

Wellfield Middle School

Kielder Road, South Wellfield, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE25 9QW

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in most subjects is good. Leaders have been successful in ensuring that teachers and other adults have consistently high expectations, particularly in key stage 2.
- Governance is improving. Governors increasingly ask more searching questions of leaders. However, governors do not scrutinise in detail the information that leaders present.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. Pupils with SEND are well cared for and make strong progress in most subjects.
- Written plans to improve the school and the progress of disadvantaged pupils are not as precise as they could be. Leaders are working hard to ensure that responsibilities are clear and plans include milestones by which they can evaluate progress throughout the year.
- A small minority of teaching is less effective. In some subjects, teachers do not always consider pupils' starting points or additional learning needs when planning lessons.
- Teachers and pupils successfully use technology in lessons to improve teaching and learning. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are very well developed.
- Pupils' progress in reading is above average. Although improving, pupils' progress in writing is not as strong, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive. The vast majority of pupils are eager to do well, and are polite and respectful.
- Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders have created a harmonious working environment where adults and pupils work very well together and display high levels of motivation.
- Leaders are outward-looking. They actively search for new ways of working and have developed strong working relationships with other schools and the local authority. The capacity to improve further is strong.
- Rates of attendance are above average. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below average. However, pupils' attendance is declining, and disadvantaged pupils are absent more often than other pupils nationally.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to strengthen progress for pupils, particularly in writing, and for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use prior assessment information and information relating to pupils with SEND to plan activities that meet their needs and abilities effectively
 - reducing the inconsistencies in teaching that lead to variable pupil outcomes in key stage 3
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to complete and improve their work so that they deepen their understanding before learning a new topic.
- Reverse the increasing rates of absence by working closely with pupils and their parents or carers so that they can better understand the importance of good attendance.
- Sustain the improvements in the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - refining school improvement plans, including those designed to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, so that they are clear, precise and include regular milestones so that progress can be evaluated
 - enhancing the key stage 3 curriculum so that pupils develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills across all of their subjects
 - ensuring that governors build on their successes further by consistently checking and challenging the information they receive.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, including governors, provide purposeful leadership. They are reflective, outward-looking and unswerving in their desire to do what is right for every pupil.
- Leaders' careful monitoring of teaching and learning informs the school's training programme. The training teachers receive is well-matched to their needs. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve and outcomes are good.
- Inspection evidence demonstrates that staff morale is high. Nearly all staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire say that the school is well led. Staff have a consistent understanding about the aspects of the school's work that could improve further. Similarly, staff know where the strengths lie in the school. In this way, leaders have created a culture where strengths are shared and staff learn from each other.
- The curriculum promotes the development of literacy and numeracy across a wide range of subjects, particularly in key stage 2. Leaders have identified that the key stage 3 curriculum requires further modification so that pupils develop reading, writing and mathematical skills across all of their subjects as they do in key stage 2.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is strong. Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, benefit from the specialist advice and guidance provided by the local authority. Additionally, new initiatives such as a weekly special educational needs newsletter, and specific training, ensure that staff are increasing their awareness of the pupils with SEND and how to support them effectively.
- The quality of subject leadership continues to improve. Senior leaders know that the effectiveness of subject leaders is vital if the school is to 'get beyond good', as described in the school's self-evaluation documentation. To this end, senior leaders have made some astute appointments and increased leadership capacity further by brokering additional expertise from the local high school. Senior leaders have successfully developed a group of subject leaders who have high expectations and, as some described during the inspection, who value the autonomy to introduce or trial their own ideas.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum provides pupils with an array of opportunities to see and experience different cultures. Recently, some pupils benefited from visiting China or learning to ski in France. Pupils support and celebrate their involvement in fundraising activities for charities and participate in many sporting events. Pupils are proud to represent their school and welcome the healthy competition which the house tournaments provide.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 regularly participate in additional sporting activities such as basketball, skipping, cricket and gymnastics. All key stage 2 pupils learn to swim. Nearly two in every three Year 5 and 6 pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire said that they frequently take part in school activities outside of lessons, many of which are subsidised using additional sports funding.
- Teachers who are newly qualified or in the early stages of their careers receive regular

support and training. Teachers say that they appreciate the opportunity to learn from more-experienced teachers in school and beyond.

- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is contributing to Year 6 pupils attaining well. However, plans to spend the additional funding are not as precise as they could be. Consequently, leaders are unclear which strategies are most effective at improving disadvantaged pupils' progress and attendance.
- Written plans to improve the school have contributed to improving standards of education over time. However, the current school development plan does not support aspects of the school's work as well as it could. This is because staff leading each action are not clearly identified and timings and monitoring activities are vague.

Governance of the school

- The vast majority of governors are new to the school and governance. Despite this, they bring to the school a significant amount of professionalism, skill and experience in industry and education. This enables governors to support leaders effectively, offer a different perspective and make effective links with parents and the community.
- Governors are proactive. They have responded to a recent audit of governors' skills by attending training to develop further the skills, knowledge and understanding identified as being less strong or under-represented on the governing body. As a result, the quality of governance is improving further.
- Governors assiduously oversee the school's financial performance and make sure money is well spent. The chair of the governing body has the relevant skills and experience of financial matters to ensure that resources are allocated to the areas that need them most.
- Within school, governors are involved in a number of monitoring activities to quality assure and evaluate their own work and that of staff. Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate that governors ask leaders more searching questions of late. However, inspection evidence also highlights that sometimes governors can be too accepting of the information they receive from leaders, not always providing comprehensive challenge when needed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of vigilance exists in school. Staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are appropriately trained and know who to speak to if they have a concern or are worried about a pupil. New electronic systems for recording and reporting concerns are helping to refine and organise further safeguarding documentation. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have developed effective working relationships with families. This contributes to an increased staff awareness in school and ensures that staff keep a watchful eye on pupils who may need support or reassurance.
- Leaders make appropriate pre-recruitment checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils.

- Nearly all pupils who responded to Ofsted’s inspection questionnaire said that there is an adult at school who they can talk to if something is worrying them. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and learn how to stay safe often. Pupils’ understanding about internet safety is strong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have managed to improve the quality of teaching recently. Teachers now follow a similar approach to planning lessons: the ‘LEARNS’ model. Typically, most teachers ensure that lessons include opportunities for pupils to use a range of vocabulary/language, model excellence, include active learning and time to read, consider the needs of pupils from their different starting points and reflect on pupils’ seating arrangements regularly. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good and improving.
- Teachers are adept at using technology to complement their teaching and pupils their learning. All pupils have tablet computers that can link to the teacher’s computer and screen. Frequently, teachers will reinforce a learning point by capturing a pupil’s written work or calculation and sharing it with the class via the big screen. In this way, pupils confidently describe their working out or misconceptions and readily accept praise or critique from their peers. Pupils work very well in groups and with their ‘shoulder partners’ when investigating a new concept or checking their understanding.
- Some teachers use searching questions to regularly assess pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding. In doing so, teachers swiftly identify the pupils who require an alternative explanation or one-to-one guidance. This ensures that most pupils stay in touch with their learning and the less confident pupils receive further support.
- A small minority of teachers do not consider pupils’ prior assessment information or additional needs when planning lessons, particularly in key stage 3. This means that the activities which pupils are asked to complete are sometimes too easy or too difficult. A small number of very able pupils at the top of the class sometimes cruise along, achieving full marks, particularly in mathematics. Additionally, in a few subjects, pupils with SEND do not always receive the support they need. End-of-topic assessment results for some pupils with SEND highlight gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding that are not always addressed before they move onto the next topic.
- Scrutiny of pupils’ workbooks demonstrates that in some subjects pupils begin a new topic or unit of work before they have completed their previous work, mastered a particular skill or responded to prompts from their teachers. When this occurs, pupils’ understanding is less developed than it could be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have developed an interesting and informative personal, social, health and

economic education curriculum. In lessons and during assemblies, pupils learn how to manage their finances, safeguard their mental health and how and why it is important to promote tolerance. Pupils say that they enjoy the diverse range of subjects they learn about from external visitors and speakers.

- Pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance early in key stage 2. Pupils learn about the world of work via workshops and 'speed dating' events where they can speak to professionals from industry. Pupils are beginning to formulate career plans and develop an understanding about the skills and qualifications they may need to follow a particular vocational pathway in the future.
- Inspection evidence suggests that bullying is uncommon. The pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey say that, if bullying does occur, the teachers are good at resolving it.
- Most pupils are motivated, keen to do their best and have high expectations of themselves. For example, during the inspection some pupils were observed punching the air in delight as they answered a question correctly or completed their work on time. A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their ability and do not engage in activities or discussion as well as they could. These pupils 'play it safe'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils arrive to their lessons on time, move around the school site sensibly and wear their uniform with pride.
- No pupils have been excluded permanently or for a fixed period for a number of years.
- The vast majority of pupils consistently behave well. The school motto of 'we care' aptly describes pupils' attitudes to each other and their school. Pupils are considerate and respectful.
- Rates of attendance are above the national average and very few pupils are persistently absent from school. However, between 2016 and 2018, pupils' attendance has declined. Furthermore, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is below that of other pupils nationally. Rates of attendance this academic year are below the same period last year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The strong relationships between pupils and their teachers, coupled with the improving quality of teaching, learning and assessment, are contributing to current pupils making good progress.
- Between 2016 and 2018, pupils' progress in reading improved from below the national average to above. Leaders have improved the reading culture in school recently by relocating the library, investing in additional resources and introducing new reading schemes and methods of assessment. Increasingly, pupils take advantage of the many opportunities to read in school and at home. Pupils' comprehension and inference skills are improving further.

- Pupils' attainment is strong. Pupils' results in the key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics assessments have been above the national average historically. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics was also above the national average.
- Key stage 3 pupils currently in the school attain well and most make good progress across a wide range of subjects. However, the school's own information demonstrates that Year 7 and 8 pupils do less well in geography and history. This term, leaders have made changes to the assessment procedures in these subjects so that the tests more accurately reflect what pupils know and can do.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress in 2018 were in line with those of other pupils nationally across key stage 2. Current disadvantaged pupils attain well and make similar progress to their peers in most subjects and year groups. However, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing is weaker in Year 6.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points in most subjects, particularly when teachers plan to meet their needs by using the detailed advice and guidance provided by the special educational needs department. The school's own assessment information and evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work highlight that achievement for pupils with SEND is variable. This is, in part, because some end-of-topic assessments are not well matched to the starting points of pupils with SEND. Occasionally, assessments are too difficult and do not allow pupils with SEND to demonstrate gains in their learning.
- Across all year groups, pupils make less progress in writing than they do in reading and mathematics. Staff have started to review the key stage 3 schemes of work with the intention to provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum. Additionally, the local authority is working with leaders to ensure that writing activities for the most able pupils provide considerable challenge. It is too early to tell if the changes will have a positive effect in the future.
- Pupils are very well prepared to make the transition to high school. Leaders from the high school say that, recently, pupils arriving in Year 9 from Wellfield Middle School make stronger progress, following a very short settling-in period.

School details

Unique reference number	108649
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10054363

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 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Giles
Headteacher	Susan Winter
Telephone number	0191 2529486
Website	www.wellfieldmiddleschool.org.uk
Email address	wellfield.middle@northtyneside.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2018

Information about this school

- This middle-deemed secondary school is smaller than the average-sized school.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2016.
- A new chair of the governing body took up post in June 2016.
- Nearly all members of the governing body are new to post since September 2016.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is below the national average.
- There was a large decrease in the percentage of pupils with SEND between 2017 and 2018. It is now below average.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The section 5 inspection took place following a section 8 inspection in March 2018. In the previous inspection, inspectors identified some priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors visited 28 lessons across the school, observing all teachers in the classroom. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders; teachers and other staff; members of the governing body, including the chair; and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with leaders in mathematics and English. In addition, an inspector scrutinised a sample of books during lessons belonging to pupils with SEND in key stages 2 and 3.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to a group of key stage 2 and 3 pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, analysis of performance information, action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors took into account the 96 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Twenty-five members of staff and 233 pupils completed Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. All of these responses were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019