

Codsall Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124424
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340564
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Kempton 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 of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hughes
Headteacher	Chris Wright
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
School address	Wolverhampton Road Codsall Wolverhampton
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 teachers' lessons, and held meetings with the chair and vice chair of the governing body, 11 senior/middle leaders, eight groups of pupils, and seven parents. They observed the school's work, and had a phone conversation with external agencies including a representative from the local authority and the school improvement partner. A group of six outside professionals associated with the school were also consulted. Inspectors scrutinised 160 parent questionnaires, (the responses are shown in the annex to this report) as well as staff and student questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It focused in particular on the following questions:

- how good is school improvement planning at all management levels?
- how much progress do individuals and groups of pupils make? How is pupil progress measured by all staff?
- how well does the school encourage all pupils to lead active lifestyles?
- how good is the quality of teaching?

Information about the school

Codsall Middle School is a popular school of average size. It serves the local community of Codsall as well as the neighbouring districts and some pupils travel because of its reputation. Pupils join and leave the school at different times because a wide range of different types of schools are available in the area: First, Middle, Upper, primary, secondary, selective and faith schools. The full range of ability is represented in this school. The school is largely White British; 13% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school has achieved Sportsmark and Geography Mark awards. The school is actively pursuing specialist status in mathematics and computing.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Codsall Middle is a good school, popular with parents and carers, where pupils thrive in a caring and purposeful learning environment. It has many strengths:

- the school welcomes everyone: visitors, new staff and pupils
- pupils' good behaviour and the courtesy and consideration they have for staff and each other
- the strong relationships in and out of lessons
- the care, guidance and support provided for all pupils to help them succeed
- pupils' outstanding attendance, which shows their enjoyment of school
- the good quality of the teaching.

When pupils join the school in Year 5, their attainment is broadly average. Some join and leave the school at varying points during the course of Key Stages 2 and 3 as parents and carers make their choices between their preferred secondary education. Pupils who stay at the school from Year 5 to Year 8 make good progress, especially in mathematics, and leave the school with attainment above the national average and similar to that achieved by pupils who are a year older. The progress made by pupils joining at different times varies depending on how long the pupil stays at the school, despite the best efforts of the school to help them catch up. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress relative to their starting points. One of the key features of pupils' progress in mathematics is the way parents are involved, known as ETS (explain, test, sign). Pupils are required to explain their mathematics learning to their parents, then test them on it. Parents then sign their child's book to say they have completed the exercise.

Staff know pupils well and everyone uses data to measure the progress that individual pupils are making. Any falling behind are quickly identified and appropriately supported. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have brought a new energy to the senior management team. There is now more accurate and frequent self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, leaders' capacity to improve the school is good. This notwithstanding, while school improvement planning at all management levels is thorough, it lacks sufficient measurable targets or monitoring milestones to allow all managers, governors and parents to see how quickly the school is improving.

Teaching is good or better in the vast majority of lessons. Inspectors carried out joint lesson observations with the senior staff and agreed on all judgements made. The school judges overall that 94% of its teaching is good or better and the headteacher has ambitions that 100% of the teaching in the school should be consistently of this quality. However, there is not a sufficiently robust system of compiling the information from the monitoring of teaching and using it to inform the professional development programme

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of staff to ensure that this ambition becomes a reality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that improvement planning at all levels has a few clear and measurable targets with regular milestones in order to:
 - further raise pupils' attainment
 - allow governors to measure the progress of management actions
 - improve the quality of teaching so that all is good or better.
- Devise a more rigorous system for monitoring, recording, analysing and supporting the quality of teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment in national tests in Year 6 is above average and the school's tracking shows that attainment by the end of Year 8 is well above average. Particularly good progress is evident in mathematics. Progress observed in lessons and examination of pupils' work shows that boys and girls across the age groups make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is outstanding. They have an enthusiastic approach to learning and are highly motivated to do well. They are sure that the adults look after them extremely well. As a result, the great majority feel safe. Pupils show a good understanding about personal safety, including internet safety. They are polite, welcoming and extremely well behaved around the school. Good behaviour in lessons is shown in high levels of attentiveness to teachers, application to tasks and collaborative working in groups. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, are respectful of others and are open to new ideas and learning experiences. Pupils have opportunities to study and celebrate different cultures within the curriculum, with particularly good examples of this seen in the art displays around the school, including African masks and Aboriginal art. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. The school offers a broad range of clubs centred on physical activities, including sports and dance, in which there are high levels of participation. School meals offer a range of healthy choices. This option is taken up by a third of pupils, despite the inadequate dining space. Almost half the pupils walk to school.

There are good opportunities for pupils to make positive contributions within school, for instance through the school council, which has had a positive impact including the provision of lockers. They have fewer opportunities to participate in the wider community, although they are actively involved in fundraising for a range of charities including Compton Hospice, Comic Relief and the Haiti Appeal. Pupils' future economic well-being is well supported by their cooperative team working, their attendance and their good skills in literacy and numeracy.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The good learning in the school is underpinned by the quality of classroom relationships and the interest and enthusiasm to learn demonstrated by the vast majority of pupils. Teachers capitalise on this by stretching pupils with an interesting variety of activities where they are actively involved in pair and group work. Pupils have good opportunities to check their own and each other's progress towards the challenging learning objectives which their teachers set for them. Teaching assistants are well briefed and deployed, ensuring that pupils who have particular learning needs make the same progress as other pupils. The best lessons are also very well planned to ensure that they contribute effectively to pupils' personal development as well as their academic progress. Progress is not so rapid in those few lessons where there is too much teacher direction or where the planning does not take sufficient account of the wide range of ability in the class.

