

Perton Middle School

Gainsborough Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, WV6 7NR

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders have not yet established a culture of consistently high expectations for teaching and achievement in all subjects and year groups.
- The school's new system of assessing students' progress is not fully established, which means that some information is not accurate.
- Governors do not hold senior leaders to account with sufficient rigour.
- Senior leaders do not check the quality of teaching and students' progress closely enough to ensure that all groups of students make good progress.
- Subject and other middle leaders do not have a sharp enough understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and good progress for students.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough to support students' good achievement in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not set high expectations for students or make it clear what students need to learn to achieve well in lessons.
- Some teachers do not use information about students' prior attainment well enough to match work to the abilities of the most-able students and those with special educational needs.
- Disadvantaged students make similar progress to their classmates. This means that they do not make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Too often, teaching in mathematics does not deepen students' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and problem-solving.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to write at length in a range of subjects or to develop good writing skills and accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are polite, friendly and courteous. They enjoy school and are happy.
- The school keeps students safe and secure. Training for staff in safeguarding and child protection helps staff remain vigilant.
- Students' attendance is above average overall.
- Adults and students co-operate well to create a calm, pleasant working environment.
- The curriculum is broad. Students study a range of topics and benefit from the educational visits, after-school clubs and residential trips, which enhance classroom learning.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. Assemblies, visiting speakers and educational visits contribute effectively to students' development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 18 lessons. Six of these observations were completed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed students' behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes, and attended assembly and registration.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, governors, the executive headteacher and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 86 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of 42 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for staff.
- A wide range of documents were examined including samples of students' work, information about students' progress, the school's development plan and self-evaluation summary, records of any poor behaviour, records of governing body meetings, and safeguarding documents.
- The inspectors listened to students read, observed the support for reading in lessons and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

Inspection team

Sherry Gladwin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stuart Smith	Additional Inspector
Robert Steed	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a much smaller than the average-sized middle deemed secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of minority ethnic students is average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Codsall High Federation of Schools. It is formally federated with Codsall High School and Bilbrook Church of England Middle School.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education and provides support to schools in the local education authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by:
 - checking that teachers set high expectations in relation to the quality of work they want students to complete
 - ensuring that teachers make it clear what students need to learn and do to achieve well in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers use information about students' prior attainment to match the work they set to students' different abilities, including for the most able students and those who have special educational needs
 - ensuring that teaching in mathematics deepens students' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and problem-solving
 - providing more opportunities for students to practise writing at length in a variety of subjects and to develop accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors rigorously hold senior leaders to account for their work in checking teaching and students' progress with accuracy and in tackling underperformance
 - helping subject and other middle leaders to gain the skills and understanding required to evaluate teaching and students' progress accurately.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have established a culture where good behaviour is expected but have yet to fully establish high expectations for academic achievement in all subjects and all year groups. As a result, behaviour in the school has improved and students' attitudes to learning are positive. However, senior leaders do not check the quality of teaching or students' progress with enough rigour to ensure that teaching and progress are good for all groups of students.
- The recently introduced system to assess and track students' progress is not fully understood by staff. As a result, some of the information collected is not accurate enough and, consequently, the work planned by teachers is not always at the right level of difficulty.
- The local authority and the Codsall High Federation of Schools support senior and middle leaders to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, the teaching of reading has improved. However, although some teaching is good, this is not consistently the case across the school. For example, leaders do not ensure that all teachers set consistently high expectations in relation to the quality of students' work.
- Leaders use the pupil premium to provide disadvantaged students with academic support through small-group teaching and one-to-one tutoring, as well as access to educational visits, residential trips, sport, arts and music activities. This use of pupil premium funding is not wholly effective in promoting good progress and attendance for disadvantaged students. Although they perform as well as their classmates, they do not make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders use the primary sport funding effectively to broaden the school's provision of physical education. An increase in inter-house and inter-school competitions, and students' raised participation in sport and healthy lifestyle choices, are direct results of this additional funding. Teachers feel better equipped to teach the subject more effectively due to the specialist coaching they receive.
- Leaders treat students fairly. The school is welcoming to students from all backgrounds and abilities. Improvements to behaviour mean that students are now more positive in their attitudes to learning. Attendance is good, and students are free from discrimination and harassment. However, the school does not yet fully promote equality of opportunity for all groups of students. Fixed-term exclusions are reducing but rates are not similar for all groups of students. Disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are among those with higher rates of fixed-term exclusions. In addition, variations in attendance and students' academic performance mean that different groups do not perform equally well.
- Middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and students' progress with limited effectiveness. They do not have a rigorous approach or clear understanding of how to judge teaching and students' progress. Consequently, their judgements of teaching and students' progress are too generous.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection. Adults are vigilant in keeping students safe and reporting any concerns to designated members of staff. Staff selection processes and procedures follow nationally and locally recommended guidelines.
- The curriculum is broad. Students experience a wide range of interesting topics taught in the classroom and through educational visits, assemblies, visiting speakers, residential trips, and extra-curricular clubs. These capture students' interest and contribute to their good behaviour, but do not yet lead to all students achieving well. Students understand and value democracy, participating in elections to choose representatives to sit on the school council or take on the role of house captains. They understand social responsibility and the rule of British law. Older students mentor younger students demonstrating support, compassion and social responsibility. Students value diversity and learn to be tolerant of difference. The school prepares students well for life in modern Britain.
- The Year 7 'catch up' funding is used successfully to improve the attainment of students who do not reach

expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Targeted small-group work and one-to-one tuition helps these students to close gaps in their learning.

■ The governance of the school:

- Aspects of governance are not yet fully effective. Governors are supportive of the school but they do not hold senior leaders to account sufficiently for the quality of teaching and students' progress.
- Governors are suitably trained in safeguarding and in interpreting the information they receive about students' performance. Helpful reports from the headteacher, together with visits to the school, keep governors appropriately informed about the progress made in tackling the targets in the school improvement plan, as well as the standards of behaviour, attendance and achievement. However, changes to the assessment system, and the information presented to governors by senior leaders, mean that governors have too generous a picture of students' progress. Nevertheless, governors have correctly identified some of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Governors set targets for the headteacher's performance based on the areas for improvement in the school. Staff targets, linked to the headteacher's targets, are reviewed regularly and supported by opportunities for professional development. Staff must meet their performance targets before they are allowed pay increases.
- The governing body understands the value of good teaching and scrutinises information about the quality of teaching provided by the school's leaders. However, governors do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching because senior and middle leaders view the quality of teaching too generously.
- The governing body has not monitored the impact of the school's use of the pupil premium on the progress of disadvantaged students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students' attitudes to learning are positive. They get on well with each other and adults working in the school, so that there is a positive climate for learning and the school is a calm, purposeful and harmonious environment.
- Students have a good understanding of right and wrong, and demonstrate courtesy and respect. They show care, compassion and consideration for others through their daily interactions, as well as through such activities as fundraising for a variety of charities.
- Students are keen to develop their leadership skills and willingly stand for election to the school council. Students take great pride in being selected for the roles of house captains, sports captains and mentors. They show good organisational skills as they work on inter-house activities. They demonstrate a good level of compassion and support when mentoring younger students to help them to improve their reading and social skills.
- Rewards are used effectively to motivate students to work hard and acknowledge their efforts and achievements. Students respond well to rewards, valuing their praise cards and house points. They are excited at the prospect of entry to the regular draw, which could result in winning prizes.
- Care is taken to record and report any incidents of students' unacceptable behaviour to their parents. Since the introduction of the new behaviour management system, behaviour has improved. Staff are more consistent in holding students to account for inappropriate behaviour. This has led to a fall in fixed-term exclusions so that these are now in line with the national average.
- Appropriate support is provided for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Students who exhibit challenging behaviour are helped through the school's good collaboration with external agencies and parents to develop clear, workable support plans. The involvement of students in these processes motivates them to achieve their set targets. Case studies show that students grow in self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness, and become better able to manage their own behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students understand risk, including the dangers that strangers might pose. They are aware of potential dangers presented by roads, rail, electricity and the internet. Helpful advice is available to parents about how to keep children safe when using computers at home.
- Students are knowledgeable about all forms of bullying including racist, sexist, homophobic and cyber-bullying. They are aware of the harm bullying can cause to the feelings of others. They know what to do if bullying occurs and they have confidence in their teachers to help them to resolve these challenges should they arise.
- Adults supervise the playground appropriately at breaks and lunchtimes so that students feel safe and secure.
- Students enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is above average. Staff responsible for checking attendance telephone parents on the first day of any unexpected absence. Holidays in term time are discouraged. Students are punctual and so begin school on time. The pupil premium funding contributes to employing additional staff who work with external agencies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged students. This strategy has not yet proved effective as disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are more regularly absent from school than their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some teachers do not set consistently high expectations in relation to the quality of work they want students to complete and they do not challenge students to achieve their best. The purpose of what is being taught is not always clear to students. As a result, students do not work with a clear focus to reach high standards.
