

Chesswood Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125961
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359974
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Bartleman

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Shaw
Headteacher	Andrew Jolley
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 21 lessons, observed 17 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan known as the 'change plan', pupils' work, assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's analysis of pupils' progress in each year group. Inspectors also analysed 235 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively is the school improving teaching and learning, assessment and the curriculum in order to raise attainment, particularly in mathematics and literacy, for all groups of pupils?
- How effective are leaders and managers, including the governing body, in taking decisive action to reverse the downward trend in attainment and achievement?

Information about the school

Chesswood Middle School is much larger than most primary schools. It is situated in a designated regeneration area. Although mainly serving the local community, it draws a small proportion of pupils from other areas of Worthing. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Most children come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. Since the previous inspection there has been a change of headteacher. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school has achieved the Healthy School award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Standards have declined since the time of the last inspection and too many pupils do not make sufficient progress as they move through the school. This is a result of inadequate teaching, learning and assessment procedures. Given pupils' capabilities on entry, attainment by Year 7 is not high enough in English and mathematics. The new headteacher has quickly developed an accurate evaluation of the school. Prior to his appointment, leaders, managers and governors had failed to take the necessary action to avert the decline in pupils' progress since 2008. Too many pupils are not getting a satisfactory education. The school does not have the capacity for sustained improvement and provides inadequate value for money.

Significant improvement is required in relation to ensuring that all the requirements relating to the safeguarding of children are met. Most pupils say that they feel safe and the majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied with the school's provision for their children's well-being. However, the school has not ensured that all policies, procedures and records relating to keeping children safe meet statutory requirements.

The new headteacher, with support from the local authority, has done much to develop the school's systems to support teaching and assessment. This has led to the introduction of some new approaches which have yet to show an impact on learning and progress. The headteacher's vision for the school is welcomed by many parents who support the view that he has injected a sense of purpose and direction into the school. However, the school improvement plan is not yet focused clearly enough on raising standards and accelerating achievement. Members of the governing body understand the challenges facing the school. Although very supportive, they have lacked rigour in monitoring the school and failed to hold it to account. Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in the processes of school improvement.

The school's curriculum is not structured well enough to ensure that work becomes progressively more difficult or is matched to pupils' needs. The school promotes healthy lifestyles successfully. In their choices about food and exercise, pupils apply their learning well. They regularly show courtesy to others and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in improved rates of attendance which are now above average.

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The school provides satisfactory pastoral care for pupils. Following the appointment of a special educational needs coordinator, there have been recent improvements for those who face significant problems in their lives. However, a very small minority of pupils are aware of some bullying at playtimes and believe they might not be safe, particularly when supervision is limited. Nevertheless, pupils are confident that they can always turn to a known adult if there is a concern. Care, guidance and support are inadequate overall due to the shortcomings in safeguarding arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in securing improvement by:
 - ensuring that the school improvement plan includes precise actions, timescales and measurable targets for improvement so that staff and the governing body are able to evaluate the impact of actions taken
 - giving middle leaders greater autonomy in steering and monitoring improvement and holding them to account for the impact of actions they take
 - providing additional support for the governing body to be effective in accelerating improvements in the school
 - ensuring all statutory policies and procedures are agreed, in place and rigorously monitored by July 2011
 - ensuring closer supervision of pupils in the playground. ♦
- Rapidly accelerate progress and raise attainment more consistently for all pupils by:
 - increasing the proportion of teaching and learning that is good
 - increasing the pace and challenge in lessons
 - making more effective use of assessment information when planning lessons so that activities more accurately match the needs of the pupils
 - using target setting more effectively to challenge pupils to achieve more.
- Ensure that the headteacher's vision and ambition for the school are shared by all leaders and managers involved in school improvement by:
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that teachers know how to improve
 - ensuring that assessment systems are fully developed, consistently applied and used well to evaluate pupils' progress
 - ensuring that all teachers take responsibility for assessing pupils' progress regularly throughout the year and making sure they are on track to meet challenging targets
 - reviewing the curriculum so that all pupils receive their full entitlement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

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Achievement is inadequate because assessment procedures and pupil tracking systems have not been good enough to improve teaching and planning. Although attainment in the national tests at age eleven in 2010 showed some improvement, the proportion of pupils making the expected progress and reaching national levels or above is still too low. This is also true for pupils in Year 7. Pupils' progress, as observed in lessons during the inspection, is starting to improve, but this has not been sustained for long enough to secure improvement in their achievement and attainment.

Too many pupils do not make adequate progress because tasks are often too easy and do not require them to think deeply. For example, in one lesson, although pupils were given the opportunity to develop their understanding by handling interesting artefacts, they did not have sufficient time to build on their ideas or to develop their learning. The attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as evident in workbooks and from the limited data available, are inadequate. These pupils have only recently started to receive appropriate support. The school is in the early stages of developing systems to monitor their progress, and underachievement has gone unchecked.

In lessons, pupils behave well, are prepared to work hard and generally enjoy their learning. Where teaching is effective, good subject knowledge, challenging questions and the use of subject vocabulary help learning. Stimulating presentations, role play and practical work also engage pupils well in some lessons, for example, when Year 4 pupils developed questions about bone structure, and Year 5 pupils investigated rocket designs. However, in too many lessons the pace of learning is slow and pupils are given too few opportunities to show initiative or be challenged. Consequently, pupils often lack confidence in their own ability and are reluctant to take risks. This is particularly true in mathematics.

Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy as recognised in the Healthy School award. Those who have been elected to the school council speak enthusiastically about their increasing responsibilities. Most pupils work and play together harmoniously but a few say they are aware of some bullying, which they feel adults deal with well. The great majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is inadequate because of generally low basic skills in English and mathematics.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Following the appointment of the headteacher and local authority intervention, recent improvements are evident in the quality of teaching; some teaching is good. Good relationships, good behaviour and regular praise and encouragement are features of most lessons. Despite the improvements, teaching is inconsistent with insufficient use being made of assessment information to challenge pupils with activities matched to their learning needs. Sometimes, for example, more-able pupils are not challenged to learn something new and less-able pupils are not supported sufficiently with additional and different examples. Staff are not using learning targets effectively enough to help pupils to know how to improve their skills and knowledge. Classroom assistants add to the quality of many lessons, although there are occasions when teachers do not make enough use of this valuable resource. Teachers' marking is not sufficiently diagnostic and is inconsistent across the school. It rarely sets targets to help pupils improve their work and progress to the next level.

The curriculum gives appropriate attention to the teaching of literacy and numeracy while providing pupils with a satisfactory range of experiences. It is enhanced by a programme of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest which add enjoyment. However, it does not build sufficiently on pupils' prior learning and is unbalanced, with pupils not receiving their full entitlement. As a consequence, the curriculum is inadequate. Improving liaison with outside agencies, families and carers has helped reduce barriers to learning

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and thus support pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Pupils report that their preparation for transfer to secondary school is good. Most pupils say that if they have worries or are troubled, there is someone they can turn to for reassurance. As a result of sensitive pastoral care, pupils believe rightly that the school cares about their welfare. There is despite some shortcomings in the procedures for safeguarding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management have declined since the previous inspection. Until recently, leaders and managers failed to tackle the inadequate progress made by many pupils. Rigorous self-evaluation had not been embedded in the school's culture. As a result, leaders did not have an accurate view of the school's performance on which to base decisions about the future. The governing body lacked rigour in its monitoring and was unaware of issues within the school. This is now changing and the governing body is working closely with the new headteacher to secure improvement. Strategic planning is developing but is not strong enough. Monitoring, including that of teaching and learning, is not regular enough or sufficiently sharply focused on pupils' learning to be of maximum benefit. Senior and middle leaders do not play a full enough part in this process.

Most pupils get on well with each other and the school is becoming more effective in promoting itself in the local community. However, the school does not promote community cohesion in any meaningful way. The school has satisfactory and developing links with other institutions and these have proved beneficial in facilitating the pupils' smooth transfer into secondary schools and in supporting pupils' personal development.

Statutory requirements are not met because behaviour, health and safety and safeguarding policies have not been reviewed or monitored by the governing body. All staff have received appropriate child protection training. The school has a positive relationship with the majority of parents and carers who speak highly of the caring staff, advice and support they receive. Nevertheless, a significant minority of parents and carers have some concerns related to behaviour, communication with home and the progress made by their children. The governing body is aware that recent improvements are not yet securely embedded throughout the school and that it is overly-dependant on the new headteacher. Some other leaders and managers are new to post and, although keen to improve, cannot convincingly demonstrate that they have the capacity to raise standards and improve pupils' progress without external help. In view of inconsistencies and

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shortcomings in pupils' progress, equality of opportunity is not being promoted well enough.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

About a half of the pupils' parents and carers returned questionnaires. Most parents and carers are supportive of the school's work. Almost all agree that pupils enjoy school, are kept safe and have a healthy lifestyle. Most are happy with their children's experiences at school. Some raised concerns about the amount of progress their children make.

Inspectors confirm that not all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently adequate progress. A minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school communicates with them and responds to any suggestions they make or concerns they have. A similar proportion expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying. Inspectors found that pupils were well behaved in lessons, but not consistently so in the playground, partly because it is not well supervised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chesswood Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 235 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 489 pupils registered at the school. Not all respondents answered every question.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	39	130	55	11	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	121	51	106	45	5	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	64	27	138	59	28	12	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	28	133	57	20	9	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	76	32	136	58	12	5	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	27	132	56	27	11	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	26	149	63	18	8	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	65	28	124	53	18	8	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	27	148	63	12	5	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	29	123	52	24	10	10	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	26	139	59	14	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	77	33	124	53	11	5	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	91	39	124	53	10	4	4	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chesswood Middle School, Worthing, BN11 2AA

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and observing your lessons. We found that your school does some things well.

- Attendance is good and most of you work hard.
- Teachers look after you and care for you.
- You enjoy being at school.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.
- The school provides you with a good variety of opportunities to take part in sports, musical activities and visits that enrich your learning.

However, by the time you leave, attainment for many of you is below that of other pupils of your age. Many of you are capable of making faster progress as you move through the school, especially in writing and mathematics. Those of you who find learning easy are not always given work that challenges you.

The people who run the school are not keeping a close enough eye on the progress you make each term, so some of you are behind where you should be by the end of each year.

We have judged that your school needs 'special measures' and have asked school leaders and governors to take urgent action to bring about improvements by:

- helping those of you who are falling behind to make faster progress so that you reach higher levels by the time you leave
- making sure that teaching is consistently good in every class and that teachers and senior leaders check your progress very carefully.

The school will be given extra support to make sure that it improves more quickly than it has been doing recently. Inspectors will visit the school regularly to check how well you are doing. You can all help by continuing to behave well and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Mike Bartleman
Lead inspector

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