

# Catshill Middle School

Meadow Road, Catshill, Bromsgrove, B61 0JW

**Inspection dates** 21–22 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Following a dip in Year 6 results in 2013, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is improving but not yet good.
- Standards in writing remain a weakness. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise writing at length.
- In some lessons pupils are not challenged sufficiently. More-able pupils in particular sometimes spend too long on simple work.
- Teachers do not routinely ask pupils searching questions to assess and deepen their understanding.
- Marking in some subjects does not provide enough guidance to help pupils improve their work.
- Leaders' analysis of the school's performance has been too generous. As a result, they have not made sufficiently rapid progress in improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Some staff are not clear about how to put leaders' guidance on effective teaching into practice.
- Restructuring and other staffing issues have led to a shortfall in skills. This has slowed the pace of some improvements.

### The school has the following strengths

- The progress of pupils currently in the school has accelerated.
- Pupils feel safe, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is orderly and responsible.
- The school works very effectively with parents, and as a result it enjoys the confidence of the local community. It has gone to great lengths to support pupils who have additional educational needs.
- Governors have strengthened their skills, and have an accurate view of the school and how it should develop. They challenge leaders over the performance of staff and pupils, and this is yielding results.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 18 different teachers; four of these lessons were seen jointly with members of the school’s senior leadership team. Visits were made to the library, form time and an assembly, and inspectors observed pupils’ conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders, class teachers, the Chair and other members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils selected at random, and spoke with many others informally, particularly in class.
- Pupils’ work was reviewed in lessons, and inspectors looked closely at the English and mathematics books of more-able pupils in Year 8.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: development plans and their evaluations; minutes of governing body meetings; case studies; policies; safeguarding records; teachers’ plans; and school publicity and newsletters. Inspectors looked in detail at the analysis the school undertakes to track pupils’ progress through the final two years of Key Stage 2 and the first two years of Key Stage 3.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 26 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and four letters from individual parents. The 21 responses to the questionnaire for school staff were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hilary Green	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Catshill Middle School admits pupils into Year 5 and they leave in Year 8. It is much smaller than most secondary schools. Since the previous inspection, it has entered into a federation with Catshill First School. The two schools share an executive headteacher and, since January 2013, a governing body. A head of school was appointed in September 2013 to manage the day-to-day running of the middle school, taking the lead on behaviour and learning.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, in this school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is slightly below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average. Some of these pupils experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or moderate learning difficulty.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement by:
  - providing work which challenges all pupils, especially the most able, to make good or better progress in all subjects
  - applying the new marking policy consistently well, so that pupils know how to improve their work
  - giving pupils more opportunities to deepen their understanding, for example through questioning in class
  - providing opportunities for extended writing in all year groups.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
  - leaders at all levels show consistently high expectations when checking standards in all subjects and, when necessary, take timely action to raise them
  - judgments on the school's performance are accurate and securely based on all available evidence
  - all teachers share a clear understanding of how to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Published information indicates that pupils should join the school with attainment that is above average. However, the school has evidence to show that in the past Year 2 results have not provided a reliable baseline for progress, and its own testing suggests that attainment is average when pupils enter in Year 5. This is partly because the school has no control over what happens in the first two years of Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, attainment in Year 6 national tests was broadly average, and lower in reading and mathematics than it had been in 2012. Progress declined for Year 6 pupils, especially in mathematics, where it was significantly below that of the previous year. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress from Key Stage 1 was below average.
- Current school information and inspectors' observations indicate that progress has quickened in most subjects, including mathematics where it is now good. Pupils' willingness to work hard makes a significant contribution to their learning. The proportions of pupils who are exceeding nationally expected progress are rising.
- Standards in reading, including those of the least able pupils, are improving rapidly. Boys and girls achieve similarly. However, progress in writing is still sluggish and requires improvement in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Pupils in all yeargroups do not make quick enough progress in the ability to write at length. Standards in some Key Stage 3 subjects are below expectations, an issue reflected in the comments of pupils themselves.
- Historically, the progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium has been in line with that of other pupils in the school. In 2013, however, a progress gap developed in reading. Overall, the attainment of eligible pupils was approximately a year behind that of the others. The school's current information shows that in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups, the gap is now closing again.
- This academic year, with the active support of the local authority, the school adopted a new approach to improving the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This has been successful, and information shows that focused help and guidance, some funded by Year 7 'catch-up' funding, are having a significant impact on improving the progress of the least able pupils, which dipped in 2013.
- The progress of the most able pupils in Key Stage 2 also dipped in 2013, but the school's information suggests that it has now recovered. This year, a higher proportion of pupils took the highest level tests (Level 6) in mathematics, but none took them in reading or writing.

### The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good because pupils are sometimes provided with activities which are not sufficiently challenging. This happens when more-able pupils are expected to complete a considerable amount of simpler work given to all the pupils in the class, with the result that they tackle few tasks which challenge them to move forward.
- In discussion with inspectors, pupils commented that sometimes lessons lack challenge. In Key Stage 3, they distinguished between lessons in English, mathematics and especially science, which they enjoyed, and some other subjects which they found uninspiring. In general terms, this matched with inspectors' observations. Pupils are not routinely challenged to think deeply or

extend their learning. This is sometimes because teachers' questions are not probing enough or too superficial. As a result, progress in these lessons slows.

