

Bromsgrove, Parkside Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116959
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326504
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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 (total)	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Harris
Headteacher	Neil Mills
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
School address	Stourbridge Road Bromsgrove B61 0AD
Telephone number	01527 873660
Fax number	01527 836574

Age group	9–13
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Inspection number	326504

© Crown copyright 2009

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 three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average middle school. Almost all pupils are from White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to average.

The headteacher took up appointment in April 2009 and a new deputy has been appointed for September 2009. The new deputy headteacher currently works in the school and is taking on responsibilities she will formally assume in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bromsgrove Parkside Middle School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is an improving school in which achievement is satisfactory and accelerating. Recent low standards and unsatisfactory achievement in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 2008 have been reversed, although improvement is at an early stage. Standards are average, although there are still some weaknesses in independent writing. Previous weaknesses in mental calculation are being dealt with successfully. In science, achievement is especially good at Key Stage 2 because the work is well matched to pupils' needs. In all subjects, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of good support by teachers and support staff.

The headteacher is providing a particularly strong drive for improvement and he is well supported by senior staff. They have a sound overview of what developments are needed. However, subject leaders do not all have opportunities to monitor and evaluate provision in their subjects, particularly teaching, so their contribution to whole-school improvement is limited. Nevertheless, the eagerness of staff to move the school forward is impressive and there is a high level of support for the headteacher. Governors provide a high level of challenge and have high expectations for the school's improvement. Sound progress has been made in dealing with issues from the previous inspection and the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Teaching is generally satisfactory, and improving. Some teaching is excellent, with fast-paced activities and challenging work that is well matched to pupils' learning needs. This is not always the case and, in all subjects, some of the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they could because assessment information is not used effectively enough to make sure work is challenging. Occasionally, marking does not give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve, or check that they have followed advice. The curriculum is satisfactory with a good range of activities to enrich pupils' experience and a wide range of well supported out-of-school sports clubs and other activities. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory and improving, but there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects and this slows the development of their writing skills.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and pupils enjoy school and learning. They feel safe, behave safely and are confident in going to adults if they need help. They have a good grasp of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. Pupils take on responsibilities readily. For example, school council members interviewed the candidates for the post of headteacher and deputy head, and were involved in choosing the new school uniform. Others are peer mentors, helping other pupils when they need it. They have a sound and improving understanding of the wide range of cultures in Britain, and of those around the world. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The quality of care and support is good and promotes pupils' personal development effectively. Statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who are vulnerable is good. However, academic guidance is not as strong because too many pupils are not sure what their targets are or how to reach them.

Parents mostly support the school. Several were concerned about the change to the school uniform, and the school has responded quickly by extending the time before pupils need to wear the new one. Comments in the Ofsted parent questionnaires were generally positive and

