

Morpeth Newminster Middle School

Address: Mitford Road, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RH

Unique reference number (URN): 137748

Inspection report: 27 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders assess and identify pupils' needs in a timely manner. They are creative in adjusting their approach to meet individual needs. Leaders take swift action to secure additional support, when pupils need it. They ensure that staff know how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) through high-quality training and the use of comprehensive pupil support plans. Teachers skilfully and consistently adapt their teaching to best meet the needs of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Some pupils access specially designed sessions that help them with their individual needs. Leaders monitor the impact of such sessions rigorously to assess pupils' progress. They successfully and systematically reduce pupils' barriers to learning and wellbeing, making a clear difference to their experience of school.

Leaders work closely with external agencies to support pupils who are known, or were previously known, to social care. They ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. Leaders monitor their use of additional funding carefully to ensure that it is impactful. They meet regularly with parents and carers. The school provides additional, bespoke support for pupils where needed. Leaders check pupils' progress meticulously to ensure that pupils have everything they need to be successful. Alternative provision is only used when it is in pupils' best interests.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development is at the heart of the school. Leaders have implemented an extensive personal development programme that enhances pupils' experiences and opportunities, while developing their beliefs and values. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They know how to be a good citizen. Pupils show kindness and respect to others. They show appreciation for other cultures and visit local places of worship. Pupils have a secure and detailed knowledge about relationships at an age-appropriate level. They know how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities and clubs, such as 'LEGO league' and science 'big bang' club. Pupils value opportunities to participate in school productions. Some older pupils take part in 'wilderness school', which helps them to learn about nature. Pupils go on residential visits, where they take part in adventurous activities, such as canoeing and orienteering. These experiences develop their independence and resilience. Leaders carefully track participation, including of pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make sure that all pupils benefit fully from the offer.

Pupils are encouraged to become leaders. For example, they take on responsibilities in the school by becoming a class representative or a 'playground pal'. Older pupils support younger pupils as reading ambassadors. Pupils plan school fairs, participating in enterprise activities. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils have many opportunities to explore careers through 'hopes and dreams day' and by attending careers conferences. Pupils meet a range of employers and participate in taster workshops. They meet with local colleges and training providers. This prepares pupils very well for their next steps and builds their aspirations for the future.

Pupils are well cared for by a highly skilled and effective pastoral team. They learn how to look after their mental health. Pupils speak fondly of their wellbeing support and how it helps them. Leaders carefully tailor support for pupils who are disadvantaged and for those with SEND.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils are well supported to develop the basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics that they need to progress well in other subjects. Typically, pupils achieve well in national tests at the end of key stage 2. For example, pupils' outcomes in writing and mathematics last year were close to national averages and above the national average in reading. Leaders build on this achievement in key stage 3 so that pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make suitable progress from their starting points. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' work. Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, need more support to develop their writing skills. Leaders have taken steps to address this, with a focus on making sure that writing is embedded across the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise attendance and carefully track this for individuals and for groups of pupils. They promote the importance of attendance and support families to ensure their child attends school regularly. As a result, attendance is high and continues to improve. Leaders provide targeted support for pupils, who are frequently absent from school. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, when needed, and break down pupils' barriers to attendance.

Leaders have created a calm, positive school environment, where pupils behave well. They have high expectations of pupils and model positive communication. Staff know their pupils well and care for them, intervening quickly when pupils need some extra support. Pupils are respectful, polite and kind to their peers and staff. They generally respond well to the clear rules and expectations leaders have established. Some pupils receive additional help to learn how to manage their emotions, and learn to do so effectively. Suspensions are used rarely and appropriately. Bullying is infrequent. Staff deal with it well when it arises. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning. A minority of pupils lack resilience as learners, particularly in subjects that they find more challenging.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is broad and balanced and prepares pupils well for their next steps. Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and take action to address areas that need improvement. As a result, the curriculum is well sequenced and typically supports pupils to build their knowledge over time. In all year groups, the curriculum is delivered by subject specialists.

