacher.

The leadership and management are good

- There are some outstanding features in the leadership and management of the school.
- The current headteacher has been in post for the past three years. During this time, he has developed very positive working relationships with staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers.
- Staff take responsibility for subjects and other aspects of the school's work with enthusiasm, and there is a common sense of purpose for planned improvements, and for all the pupils achieving the best of which they are capable.
- A detailed school plan outlines clearly the key areas for improvement. The actions that the school takes are based on an accurate self-evaluation of the current quality of provision within the school. The general quality of this plan has enabled the headteacher to develop a coherent and clear vision for the school, ably supported by staff and governors. Staff and governors speak positively about the drive to improve the school further.
- However, the improvement plan has some weaknesses, which affect its overall quality. There are no milestones so it is impossible to know whether the rate of progress that the school is making in each action is as fast as it should be. Furthermore, there are no details about the evidence gathering process that the school uses to show progress. The high expectation on

senior staff to monitor almost all aspects of the plan limits the greater involvement of all staff and governors.

- The local authority has supported the school in a way that is helpful to staff and governors.
- The use of other external partners to help the school assess the quality of its provision is good and has been well focused on known areas for improvement from the previous inspection. This strategy of seeking an external overview of provision and standards exemplifies the outward-looking nature of the headteacher's leadership of the school.
- The curriculum of the school offers pupils a broad range of learning experiences, and is enhanced through the school's extra-curricular provision.
- The Parent View results show that the overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory regulations.
- **The governance of the school**

- The role of governors is continuing to develop well. The governors take their role very seriously and the number of full and separate sub-committee group meetings is helping them to work really well with the headteacher and staff of the school. Governors know how well the school is doing because they get regular progress reports from the headteacher, in addition to making visits to see the school at work; this means that governors have a good overview of the quality of teaching in the school. Governors and senior staff are able to show that the group of pupils in receipt of extra funding, available through the pupil premium, is helping them to achieve a similar rate of progress to other pupils in the school. However, governors do not yet receive this information at individual pupil level. The governors have a good understanding of how well teachers are doing in school, in terms of the progress that the pupils are making. This helps the governors to sensibly assess teachers' performance against the pay they receive, but the use of the recently published teachers' standards of professional competencies is currently underused.
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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

Unique reference number	122341
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	403486

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	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Brown
Headteacher	Mr N Jones
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
Telephone number	01661 833215
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