- Recent changes to the way that students' progress is assessed and recorded are not yet fully understood by staff. As a result, information about students' prior attainment is not always used effectively to plan and set work that is closely matched to students' different abilities, including the most able and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, work is sometimes too hard or too easy. This slows students' progress. Teachers' marking of students' work is accurate, however, and mostly provides good advice on what students need to do to improve their work.
- Teaching in mathematics does not deepen students' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and problem-solving. Too often, students repeat topics that do not build on their prior learning and which fail to extend their learning. Over time, students do not develop the resilience or gain the depth of understanding required to achieve good outcomes.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Students demonstrate a good understanding of phonics (letters and sounds) and apply this well to reading. However, they apply phonics less well to spelling. Writing lacks accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students do not have enough opportunities to write at length in English or in other subjects, and this slows their progress.
- Teaching assistants benefit from good support and training. They deliver well-planned in-class support and supplementary sessions to help disabled students and those who have special educational needs gain reading skills that are appropriate to their age. However, gaps in students' achievement in writing and mathematics are not closing as quickly.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan learning using the information they have about students' attainment to set activities that are engaging and challenging for all students. When this occurs, students respond with good application and enjoyment, and make good progress.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The work in students' books and observations of their learning in lessons show that they are making the progress expected of them, between joining the school in Year 5 and leaving at the end of Year 8. However, too few students are making better than expected progress across a range of subjects. Consequently, achievement requires improvement. The school's analysis of students' progress from the information the teachers collect about attainment is over-generous.
- Where students are challenged, for example in a Year 5 religious education lesson about the Shroud of Turin, they make good progress. Students' progress was closely reviewed throughout this lessons and the work set by the teacher was carefully modified for different abilities. The work in students' books confirmed their good progress in religious education throughout the year.
- The results of national tests, at the end of Year 6 in 2014, show that students reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There is evidence, in students' work, that the picture is improving. A higher proportion of students are on track to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics this year and the proportion of students making good progress is beginning to rise.
- By the end of Year 8 the school's information shows that far fewer students make good progress in reading and writing, than in mathematics. The work in students' books, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, shows that while most students make the progress expected of them not enough are making good progress by the end of Year 8, particularly in reading and writing. Inconsistencies in handwriting, and erratic punctuation, spelling and grammar evident in students' work in Years 5 and 6 are still present in some students' work in Years 7 and 8.
- In 2014, the most-able Year 6 students did not reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that they should. Their results in writing were lower than in reading and mathematics. Various activities, including after-school master classes, are now supporting these students to reach higher attainment. However, observation of teaching shows that in some lessons, the most able are not always stretched and challenged to produce their best work. The work in their books shows that the progress of the most-able students requires improvement in all year groups.
- In some lessons not enough account is taken of the learning needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Teachers do not always pitch learning at the correct level for them, which slows their progress. An examination of their work shows that disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as they could.
- Disadvantaged students are making progress at a similar rate to their classmates. Those in Year 6, performed as well as their classmates and others nationally in writing and mathematics in 2014, but they did not do as well as in reading where they were a term behind other students in the school, and nationally. Scrutiny of students' books confirms that the progress of disadvantaged students requires improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124437
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	462551

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Burton
Headteacher	Marjorie Tunncliffe
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2013
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