

Canford Heath Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113701
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	378747
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Youlden
Headteacher	Sue Pelham
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by 16 teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, documentation relating to safeguarding pupils, plans and minutes of meetings. They scrutinised 83 responses to questionnaires from parents and carers and those returned by pupils and staff.

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

- What are the reasons for the apparent inconsistency between the school's view that achievement is outstanding and its judgement that teaching and learning are good?
- How well does the governing body understand the school and challenge senior leaders, holding them to account for all their actions and outcomes?
- How well does the curriculum promote community cohesion and pupils' understanding of other cultures?

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average middle school, deemed primary, situated next to a First School with which it shares an executive headteacher. There is also an associate headteacher. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who speak English as an additional language and who come from minority ethnic groups are lower than average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a higher than average proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have behaviour, social and emotional needs,

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Canford Heath Middle is a good school. Pupils make good progress, leaving with above average levels of attainment and consistently good achievement. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. Those who are known to be eligible for free school meals make slightly less progress than others, but the school is rapidly closing this gap.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding; their behaviour is excellent and this contributes to their good learning and the very harmonious atmosphere found in the school. They understand exceptionally well how to be safe and healthy in their lives and readily take responsibility for their own and others' well-being. Pupils are enthusiastic volunteers for buddying others, for charity fund-raising and the school council. They are confident in their dealings with adults and they champion the rights and responsibilities of individuals. The school ensures that pupils reach excellent outcomes overall. This includes outstanding personal development and good achievement; value for money is therefore outstanding.

The senior leadership team has come through a period of change during which time pupils' achievement has risen sharply. The executive headteacher, who also leads the adjacent First School, works very closely with the associate headteacher towards shared goals for success. Their evaluation of what needs to happen now to move the school further ahead has sharpened the resolve of the whole staff team. This means the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Staff contribute regularly to the professional development of their colleagues, providing valued training for one another. However, the monitoring of teaching has not always been sharp enough and not fully linked to pupils' outcomes.

Good teaching and learning, based on effective planning and good subject knowledge, ensure pupils enjoy their work. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to explore the wider world, learn about its peoples, use other languages and appreciate what it is like to live somewhere else. There is an obvious feeling of cohesion in this school community and pupils' understanding in this regard supports their appreciation of the needs and rights of their own peers at school.

Pupils' attendance is average and improving after several years where absences were regular occurrences. However, the proportion of persistent absentees remains too high. Parents and carers are now fully committed to the school and are highly supportive of all its undertakings. Relationships with other school partners are

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strong. Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school and challenge it frequently, holding it to account. They ensure pupils are safe at Canford Heath Middle school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure a further rise in attendance by tackling the persistent absence of some pupils.
- Raise achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - building on the existing good practice at the school to ensure that teaching consistently challenges all pupils
 - improving the consistency and accuracy of the monitoring of teaching through a sharper focus on its impact on learning at every stage of the lesson.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils make good progress at Canford Heath Middle School. They leave with above average attainment and this represents good achievement from their starting points. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with behaviour, social and emotional needs, also make good progress. This is because teachers provide very high levels of care and support for these pupils and understand their needs very well.

Progress in English has been higher than in mathematics for some time, but this anomaly is gradually being ironed out. Pupils use their skills in mathematics across the curriculum to design and build working models, for example. They search for creative solutions, such as in science and technology where skills from design and art were used to build a safely exploding volcano. Boys and girls do equally well but those who are known to be eligible for free school meals have historically made less progress than their peers. A clear focus on support for these pupils is closing that gap.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to be safe around school and on the internet. They move around in lessons with great care and show genuine consideration for their fellows. Behaviour is outstanding; this supports good learning because lessons are very rarely interrupted. Pupils' understanding of the world beyond the local area is excellent because the school has focused attention on rights and responsibilities for all. This ethos permeates everything the school and its pupils undertake and helps the pupils to develop as extremely articulate and thoughtful young people.

Pupils' development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life is outstanding. They enthusiastically volunteer to help those who are less fortunate than they are; they enjoy celebrating each other's successes and are proud ambassadors for their school in sports and the arts. Those who are keen on ecology

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and wildlife support the school by helping to keep up the grounds and gardens. Some have written to the Prime Minister to ensure he understands their forthright views on the world.

Pupils’ attendance has been of concern for many years but over the last year it has improved markedly. Some pupils are still persistently absent, however, and a small number have not responded to the school’s tenacious pursuit of their goal that everyone comes to school every day.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching ensures that learning is good and improving. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most lessons challenge pupils to think for themselves, work out how to help themselves, and develop good strategies for solving problems. For example, pupils are expected to explore problems in mathematics, work out how to solve them and to discuss methods with their peers. Teachers also provide very good help and support and ensure pupils feel comfortable asking for this. Pupils are not afraid of getting answers wrong. This engenders confidence.