in particular on praising the quality of care for pupils, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently in all subjects.
- Make sure that work is always challenging, especially for the more able, by using assessment information to plan work matched to pupils' needs.
- Enable subject leaders to monitor and evaluate performance, especially teaching, so that they can contribute effectively to school improvement.
- Make sure that pupils are fully aware of their targets and that they are given clear guidance on how to reach them.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average on entry to the school. Standards in English are average overall, but slowly rising. Pupils' speaking and reading skills are best, but their writing skills are a little lower, because they do not write independently enough in other subjects. Standards in mathematics are also average and rising because strategies to encourage pupils to develop mental calculation skills have been effective. Standards in science have risen particularly rapidly at Key Stage 2 where work is particularly well matched to pupils' learning needs. Pupils have sound investigative skills and discuss their scientific understanding competently. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, and it is improving as the quality of teaching becomes steadily better. Occasionally, some of the more able pupils do not make sufficient progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to effective support from classroom assistants and in small groups where teachers can provide individual help.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and demonstrate their commitment by their positive attitudes. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils' behaviour is good despite a very small amount of low level disruption in some classes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a real sense of fairness and they respect different opinions and religions. They have a good understanding of their own and European cultures and an improving understanding of the values and beliefs of different cultures in Britain and around the world. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility, and concern for others and the environment. For example, some pupils work on an eco working group, others raise funds for charities (for which they received national recognition) and the school council brings pupils' concerns to the attention of the staff. Pupils feel their views are valued and their worries addressed. They have established links with schools where pupils have disabilities and they support and organise activities for other schools. Given their broadly average basic skills, pupils' preparation for future life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Typically, lessons are well organised with a wide range of interesting activities that catch pupils' interests. Teachers establish good relationships and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response, so that nearly all pupils are attentive and keen to learn. In the best lessons, teachers use what they know about pupils' progress to match work closely to learning needs. For example, in an outstanding physical education lesson, well planned group work meant that all pupils made good progress and were able to support other pupils working at similar levels. However, planning does not always take into account pupils' previous progress so that work is not always challenging enough, especially for the more able pupils. Lessons generally move at a brisk pace and are well organised. Teachers use questioning well, encouraging pupils to think deeply about what they learn. Marking is variable. Some is good, indicating levels reached by pupils and giving guidance on what to do next. Other marking is much briefer, gives little guidance and does not ensure pupils follow advice given.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is improving and further improvements are planned. Numeracy skills are taught in several subject areas and this is contributing to pupils' growing skill in mental calculation and handling numerical information. However, writing is not so well established in all subjects and writing skills are not developing as fast as they should. Provision for ICT has improved and is increasingly used in all subjects. Work for the most able pupils is not consistently well planned for but there is some good practice in science.

There is a sound programme of activities to enrich pupils' learning experience and a very wide range of sports, other activities and increasing musical activities which pupils enjoy and take part in. There is an extensive personal, social and health education and citizenship programme that contributes successfully to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care and support are good and promote pupils' personal development effectively. The school has effective strategies to promote good behaviour and has worked well with external agencies to improve attendance. Links between first and high schools are good, ensuring a smooth transition between the different stages of education. The school has good and improving links with homes that are effective in promoting pupils' learning. Pupils needing support for personal or social reasons are supported extremely well and parents appreciate this. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are rigorous and the school responds to parents' concerns swiftly (and confidentially) where necessary. Pupils' achievements are celebrated and rewarded. However, despite comprehensive assessment of pupils' progress, academic guidance is not as effective as it should be. Not all pupils know what their academic targets are, or how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The newly appointed headteacher has high aspirations for the school and gives very clear direction for improvement. Senior staff have a broadly accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve. However, there are not equal opportunities for subject leaders to monitor and evaluate teaching in their subjects, and while they have a general idea of improvements needed, they do not have specific information to contribute to effective subject, or whole-school, improvement. It is too soon to see if the impact of early efforts to drive up standards are sustained, but teaching and achievement are improving and, given the commitment of staff, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and have equally high ambitions for the school. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, and improving with increasing opportunities for pupils to learn about the values and beliefs of different cultures and to compare them with their own.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bromsgrove Parkside Middle School, Bromsgrove, B61 0AH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were friendly and told us a lot about your school and what you think about it. What you told us helped us make our judgements.

These are the main things we found out about your school:

- You are at a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher, the governors and all of the staff are keen to make sure the school improves.
- You make satisfactory progress and you enjoy being at school.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving.
- You behave well, work hard and get on very well with each other.
- You take on a lot of responsibilities and the school values your opinions.
- Helping appoint the new headteacher was especially good!
- You eat healthily, take part in physical exercise and understand the importance of having a healthy lifestyle.
- The school is a very safe place and you are looked after very well.

To improve things, we have asked the school to do the following:

- Improve your writing by making sure you have the chance to write independently in all subjects.
- Make sure that work is always challenging, especially for the more able of you, by using what teachers know about how well you do to plan the work you are given.
- Make sure subject leaders check on how well you do, especially in lessons.
- Make sure that you know your targets and are given clear guidance on how to reach them.

You can help. If you think work is not hard enough, tell your teacher.

Again, thank you for being so friendly and helpful. Yours faithfully

Ted Wheatley

Lead inspector