- In other lessons, pupils respond very enthusiastically to interesting resources that are designed well to engage them. For example, in a food technology class, pupils were able to research, experiment and create their own pasta dishes, and made outstanding progress.
- Homework is set regularly, and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Displays in corridors and classrooms are attractive, and teachers sometimes make good use of them to guide pupils or reinforce learning.
- The school places a significant emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills, and in particular writing skills for those performing below national expectations. Specific support and guidance have had a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school has invested in training for teaching assistants, and they often work with teachers most effectively, for example by asking their own probing questions.
- Since the appointment of the head of school, there has been a determined effort to improve teachers' feedback to pupils on the quality of their work and how they can improve it. Where this is now done well, it has had a considerable impact on pupils' progress. However, leaders recognise that this good practice is not yet fully secure across the school, and inspectors saw several books in which marking, while encouraging in tone, provided little help.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say bullying is rare, and dealt with quickly and effectively when it does arise, using procedures that are well understood. Lessons regularly address safety issues, and provide clear guidance on how to stay safe on the internet. All pupils know to whom to turn in case of personal difficulty or problems in school. They see the small size of the school positively, as pupils know children in other year groups, and the staff know pupils as individuals.
- Parents share the views of the pupils: all those who responded believe that their children are well cared for, and four parents wrote to inspectors to explain how the school has made thoughtful individual provision for their children's needs. Child protection procedures, including staff training, and risk assessments for activities are appropriate.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Moving between lessons and during breaktimes, pupils are sensible and orderly. They are good ambassadors for the school, helpful and courteous to visitors. They show tolerance and cooperation while queuing for lunch, and chat quietly among themselves. They are appropriately supervised by teachers and lunchtime supervisors, but staff do not need to intervene.
- Outside at lunchtime, pupils play cooperatively, although there is little equipment to support or structure their games. No instances of aggression or irresponsibility were observed. Pupils respect the school building. The school confirms that this is typical behaviour.
- In class, pupils approach their studies with enthusiasm, and conform to the high behavioural expectations of staff. They bring the right equipment, and arrive punctually. They listen attentively, and some are prepared to respond articulately in discussion.

- When teaching is less well matched to pupils' abilities or learning slows, their enthusiasm wanes somewhat, but even in these circumstances there is little inappropriate behaviour. Pupils report that behaviour is good in classrooms, and that most teachers are effective in managing the behaviour of a few individuals who might otherwise prove disruptive.
- Work is almost always presented neatly, using the correct equipment. For example, in a mathematics lesson, less-able pupils were making every effort to construct triangles accurately using pencils, rulers and compasses. Pupils take a pride in their work.
- The school has not been obliged to exclude any pupil permanently in recent years, and there are only very occasional fixed-term exclusions. The log kept by the school shows that incidents of racist behaviour are also very rare, but treated with an appropriate gravity if they do occur. Thus school records confirm the inspectors' observations that the school community is one where the harmonious atmosphere makes a significant contribution to learning.
- In keeping with the school's commitment to its vulnerable pupils, it has striven to increase the attendance of a small number of pupils who have particular needs. This effort is now being rewarded, and as a result, attendance is broadly average.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of the school's progress in improving is too generous, and does not address sufficiently the weaknesses exposed by last year's Key Stage 2 results.
- In jointly observed lessons, senior leaders' judgments were in line with those of inspectors. However, the school's analysis of the quality of teaching is inaccurate.
- The federation of the school with Catshill First School and other staffing changes have required a restructuring of the school's leadership, which is still in progress. The new head of school is already having an impact on standards and the quality of teaching.
- This staffing flux has presented a challenge to the school in providing continuity in subject leadership, the checking of standards and the carrying out of initiatives. Progress has slowed when leaders have lacked the skills, understanding and capacity to exercise their roles with full effectiveness. So whereas the school improvement plan identifies the right priorities and actions, its implementation has been uneven.
- The school rightly makes reading, writing and mathematics a priority and pupils appreciate this. It offers an appropriate range of subjects at Key Stage 3, although inconsistent teaching in some other subjects compromises their usefulness in preparing pupils for the next step in their education.
- Pupils identified as having exceptional talents, especially in sport, music and the arts, benefit from a wide range of sporting clubs, including badminton and basketball, and clubs for gardening and cookery. Residential visits are offered to Key Stage 3 pupils.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to each other reflect the effectiveness of the school's moral and social education, and they learn about other cultures and traditions. Inspectors observed lessons in which creativity and deeper thinking were encouraged, but teachers sometimes give pupils insufficient opportunity to consider and reflect on ideas in such depth.

- The school provides some guidance on careers through personal, social and health education lessons and the attendance at a local careers fair.
- The school manages the performance of teachers rigorously, and uses the results to inform decisions about pay rises and promotion. Through this process senior leaders have established clear expectations about the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, discussions with teachers revealed that some are not clear about how to apply them.
- The local authority has regarded the school as one requiring only 'light touch' help, but has provided support for the new approach to catering for pupils who have special educational needs.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors understand the need to provide for more pupils in the future while maintaining financial stability, and have invested wisely in the fabric and technology of the school. They are fully aware of the crucial importance of attracting and selecting the right staff. Through federation, they have strengthened their role. They acknowledge that their scrutiny of the school is now sharper than it was in the past, and they are anxious to improve their effectiveness still further.
  - The governing body fulfils all its obligations, and meeting records exemplify governors' willingness to challenge senior leaders. They are familiar with national measures of achievement and receive reports on the quality of teaching. They check on the progress of groups of pupils, including those for whom the school receives the pupil premium. They manage the performance of the Executive headteacher, and accept recommendations based on the performance management of teachers. Governors visit the school to make their own assessments of progress. The governing body ensures the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116958
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443937

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	256
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frank Fletcher
<b>Headteacher (Executive)</b>	Paul Essenhigh
<b>Headteacher (Head of School)</b>	Maria Brannelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 872431
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 837113
<b>Email address</b>	office@catshill-middle.worcs.sch.uk

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



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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