Where teaching is less successful it is because the challenge is inconsistent, where teachers are less comfortable taking a calculated risk, for example, to inspire their bright and inquisitive pupils. Sometimes learning is too slow, pupils have to wait while others catch up. Where there is good planning, which is usually the norm, teaching assistants are well deployed and highly supportive of pupils’ learning, and

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

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assessment is used to effectively drive that learning, then progress is good or better.

The curriculum also drives learning effectively, often providing links between subjects to help explore a topic fully. It provides a broad range of experiences, many memorable, such as where a homework project led to the building of some superbly intricate Tudor houses or where almost life-size models of the human body were made to show how digestion works. The curriculum provides well for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for the small number who speak English as an additional language. There is excellent support for these pupils through the work of teaching assistants in class; skills in English and mathematics for all are given due emphasis across all subjects.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Teachers ensure pupils know who to turn to for help and have developed a system of peer mediators so the pupils themselves also support one another. The emphasis on rights and responsibilities leads to an environment where everyone involved, including parents and carers, can access support, guidance about how to improve their own lives, and help with solving problems. There is a blog-based website that is popular and letters to home go out in a range of appropriate languages.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has worked hard to raise attainment over the last few years, starting from a low base. The school is now one where achievement is much better than it has been for many years and pupils' attendance has risen as a result of an interesting and more challenging curriculum. It still has further to go though in this regard. The efforts of the executive and associate headteachers have been to build a cohesive team of staff, one that feels empowered and positive about the school as a whole.

The monitoring of teaching is regular and largely effective, though not always focused sharply or rigorously enough on learning. This means that not all lessons fully stretch and inspire the high quality learning that some provide. Members of the governing body are highly proactive in their support and challenge for the school and are very regular visitors. They ensure the school is an extremely safe environment. They know the school very well, have a clear understanding of how well the pupils are doing and where the school needs to go next. The good level of scrutiny

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provided through the team of senior leaders and the governing body ensures the school’s self-evaluation and planning are broadly effective in communicating its ambition to drive improvements. However, the governing body has not always ensured the school’s general policies are reviewed and developed often enough. Inspectors judged achievement to be good rather than outstanding. However, given that most aspects of pupils’ personal development are exemplary, inspectors agree with the school that outcomes are outstanding and that consequently value for money is excellent.

Parents and carers receive very regular communications from the school and are encouraged to work with the school in this very harmonious community. There are texts, emails and phone calls reminding parents and carers of events and meetings, workshops on how to support learning and a family liaison process that is highly effective. The school has formed a network of other agencies to support pupils’ learning. There are good links with other schools and effective partnerships with institutions to support the particular needs of some. Transition between schools is very well handled and ensures those leaving to go on to a range of secondary schools are well prepared for this experience.

Pupils are all seen as equal at Canford Heath Middle School and the excellent care given ensures they may access the opportunities on offer. Most pupils make good progress and the small differences between groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, are quickly being eradicated. This means that pupils have equally good opportunities in school to thrive and do well. The focus on the individual is augmented by a truly outward looking ethos that leads to pupils’ excellent appreciation of the world as a whole. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The school is a very positive member of its community and pupils see this as extending far beyond the confines of the building itself. They have made productive links with many other learning institutions across the country and the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a 23% return of questionnaires, which is lower than the national average return for primary schools. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded stated that their children make enough progress, they are safe and that teaching is good. A few stated that they do not feel the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection found that the school has made considerable efforts to communicate with parents and carers, via their website and regular letters home. There are workshops to help support learning and very open lines of communication. It also found that the school has developed excellent relationships with the majority of families who send their children to the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Canford Heath 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 364 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	51	38	46	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	52	63	30	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	43	52	36	43	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	59	27	33	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	67	22	27	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	49	59	30	36	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	47	40	48	4	5	0	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)	47	57	29	35	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	47	57	30	36	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	40	36	43	7	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	39	36	43	9	11	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	56	67	24	29	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	56	67	21	25	4	5	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Canford Heath Middle School, Poole, BH17 8PH

Thank you very much for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we recently inspected your school. We really enjoyed meeting you all and particularly liked the way you so confidently came and showed us the results of your work, both at home and in school.

We hope you enjoy the 'human body' cake that was produced for science, when it finally gets eaten. We were very impressed with the knowledge expressed by those of you working on Tudor times as well and thought your designs for Tudor homes were excellent.

The inspection found that Canford Heath Middle is a good school that ensures you make good progress because you are well taught and very well cared for. Your understanding of the rights and responsibilities of everyone is outstanding and this makes for a very warm and welcoming place to learn. We have asked your school to make some improvements. These are:

- to raise achievement by ensuring all lessons provide enough challenge for everyone
- to ensure the monitoring of teaching is really accurate and helps teachers focus their thinking on how each lesson provides for maximum learning
- to make sure that the rise in attendance is kept up and improved further.

You can help by making sure you always come to school, every day, so you have the most chance to improve your progress and by always doing your best in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan
Lead inspector

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