Leaders and staff carefully consider the individual needs of pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan, when designing and implementing the curriculum. Teachers know their pupils well. They make skilful adaptations to their teaching to ensure that all pupils can access the learning. Occasionally, teachers do not draw sufficiently on what pupils know and use this to adjust their teaching.

Pupils who need extra support to learn to read receive this support and catch up quickly. Pupils become confident readers and many enjoy reading for pleasure. Across the curriculum, texts are carefully adapted to support access for pupils who are developing their reading skills.

In some subjects, for example mathematics, a small number of pupils are less confident and demonstrate less resilience in their learning. These pupils have not yet secured the basic knowledge needed to fully access the curriculum. Leaders are taking appropriate action to address this.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have identified a clear set of priorities and monitor the impact of their actions. Some of these actions are recent, such as the introduction of a new mathematics curriculum, so it is too early to assess the extent of their impact on pupils.

Leaders have high expectations for all. They act in pupils' best interests, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are committed to continuing to reduce barriers to learning so that all pupils thrive. Leaders' vision is shared by trustees and governors, who hold leaders to account effectively. Trustees and governors undertake their statutory duties well. The trust has strategic oversight of leadership and closely monitors the work of leaders, providing them with effective support and challenge.

Leaders provide a well-considered professional learning programme for staff. This is informed by research and takes account of the school's context. Staff are encouraged to build on their learning through externally accredited courses. Leaders care about the wellbeing of their staff. They consider staff workload when making decisions.

Parents and carers are actively encouraged to visit the school and have regular opportunities to meet with leaders and staff. Parents appreciate the work of leaders and the positive impact that the school has on their children.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending school. They are welcomed by staff, who care for them and support them to thrive. Pupils benefit from a high-quality curriculum across a range of subjects. They achieve particularly well in reading. There is more work to do to make sure pupils develop their writing skills to the same level. Pupils learn practical skills from subject specialists in other subjects. Teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and adjust their approach. Typically, however, pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school. They enjoy positive relationships with staff and their peers. All pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities to enhance their experience of school. They participate in a range of enrichment activities, such as archery, book club and the school choir. Pupils go on purposeful, educational visits to museums, theatres and local landmarks. They engage with employers and education providers to explore their options beyond school and build their aspirations. Pupils get involved with their local community. For example, they sing for members of a local residential home and take part in charitable events. They are well prepared to become active members of society.

Pupils behave well. They treat each other with respect and kindness. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it arises. Pupils benefit from clear rules and expectations that are consistently applied. As a result, they feel safe and happy. A small number of pupils are not yet resilient learners and can give up too easily. Overall, pupils value their school and attend regularly.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently use assessment to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this to adapt their approach, when implementing the curriculum.
- Leaders should continue to embed their strategy for developing writing skills across the curriculum to ensure that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, become confident writers, and this is reflected in pupil outcomes.
- Leaders should continue to develop targeted support to ensure that pupils can demonstrate self-discipline and resilience, when faced with challenging learning activities.

About this inspection

This school is part of Cheviot Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alice Witherow, and overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Ben Cole and Steven Duckworth.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, the chief executive officer, trustees and governors during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Elizabeth Kinninment

Lead inspector:

Nikki Heron, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Joanne Owens, Ofsted Inspector

Geoffrey Lumsdon, Ofsted Inspector

David Milligan, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

555

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

512

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.43%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.98%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.02%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	54%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	89%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	81%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	24%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	52%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	85%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	33%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	59%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	33%	68%	-35 pp
2024/25 (revised)	24%	69%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	67%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	66%	-26 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	52%	81%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	85%	78%	7 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	42%	78%	-36 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	78%	-35 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	45%	77%	-32 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	81%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	80%	79%	1 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.9%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	12.5%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	17.6%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	13.0%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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