

Codsall Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124424
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292993
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	David Anstead HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hughes
Headteacher	John Armstrong
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001
School address	Wolverhampton Road Codsall Wolverhampton WV8 1PB
Telephone number	01902 434145
Fax number	01902 434152

Age group	9–13
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Inspection number	292993

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Codsall Middle School is of average size when compared to other middle schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, although there is a small but rising number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school badge was chosen to symbolise how opposites can flow together to form a harmonious and cohesive community. Such a community flourishes at Codsall Middle School. Pupils respect each other's different backgrounds. Relationships and behaviour are exemplary. Parents are highly supportive of the school. One told inspectors, 'This school is a genuine asset to our community'. This is a good school.

Equal emphasis is placed on both the personal and the academic development of pupils. This philosophy is expressed in the school's motto of 'personal bests'. Pupils are exhorted to achieve their best whether it be in tests, sporting events, a performance or making a contribution to the community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life and appreciate the excellent range of lunchtime and after-school activities they can participate in. The personal development and well-being of pupils is outstanding. Standards are above average and achievement is good.

The curriculum is good and made relevant and interesting by involving outside speakers and organisations. Opportunities for pupils to go on visits, participate in residential trips or to engage in sporting competitions with a school in France are outstanding. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils say teachers make learning fun and they enjoy working together in small groups. The school is particularly effective in helping pupils to become independent learners. In an outstanding Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils discussed the learning aims with each other and negotiated the targets that they felt each other should achieve. The teacher skilfully led pupils in evaluating how well they had done against the targets they had set for themselves. However, this is not done so well in some other lessons. Assessment information is used inconsistently by teachers in planning work to closely match it to the full range of pupils' learning needs. Marking does not always tell pupils clearly enough how well they are doing or how they can improve their performance, for example, by reinforcing pupils' individual targets.

Governance is outstanding and makes an important contribution to school improvement. Governors have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it most needs to do next. They are well involved in setting the school's strategic direction, monitoring its progress and challenging it to do better. Governors work closely with senior leaders so that the school is well led and managed. Consequently, test results have improved year on year, attendance has improved and the progress made by pupils in their personal development has improved to be outstanding. Middle managers are becoming involved in evaluating the work of their teams and contributing to whole-school evaluation. However, self-evaluation is not yet sufficiently rigorous. It focuses on test results without sufficiently analysing pupils' progress and how the gains pupils make are influenced by teaching and the curriculum. This prevents the school from more sharply identifying how to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 2.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers make full use of assessment information to match work closely to all pupils' learning needs.
- Make self-evaluation more rigorous by focusing on how teaching and the curriculum influence pupils' progress, as well as on test results.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils join the school in Year 5 and a smaller but significant number join in Year 7. Tests taken by pupils at the time they join the school are used to establish a baseline from which their future progress is tracked. These tests show that attainment on entry is above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2 so that by the time they sit the national tests at the end of Year 6, standards are above average, with none significantly below. The results of the 2007 tests arrived in school during the inspection. They show an improvement on the previous year.

During Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress. The school tests pupils at the end of Year 8 before they transfer to the high school. At this point, although pupils are a year younger, standards in English, mathematics and science have risen to be above the national average for Year 9 pupils. Standards in comparison to Year 8 pupils nationally are well above average. Consequently, the overall progress made by pupils from joining the school to leaving it is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same good progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are articulate and confident and possess high self-esteem. They are proud of each other and their school. Particularly noticeable is their high level of consideration for others. This leads to a harmonious atmosphere which generates a safe and supportive learning environment. Behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships are all excellent. Pupils appreciate each other's different backgrounds and are stimulated by activities which broaden their understanding of a multicultural world. Global citizenship is developed through strong links with schools abroad; for example, pupils undertake sporting events with a school in France and support a school in Zambia. Pupils enjoy the 'world day' competition, as well as visits to places of worship for different faiths. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for a healthy lifestyle and benefit from the strong moral guidance provided by the staff. Enjoyment of school is demonstrated by pupils' outstanding contribution to the community as well as their good attendance. Through taking on responsibilities such as those of prefects, and through the school council, pupils develop good leadership skills. Pupils show initiative in taking a lead in fundraising for the school charity and run an annual 'fair trade' week. Preparation for future life is good. Pupils develop the skills needed for the workplace, such as in teamwork.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with examples of outstanding practice. In the best lessons, pupils with additional needs, including the gifted and talented, are identified in the lesson plan. Work is closely matched to their differing needs so that everyone makes good progress. However, the quality of lesson planning across the school is inconsistent. In a small number of less successful lessons, activities are not sufficiently matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teachers sometimes use innovative ideas, for example, pupils in Year 7 used electronic voting to assess their learning in an enjoyable science lesson. Most teachers are skilled at building

