



# Bromsgrove, Parkside Middle School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 116959  
**LEA** Worcestershire  
**Inspection number** 279964  
**Inspection dates** 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Brooker HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary	<b>School address</b>	Stourbridge Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bromsgrove
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13		Worcestershire B61 0AD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 873660
<b>Number on roll</b>	462	<b>Fax number</b>	01527 836574
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Bill Newnes
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 April 1998	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Graham

<b>Age group</b> 9 to 13	<b>Inspection dates</b> 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279964
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Parkside is a larger than average middle school. It is located near the centre of Bromsgrove and draws its pupils from the north of the town. Almost all pupils are from white British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average; nine pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased and is broadly average. Parkside is one of seven schools in Bromsgrove that are to be rebuilt. The new school is due to be completed by Easter 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

At the time of the last inspection the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. However, this designation no longer applies. Over the last two years, staff at all levels have worked hard to address the issues raised and the school has improved: the quality of teaching is better; the pupils now make better rates of progress in lessons and over time; and standards have risen. Results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2005 were broadly in line with those seen nationally. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although standards in English are lower than they should be, mainly because of weaknesses in pupils' writing.

The school judges that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Inspectors agree with this view, although there are pockets of good and outstanding practice in aspects of its provision. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with much that is good or outstanding. However, assessment information is not consistently used to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but there remain areas that need strengthening. In general, weaknesses have been accurately identified and are included in the school's development plans. However, whole-school initiatives are not driven through rapidly or effectively and the school lacks a transparent system for line management by which middle managers can be properly held to account.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Senior managers and staff at all levels have worked hard to improve teaching and raise standards. The quality of staff and their determination to strengthen provision indicate that the school has the capacity for further improvement. It provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards of attainment.
- Strengthen the quality of pupils' writing by developing a whole-school approach to improving literacy.
- Make better use of assessment information and marking to provide a more appropriate level of challenge for pupils of all abilities in lessons.
- Take a more strategic and rigorous approach to whole-school improvement through systematic planning and effective evaluation to inform subsequent actions.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The pupils' results in national tests before they join the school are broadly average. However, the pupils start middle school half way through Key Stage 2, and assessment of their standards on entry highlights weaknesses in key aspects of numeracy and literacy. By the time that they sit the national tests at the age of 11, the standard of their work is broadly in line with that seen nationally. In Years 7 and 8 the standard of work is generally in line with age-related expectations. This indicates that the pupils,

including those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and that achievement is satisfactory overall.

The pupils sit national tests at the age of 11, half way through their time at middle school. Results in these tests have previously been below average, but have improved steadily in recent years. There was significant improvement in the results in the most recent tests in 2005, particularly in mathematics and science. However, standards in English, particularly in writing, remain too low, with too few pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or higher Level 5. Although many pupils write fluently and accurately, weaknesses in literacy constrain the progress and attainment of a significant number of pupils. Although there is some very effective teaching in English, there is no whole-school strategy to improve the quality of pupils' writing.

The school makes use of assessment data to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in different subjects, and assessment information is effectively used to ease the transition from Year 4 to Year 5 when the pupils start at the school. In addition, good use was made of assessment data to target support for specific groups of pupils and to boost attainment in the most recent national tests. The pupils are aware of their current and expected levels of attainment.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy learning and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Reflective, thoughtful and polite, they are excellent ambassadors for their school. They readily engage visitors in conversation and comment perceptively on what helps or hinders their learning. They report that the school seeks, values and where possible acts on their views. Pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, for example, through the wide range of sports activities available to them. While praising the improvements in school dinners, however, they lament the lack of healthy snacks, such as fruit, at break times. They greatly appreciate the various awards they receive for effort and achievement in and out of school. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils acknowledge that bullying occurs occasionally but that, when reported, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. They develop a good understanding of citizenship through fund raising for charities, the school council and a strong commitment to the ECO project. Pupils are very conscious of the evils of racism and prejudice and of how to avoid them. Teamwork and respect for others feature strongly in their thinking and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although literacy skills are sometimes underdeveloped, the pupils' broader education ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their life beyond school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Nonetheless, there is a core of teaching that is consistently good and some that is outstanding. Good teaching planned a range of varied activities for the pupils which were underpinned by skilled presentations and questioning that enabled pupils to understand the work and think things out for themselves. A good feature in many lessons was the way in which teachers clearly set out their expectations of what pupils should learn. Teachers made good use of information and communication technology (ICT) both to present work and to give pupils a creative outlet. The outstanding lessons in science and English were very well focused and sustained a brisk pace through clever questioning and challenging activities. In these lessons the detailed planning and skilful management ensured that pupils of all abilities were able to make clear gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Lessons judged to be satisfactory gave fewer opportunities for pupils to respond actively. In these lessons teachers were more willing to accept routine responses. Less challenging work was expected, particularly from more able pupils, and less attention was given to planning work to meet pupils' individual learning needs.