A wide variety of extra-curricular activities and trips are provided which, together with themed days in school, enhance pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of their education. The school monitors the curriculum well and is prepared to make adjustments to ensure

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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that all pupils make good progress. For example, smaller teaching groups are provided for French in Year 7 so that pupils recently joining the school without previous experience of learning the language can quickly catch up. As a result, pupils make good progress in French. The school has also adapted some transport arrangements to ensure that more pupils can take part in the wide range of sporting activities provided at the end of the afternoon session.

There are good procedures to look after pupils' personal well-being which are particularly appreciated by those with special educational needs. A group of these pupils told the inspector that 'our teachers are approachable and helpful'. Individual curriculum arrangements are devised to ensure that the emotional and social needs of vulnerable pupils are met. Transition arrangements ensure that pupils joining the school at various times or leaving to begin the next stage of their education can do so smoothly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

One of the teachers commented, 'The senior leadership team are working exceptionally hard to improve and drive standards at Codsall Middle School.' Inspectors agree. This is a team that is embedding ambition and driving improvement and has ensured good progress since the last inspection. A very open and supportive environment has been created by the new headteacher, who leads the school well. He is supported by a good senior leadership team. Recently appointed staff confirm how they have been well-supported and helped to settle quickly into their roles. All teaching and non-teaching staff feel valued for the unique contribution they make, from the office staff to the site manager. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. There have been no racist incidents recorded this year in the school.

Management systems have become more robust. For example, all managers now carry out self-evaluation more frequently, and the senior team have new job descriptions and line management responsibilities for specific subjects. Subject leaders create development points as a result of the self-evaluation process. However, these development points appear as a list of actions and are not sufficiently focused on specific targets that will improve attainment in the subject.

The school has detailed systems in place for child protection. Pupils are encouraged to report any concerns to an adult. There are rigorous procedures to ensure that pupils can learn in a healthy, safe and secure environment. Risks are routinely assessed for the

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school premises and for trips off-site. Ninety six per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire as part of this inspection said that the school kept their children safe.

The school is a very cohesive community and some links have been established with the local community, for example, senior citizens' lunches and arts events. School council members are now deciding on additional community projects for their own tutor group, such as litter picking, and reading to younger children in local schools. Links have been established with an African school to allow pupils to appreciate how pupils learn in different cultural contexts. Links with schools in different contexts in this country are less well developed.

The governing body holds the school to account for pupils' attainment and are regular visitors in school. Outside professionals associated with school are very positive about their links. One described the school as, 'a high achieving school developing responsible citizens'. Parents and carers too have noted a difference in the school over the last few years. One commented, 'When my son comes to school I always know he is going to have a productive day. He always comes home with a smile on his face.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A large number of parents and carers (160) responded to the questionnaire sent as part of this inspection. They were overwhelming positive about the school. In particular, 96% said their children enjoyed school and a similar percentage said that the school kept their children safe. 15% of parents and carers felt that the school did not keep them sufficiently informed of their children's progress, and 13% felt that the school did not

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deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors held a meeting with a group of parents to further explore these and other issues and all felt that the school did keep them informed about their children's progress, or that the school was receptive if they raised a specific question or concern. The headteacher has agreed to explain in the next Codsall Chronicle newsletter the various occasions throughout the year when parents and carers are given information about their children's progress. Regarding behaviour concerns, inspectors judged behaviour in lessons and around the school to be good and asked the parents and pupils what they thought about behaviour. Most felt that behaviour was good overall but different teachers had slightly different expectations of behaviour. Inspectors judge that this is partly due to the inconsistent application of a newly introduced behaviour management policy. The headteacher has agreed to ensure that all staff consistently follow the new behaviour policy. This policy is available to parents and carers from the school and the headteacher has agreed to post it on the school website: www.codsall-middle.staffs.sch.uk

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Codsall Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 160 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 452 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	33	102	64	6	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	43	84	53	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	24	96	60	21	13	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	26	106	66	9	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	28	107	67	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	23	95	59	19	12	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	22	106	66	13	8	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	23	97	61	11	7	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	26	97	61	14	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	24	89	56	17	11	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	18	96	60	17	11	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	28	103	64	6	4	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	30	103	64	5	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Codsall Middle School, Wolverhampton, WV8 1PB

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school in May. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and how inspectors think the school could become even better.

You go to a good school where the staff care about you and want you to do well. All the adults in the school work hard to prepare interesting lessons and trips for you. By the time you leave the school in Year 8, you have reached standards that are better than most Year 8 pupils in other schools, especially those of you who started the school in Year 5. You get lots of opportunities to take on leadership roles like prefects and members of the school council. This helps you to become more confident. There are lots of after-school clubs for you to join if you want to and the school has even made sure that there is a bus to take some of you home if you live a long way away and you want to come to a club. You should all try to come to at least one club each week to get more exercise or to extend one of your hobbies. You are all very polite to visitors and to each other most of the time. I think that the explain, test and sign system (ETS) you use in mathematics is a really good idea and your parents like it too. It is one of the reasons why you are making such good progress in mathematics. You all obviously enjoy coming to school and your attendance is outstanding. Those of you who need extra help get a lot of support from different adults and this helps you to cope well with the challenges of school and achieve well as a result. You have a good headteacher who is improving your school and wants you all to achieve your full potential.

In order to make your school even better, I have asked the headteacher and senior staff to do two things.

Make sure that the plans that the senior staff write to improve your test results have more measurable targets.

Make sure all the teaching is as good as the best.

Thank you once again for making us all feel so welcome at Codsall Middle School.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector

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