

Meadowdale Academy

Hazelmere Avenue, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6HA

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics to reach above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 8. Pupils are articulate speakers and read widely and fluently. They record their work carefully so that standards of presentation are high. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English and average in mathematics. Progress in mathematics accelerates in Key Stage 3 so that standards match those achieved in English.
- The quality of teaching is mainly good with some that is outstanding. Teachers plan interesting lessons and use imaginative ideas to enthuse pupils. Pupils are able to work cooperatively and this helps them to learn. Teachers are excellent role models so that pupils are keen to do well, enjoy their lessons and make good progress.
- Leaders have created an exceptionally well-organised and vibrant environment which reflects high standards of care and respect so that staff and pupils are proud to work in the school.
- There are impressive opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. As a result, pupils have developed mature attitudes and behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, courteous and caring. Poor behaviour, bullying and exclusions are rare and if they happen, are dealt with effectively. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and say they feel safe in school.
- The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, lead the school with an unrelenting energy and determination. They have the highest possible expectations of themselves and others. All senior leaders are outstanding teachers and use their expertise well so that professional development is making a good contribution to improvements in teaching.
- Leaders have an accurate knowledge of pupil achievement and use this information well to identify pupils who are falling behind so that timely action is taken. As a result, standards are rising and all pupils make at least good progress, and those with special educational needs often make outstanding progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is a small amount of teaching that requires improvement.
- Not enough pupils are making better than expected progress in mathematics in Year 5 and Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons taught by 23 teachers and looked at pupils’ work. Some of these observations also included members of the senior leadership team of the school.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils from Year 5 and Year 8 and listened to others in Year 6 read.
- The views of 29 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 35 staff who submitted their views via a questionnaire were taken into account.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, members of the governing body and an Independent Improvement Adviser who works with the school.
- The school’s improvement plan and records of pupils’ achievement, the quality of teaching, pupils’ behaviour and safeguarding were examined.

Inspection team

Christine Cottam, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector
David Griffiths	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Meadowdale Academy converted to become an academy school on 01 April 2012. When its predecessor school, Meadowdale Middle, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Meadowdale Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly higher than found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always good and an even greater proportion is outstanding by:
 - setting work that is more accurately matched to the different ability levels of pupils, particularly in science and the foundation subjects
 - making sure pupils have time to respond to teachers' marking so that they can improve their work and make more rapid progress.
- Improve achievement in mathematics in Year 5 and Year 6 so that a far greater proportion of pupils make better than expected progress by:
 - making sure all pupils know exactly how well they are doing, what they need to do to achieve the next level and are then set appropriately challenging work to achieve that level
 - expecting pupils to correct their work in order to improve their understanding
 - ensuring pupils record more work in their books for themselves so that teachers, pupils and leaders can see a clearer record of progress over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers expect them to work hard and do their best.
- Pupils make expected progress in mathematics to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is lower than found nationally. Pupils are not always expected to record enough of their work systematically in their books so that they and their teachers have a clear picture of their progress over time. While work is marked accurately, pupils do not have enough opportunities to correct their errors in order to make more rapid progress.
- Progress in mathematics accelerates in Key Stage 3 so that more than half of pupils reach above average standards by the time they leave in Year 8. This is because expectations are much higher and pupils have a clearer understanding of how well they are doing and how to reach the next level.
- Pupils enter the school with attainment that is slightly below average in English. They make consistently good and sometimes outstanding progress so that attainment at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 is above average in reading and writing. Pupils' writing is extensive, interesting and well organised, for example, they are able to communicate their views about animal testing in a well-balanced written argument.
- All pupils read regularly and have good levels of fluency and expression for their age. They are knowledgeable about books and authors and enjoy reading.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well in relation to their starting points. Their attainment is about six months behind those who are not eligible in English and mathematics. This gap is smaller than found nationally.
- Pupils who are supported at school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs make more progress than other pupils because their additional needs are clearly identified and there is excellent support in place to help them achieve.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good with a fair proportion that is outstanding and a small amount that requires improvement.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan creative and imaginative activities that fire the interest of pupils and involve them fully in lessons so that they enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Teachers explain clearly and use questioning well to check that pupils understand. They usually make sure that all pupils are involved in answering questions so that the teacher has a good knowledge of the different learning needs of pupils within the class.
- The work set in English is almost always appropriate to the abilities of different pupils within each class. This is not as consistent in other subjects where pupils are sometimes given the same work regardless of their ability and this means that it is too easy for some and too difficult for others.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately with good feedback to help them know how to improve. There are some excellent examples of pupils responding to feedback from teachers but this is not happening often enough. This means there are missed opportunities to accelerate pupils' progress even further.
- Pupils are given extensive opportunities to work with others and this builds their confidence and independence. Teachers manage behaviour extremely well so that pupils are able to make good progress in well-organised classrooms.