simple assessment into their planning, for example, by asking pupils to put their thumbs up to show that they have achieved a particular goal, or through skilful questioning. Peer assessment is used very effectively, for example, in a music lesson when pupils in Year 5 discussed their success criteria for activities at the start of the lesson. However, the review of learning at the end of lessons is not always thorough enough. There is some inconsistency in marking and not all teachers are good at showing pupils how they are doing, how to improve or refer to their individual targets.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class are outstanding. They cooperate well in pairs and team tasks and say they enjoy being actively involved in their learning. Opportunities for practical activities and working together in lessons are helping pupils to become independent learners. Support staff play a valuable role in class, not only helping less able pupils and those with disabilities, but also encouraging shy pupils to be more assertive and confident.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and it is exceptionally well enhanced through an outstanding range of clubs, sports fixtures, visitors to the school and exciting trips. All of these activities contribute significantly to pupils' cultural, spiritual and social education. Work in personal, social and health education also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development. Since the previous inspection the timetable has been improved so that all pupils have a discrete information and communication technology (ICT) lesson and this has led to rising standards in this subject. ICT is used well in other subjects and pupils have good opportunities to practise their literacy and number skills, for example, in food technology. The library period is a satisfactory opportunity to read but pupils do not get sufficient help in improving their reading during these sessions. Additional help for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is sensitively timetabled. There is a good range of provision for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils begin learning French in Year 5 and have the chance to learn how to play a musical instrument. When new entrants arrive in Year 7 they are given booster classes in French and catch up successfully. Years 7 and 8 now have a good balance of activities and enough time for each subject.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils know their targets and their current national curriculum levels and are able to explain what they need to do to improve. Pupils carry their targets and guidance on how to improve with them in their planners, which means this information is communicated well to staff and parents. Parents comment upon how well they are informed: 'Codsall Middle School has got time for each child and gives excellent support'. Reports to parents clearly show how pupils are progressing from their baseline at the start of the year towards their target levels for each subject. Pupils identified as underachieving receive effective support to help them catch up. Pastoral provision is equally outstanding and pupils are well cared for. Child protection procedures are robust and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. The learning support team identify appropriate provision and liaise effectively with teachers and parents to ensure good progression.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The governors have organised their work exceptionally well so that there are clear links between a group considering what the school should be like in the future, a group allocating resources to support implementation of the strategic plan and a group reviewing the school's effectiveness. Accordingly, governors are well involved in setting the school's strategic direction, monitoring its progress and challenging it to do better. Governance is outstanding and has a strong impact on the overall quality of leadership and management.

The school follows national guidance in setting challenging but realistic targets based on pupils' prior attainment. These require pupil achievement to be in the top 25% of all schools. The improving trend in test results and attendance shows the school is on course to achieve its targets this summer. Since the previous inspection, the use of data to check on the school's effectiveness has improved. Subject leaders are now more accountable. They write subject evaluation reports but these are not rigorous enough because the emphasis is on pupils' test results rather than on their individual progress. As a result, there is not always close enough scrutiny of how teaching and the curriculum lead to the outcomes in pupils' progress. Subject leaders' monitoring of teaching has been inconsistent because they have not been allocated specific time to do this in. There is good liaison between senior management, class teachers and the learning support team to manage the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Progress since the last inspection has been good, with improvements in attendance, achievement, personal development, provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the use of data. Altogether, this indicates that the school has a good capacity to further improve.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Codsall Middle School, Codsall WV8 1PB

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank those of you we spoke to for the friendly welcome you gave us. Your thoughtful responses to our questions helped us decide what is good about your school and what needs to be improved. The education you receive at your school is good.

These are the main strengths of your school.

- You make good progress during your time in the school because teaching and the curriculum are good.
- Your personal development and well-being are outstanding. You get on very well with each other and this makes the school a happy place in which to learn.
- The use of targets and the guidance on how to improve in your planners is excellent.
- The adults ensure that you are exceptionally well cared for and supported.
- The range of lunchtime and after-school clubs and other activities such as visits is outstanding.
- Your school is well led and managed.

There are two aspects of the school's work which we think can be better. In some lessons you are all given the same work to do, even though this may be too easy or too hard for some. We have asked your headteacher to make sure all your teachers set you work at the right level of difficulty for you personally. The school monitors test results but doesn't check whether these are good enough in relation to how the year group were doing before. This means that it does not always look closely enough at the detail of whether aspects of teaching and the curriculum could be better. You can help your school to improve further by following the guidance that your teachers give you on how to improve your work.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

David Anstead Her Majesty's Inspector