

Perton Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124437
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340570
Inspection dates	16 - 17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Cartwright 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	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sian Rudling
Headteacher	Mr Kerin Jones
Date of previous school inspection	4-5 July 2007
School address	Gainsborough Drive Perton Wolverhampton WV6 7NR
Telephone number	01902 758244
Fax number	01902 746411
Email address	office@perton-middle.staffs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 16 lessons, and held meetings with staff and pupils, and spoke to governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, governing body minutes, pupil progress data, the school's self evaluation documents, 133 parental questionnaires, 288 pupil questionnaires and 15 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The effectiveness of the school in ensuring at least expected progress for pupils
- The work the school is doing to further reduce gaps in attainment between girls and boys
- The management of the reduction in pupils on roll
- The effectiveness of the governing body in ensuring compliance with statutory policies.

Information about the school

The school is the only middle school (part of a three-tier school system) in the modern village of Perton, and receives Year 5 pupils mainly from the two local first schools. It is close to other local authority areas that provide a two-tier school system of primary and secondary schools. The number of pupils in the area has reduced in recent years, by about 25% since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. Almost all pupils are from a white British heritage. There is a low proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school holds the 'Sportsmark' award, and Dyslexia Friendly Status.

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

Perton Middle school continues to deliver an effective education for all of its pupils. This is primarily because the quality of teaching is good throughout the school, thanks to expert and enthusiastic staff who thoroughly enjoy their work. Lessons are lively and interesting. As a result, pupils become enthusiastically involved in learning, and so make good progress. Pupil attendance is exceptionally high. They have a strong voice through an active school council that gets things done on their behalf. Their excellent involvement with younger and older pupils in the local 'pyramid' of schools also ensures an outstanding contribution to their community.

Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained above average educational standards, secured good academic progress for pupils, and further reduced the small number of serious behaviour incidents to an even lower figure. The school has managed resources well despite the substantial reduction caused by falling rolls. Senior leaders have continued to develop the curriculum and introduce even better approaches to developing the social and emotional skills of pupils. Staff continue to go the extra mile to provide high levels of extra curricula activity on behalf of their pupils. The consolidation of these major performance indicators confirms the school's good capacity for further improvement. There are shortfalls in the systematic evaluation of some statutory school equalities policies. The school is at an early stage of developing plans to better meet the needs of its pupils in understanding life in modern multicultural Britain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop plans to promote community cohesion, by widening opportunities for pupils to meet with and learn about British people from different localities, beliefs and cultures.
- Improve the rigour of the monitoring and evaluation of statutory school policies by:
 - widening the involvement of the governing body by assigning accountability for different policies to particular committees or members.
 - including more staff, at all levels, in the development and evaluation of school policies through working with governors more closely.
 - informing parents of the impact of school policies, and giving them opportunities to contribute to the review of those policies.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The attainment of pupils at the end of their Year 4 in first schools is slightly above average, according to first school data. By Year 6, standards attained by pupils are above average, and by Year 8, the school conducts additional nationally accredited tests that show pupils overall reach standards expected for pupils in Year 9; this confirms good academic progress throughout the school. There are some differences between boys and girls performance, but they are not as wide as the national picture. The school has significantly more boys than girls. It has been successful in maintaining the motivation and enthusiasm of boys. It does this by continuously adjusting the curriculum to ensure it captivates their interests.

The school uses the subject expertise of staff to very good effect in lessons. This was evident, for example, in a Year 5 English lesson where pupils had the opportunity to prepare a short play, record the performance on video, and play it to the whole class for their peers to evaluate its qualities. As well as being very demanding and challenging, the activity was also great fun. Children’s laughter is a common background sound, indicative of the school being a delightful place to learn. Pupils really do enjoy learning because of this skilled teaching, and make good progress as a result. They want to come to school, as evident in their excellent attendance and good behaviour. Learning support staff are effective in their support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so they also make good progress, irrespective of their need.