- Where teaching is outstanding it is because expectations are extremely high and realistic activities challenge pupils to think deeply so that they make rapid progress.
- For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were working to understand different ways of expressing averages. They were given real data from estate agents, car dealers and restaurants to generate their own comparisons. While they developed their skills in calculating averages, they also made excellent progress in their understanding of statistics in real life situations.
- Literacy is taught well in English lessons and in other subjects where pupils are given extensive opportunities to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills. There are some opportunities to apply mathematical skills in other subjects, but these are less well developed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are confident, articulate and polite. They are given excellent opportunities to work together both in and out of the classroom so that they are able to cooperate extremely well.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding then behaviour in lessons is often exemplary. An excellent example of this was seen in a music lesson where pupils were able to compose and practise rhythms on a wide range of musical instruments while displaying the highest standards of behaviour because they were interested and enthusiastic.
- There are excellent opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others. They are justifiably proud of their school and readily take on roles such as peer mentors to younger pupils and working as 'school office support students' at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work, enjoy school and work hard so that the quality of work in their books is of a high standard.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need for mutual respect and have highly developed moral values. They know about different forms of bullying including racism, say that it is completely unacceptable and that the school deals with it very well on the rare occasions that it does happen.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety, including keeping themselves safe on the internet. There are excellent systems in place to support pupils who may be more vulnerable such as access to a learning mentor. The vast majority of pupils say they feel safe.
- Attendance is broadly average and has improved over time with good strategies to tackle the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent from school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school with an ambitious determination to secure the highest possible standards for pupils. This energy and vision are shared by a highly competent team of senior leaders, including governors. An unequivocal belief that all pupils can and will succeed pervades the school. As a result, the achievement of all pupils is improving and the school discharges its duty to promote equality and tackle discrimination extremely effectively.
- Leadership is not outstanding because standards are not rising rapidly enough and there is a small proportion of teaching that requires improvement.
- Leaders have a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because there are effective systems to track the progress of pupils and a range of effective strategies to monitor the quality of teaching. This information has been used well to identify precise and accurate priorities for the school improvement plan.
- The performance management of teachers is extremely well organised. Teachers value the rigorous approach which helps them to improve their performance and they feel their professional development needs are met well. Where teaching has not been good enough then support plans are in place to help those individuals. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving. This, together with excellent support for new leaders, shows the school's ability to carry on making improvements.

- The school has forged effective partnerships with the local community and with other schools. For example, a partnership with a local teaching school is helping good teachers to become outstanding.
- The curriculum is well planned to bridge the gap between feeder first schools and the high school so that there is good continuity. There are excellent opportunities for enrichment including sporting and musical opportunities and residential visits. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a giant display of poppies has very moving individual messages of thanks to previous generations written by many pupils.
- There are good systems in place that meet all safeguarding requirements.
- An external School Improvement Adviser has provided good support by observing some lessons with the headteacher and reporting to the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and shares the headteacher's high expectations. The process of academy conversion has strengthened the knowledge, expertise and resolve of governors.
 - Governors are extremely supportive of the school and visit regularly. They challenge school leaders when necessary but correctly assert that they are 'pushing at an open door'.
 - Governors ensure that resources, including the pupil premium funding, are used diligently. They have high levels of awareness of the effectiveness of staff and take their responsibilities about pay awards seriously.

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	138078
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	413276

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Alcraft
Headteacher	Mrs J Finn
Telephone number	01670 823170
Fax number	01670 822781
Email address	admin@meadowdale.northumberland.sch.uk

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