In some subjects pupils know the level that they should be trying to achieve, but assessment of pupils' standards and progress requires further improvement. Work is marked regularly but pupils do not yet consistently receive good feedback on what they have done well or what they need to do to improve.

Work is well planned for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Their needs are well mapped out and reviewed through individual education plans. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum provided is good. Pupils are taught all the required range of subjects. The advantage of being a middle school is used to gradually introduce pupils to specialist subject teachers as they move through the school. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are very popular with pupils. In particular there are many ways in which pupils can undertake additional sporting activities; the school fully merits its 'Sportsmark' award. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential education experience each year, including the possibility of visiting France in Year 8. The school involves a number of external agencies to support its curriculum, including community police officers, the local further education college and the local supermarket on aspects of healthy lifestyles and safety. Pupils have good provision to develop skills for their future employment and economic well-being, including many opportunities to work with computers.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school works tirelessly and successfully to promote good behaviour. The consistently effective approach in all year groups is very carefully checked by the heads of year who, together with the form tutors, rigorously track pupils' personal development. The outstanding personal guidance offered to all pupils results in their developing good levels of maturity by the time they move on to high school. The very effective use of external agencies provides additional support for pupils who have learning difficulties, vulnerable pupils or those suffering trauma in their personal lives. Parents are fully and effectively involved in these processes and the vast majority are very positive about what the school does for their children. Child protection procedures are good and all health and safety checks are in place. As a result, pupils work and play in a safe and secure environment. Transition arrangements from first schools and on to high school are very good. Effective links with the high school and the community benefit pupils' learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory. However, the information gained from assessment is not used well enough to support pupils fully in improving their learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The inspectors agree with the school's judgement that leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers have responded to the criticisms in leadership and management raised in the last inspection. Planning for school improvement is satisfactory and is soundly based on a clear vision, and procedures have been developed to check the school's work. The recent improvements in the quality of teaching and in standards of attainment demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve.

The headteacher provides effective day-to-day management for the school and supports staff very well. He has realised the vision for a 'safe and happy centre for learning'. The school has a positive ethos; the pupils enjoy coming to school and are part of a caring community. The vast majority of parents recognise these strengths. As one parent said: 'the fact that this is a happy school is reflected when we as parents attend any event'. However, the leadership is not as strong or dynamic as it should be in guiding improvement. This is because leadership roles are rather muddled and tasks are not properly delegated. These are weaknesses because priorities for improvement are not driven through across the whole school, and some work is unnecessarily duplicated.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest, but procedures for gathering and analysing information are not sufficiently rigorous or robust, and the findings are not always acted upon swiftly. Although the headteacher knows his school well, the good and outstanding practice is not shared effectively, and strengths are not developed as quickly as they might be. Middle managers take responsibility for their respective subject areas, but there is too much variability in the way that actions are implemented

and work is checked. This is partly because line management arrangements are underdeveloped.

Judgements made by school managers on the quality of teaching are accurate. Lesson observations are used to evaluate the impact of the school's initiatives and to identify the professional development needs of individual staff and whole-school development. This has helped to strengthen the quality of teaching and to improve pupil achievement.

Since the last inspection the governing body has been strengthened by new appointments. It is well informed and provides sound support for the school. Effective procedures are in place to enable governors to hold the school to account. The school takes suitable steps to consult parents and pupils.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

The Pupils Parkside Middle School Stourbridge Road Bromsgrove Worcestershire B61 0AD

December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the contribution that you made to our recent inspection. You made the three of us feel very welcome by being so friendly and helpful and were sensible in the way that you spoke with each of us. Your opinions were important in confirming what staff, parents and governors told us about the school. We agree with your assessment. We were particularly impressed with the following:

- how well you behave, how you cooperate sensibly and work hard in lessons
- how smartly you present yourselves
- how well you are cared for and supported at Parkside.

This shows that you are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. Many of you have taken on board the messages about healthy lifestyles and join in the wide range of sporting activities available after school. We noted what you said about the improving food options, but also the lack of healthy snacks at break! The fact that so many of you participate in out-of-school activities is excellent. The school deserves its Sportsmark status.

Most of you work hard and make progress in lessons. The school's results in national tests have improved steadily over recent years. The standard of most work is what we would expect to see. However, there is always room for improvement and we have asked your teachers to work on a few areas:

- The school needs to be more careful to improve levels of literacy, particularly writing, because this is so vital for high achievement.
- Although standards are rising, teachers need to ensure that your work in lessons always challenges you properly.
- The school needs to plan, organise and check its work more carefully.

Parkside was judged to have 'serious weaknesses' at the time of the last inspection in November 2003. However, it has improved a lot since then: teaching is better and results have improved. We are confident that you have the potential to do even better and wish you every success in future.

Yours faithfully

Paul Brooker HMI Lead inspector