

Inspection of a good school: Perton Middle School

Gainsborough Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire WV6 7NR

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

Outcome

Perton Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a warm and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Pupils, parents and carers and staff are 'Proud to be Perton'. Leaders know their pupils well. Carefully crafted moments in the day, such as 'moral compass', help teachers to nurture strong, positive relationships with pupils. Pupils know whom to turn to if they have a concern. They are confident that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with. Pupils feel safe here.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have developed a broad curriculum that spans beyond the academic. For example, many pupils take part in the 'young voices' programme or in the school's theatrical productions. Pupils engage with important concepts such as climate change through the 'solutions for the planet' programme, through which pupils have celebrated much success. Leaders have made sure that all pupils can benefit from these valuable experiences.

Pupils behave very well. They model leaders' high expectations in all that they do. Teachers are quick to challenge pupils if they fail to meet these standards. Pupils value their learning. They are resilient to setbacks; they understand that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Teachers and leaders nurture this important character trait well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. Across all subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the small steps that pupils need to take in order to be successful. They have mapped knowledge out carefully to make sure that the things pupils learn build sensibly on the things they already know. For example, in mathematics, pupils develop a sound understanding of algebraic expressions before expanding their understanding of how these are used when solving linear equations. Pupils build strong mental models of these challenging concepts. This helps pupils to remember the things they have been

taught. Pupils make strong progress despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders have prioritised staff development. Teachers are rapidly becoming experts in their subjects. Because of this, teachers are aware of the things pupils may struggle to remember. They are alert to common misconceptions. Teachers make good use of this knowledge and assess skilfully to make sure that pupils have understood the important things they have been taught. Teachers adapt their teaching quickly to fill any gaps in knowledge. This stops pupils from falling behind.

Leaders are quick to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They know these pupils well. However, leaders have not made sure that all staff have the important information they need about pupils with SEND. This means that some teachers do not understand how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, the work given to pupils is not always well matched to their needs, and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Governors have not checked on this aspect of leaders' work carefully enough.

Leaders are growing a culture of reading. Pupils, particularly those in key stage 2, read often and talk with passion about the books they read. A well-stocked library gives pupils the opportunity to read a wide range of diverse and appropriate texts. Texts such as 'Sadé and Her Shadow Beasts' allow pupils to confront difficult concepts such as childhood grief in a carefully considered way. Leaders' work to support pupils who are at an early stage of reading is well developed. Pupils with gaps in their phonic knowledge are identified quickly, and effective interventions are put in place.

Leaders' work to encourage pupils' personal development is promising. Diversity is celebrated here. Through the school's 'Accept, Respect and Celebrate' programme, pupils learn to champion individual difference. Leaders have made sure that pupils receive valuable information about the world of work. There is a wide range of opportunities for this, including visits to a music studio and the National Gallery. A growing number of pupils benefit from the wide range of extracurricular clubs on offer. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to support more pupils to take up these opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all staff receive ongoing safeguarding training. Staff are vigilant to potential risks. They raise all concerns, no matter how small. Leaders ensure that all concerns are acted on so that pupils are kept as safe as possible.

Leaders, including governors, do not check carefully enough on the quality of record-keeping. Records of concerns do not contain sufficient information about the concern or the actions leaders have taken to safeguard the pupils from harm. Leaders are beginning to address this, but they have been slow to do so.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from harm and how to build and maintain healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While there is a culture of safeguarding, leaders have not made sure that records of concerns contain the appropriate level of detail. This means that there is a risk that pupils may not receive the help they need at the right time. Leaders should ensure that safeguarding records are sufficiently detailed to outline the detail of the concern, the discussions had and the decisions made.
- Some teachers do not adapt their teaching to take account of the needs of pupils with SEND well enough. This is because leaders have not made sure that all staff have the information they need in order to do so. This limits the progress that pupils with SEND make through the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that teachers are provided with the information they need to enable them to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and enable them to achieve well.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, do not have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of some aspects of the school's work. This means that leaders have not taken effective action to address the most important areas needing improvement. Governors should ensure that they closely monitor the effectiveness and impact of the work of leaders.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	124437
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10240785
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jessica Shulman
Headteacher	Alexandra Dadge
Website	www.pertonmiddle.com
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of any alternate provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including from across the governing body, and the executive headteacher. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SEND coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, reading and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy. They spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at

how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.

- Inspectors took account of the responses and free-text comments on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tim Hill

His Majesty's Inspector

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