The large majority of pupils said they feel safe and most of them enjoy school, One new Year 5 pupil wrote that ‘now I can’t wait to go to school – it is super duper!’ Pupils confirmed that the school deals effectively with occasional instances of bullying. The school council is co-ordinated by a member of staff and is a very active body that has helped bring about many improvements to the school environment. Pupils really enjoy contributing to activities with partner schools; these include sports, arts and helping younger pupils to settle into school. Pupils seize these opportunities for community contributions wholeheartedly, and would like even more. Inspectors agree that there is scope for links to schools and communities facing different circumstances to Perton. A few pupils were sometimes frustrated at long lunch-queue time and occasional limited menu choice at the end of the lunch break. They do like the food, nevertheless.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	2
	2

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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Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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	1
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?

Teaching is good. Outcomes for learners have been consistently good for many years. This is primarily because teachers are skilled at delivering lessons that are well matched to the needs and interests of learners, in a lively and good-humoured working atmosphere. The very best teaching observed by inspectors demanded a high level of pupil participation and concentration and took learners along at a brisk pace. It helped pupils to evaluate for themselves the quality of their work, and gave informative feedback to them on how that work may be improved. However, pupils do not always act upon that advice. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to enhance classroom provision and involve pupils in interactive learning tasks. They use ICT to help track pupil progress and plan lessons matched to pupil prior attainment. The few examples of more mundane, yet still satisfactory teaching were largely because the teacher spent slightly too long talking about the task ahead, rather than letting pupils start quickly on the main activity.

The timetabled curriculum benefits from specialist teaching staff delivering lessons throughout the school. Their subject expertise allows pupils to extend their knowledge and skills as soon as they begin Year 5, and sustains their inquisitiveness through to Year 8. Despite the relatively small size of the school there is a very rich programme of extra activities, which include sporting, musical and artistic sessions. Over 100 pupils are learning a musical instrument. The school has the 'Sportsmark' award affirming the high participation of pupils in sporting activities in and out of school. Some two-thirds of pupils engage in four hours or more of sports covering 29 different activities, in addition to the two hours of timetabled physical education. However, pupils have limited opportunities to gain first-hand experience of other faiths and cultures elsewhere in Britain.

Pupils, including vulnerable children, are well supported by all staff. Form tutors have recently been given a greater role in supporting their pupils directly, and take the lead in ensuring any difficulties are resolved. Written reports to parents give details

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of the effort and academic outcomes of pupils, although do not contain explicit advice on what a pupil needs to do to improve further in different subjects. Pupils themselves have a reasonable idea of their own areas for development.

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?

The school has successfully maintained standards despite reductions in resources due to falling rolls, primarily because the quality of teaching and learning continues to be good. School leaders and managers routinely monitor the quality of teaching, analyse trends, and ensure an appropriate whole school focus on any aspects of classroom practice that needs attention. Staff are encouraged to develop new ideas, and have access to excellent ICT services. Senior staff are determined to include learners of all abilities, backgrounds and attitudes, including pupils who have found school to be challenging; one parent noted that the school had 'dealt promptly with a behaviour problem with excellent results'. The headteacher is dedicated to further reduce gaps in attainment between different groups of learners, for example boys and girls. His continuing effective leadership is evident in his determination to further improve the curriculum by developing social and emotional aspects of learning

The governing body have maintained an adequate oversight of school performance, particularly in regard to budget management. They have maintained a high quality learning environment in well managed buildings and grounds. Governors have ensured that safeguarding procedures are robust and fully compliant with requirements. However, they have given insufficient attention to the development of a robust community cohesion policy. They have not fully met some statutory requirements to evaluate the impact of some key school policies, for example those related to equality of opportunity, and have not reported that evaluation to parents.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	3

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
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

About two in every five parents returned a questionnaire, which is higher than for most secondary schools. Almost all parents who did reply are happy with their child's experience at school and agree that teaching is good. A very small minority of parents commented that the school did not give enough information about the progress of their child at a subject level. The school believes that the impending launch of the schools web-based 'learning platform' for parents will help improve this issue. Pupils already use this facility for their school and homework.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Perton 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/inspector received 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 321 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	37%	82	62%	2	2%	0	0%
The school keeps my child safe	49	37%	77	58%	0	0%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child’s progress	31	23%	77	58%	12	9%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	25%	77	58%	9	7%	0	0%
The teaching is good at this school	35	26%	83	62%	4	3%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	22%	75	56%	11	8%	4	3%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	18%	92	69%	5	4%	0	0%
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)	32	24%	18	59%	7	5%	0	0%
The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	23%	82	62%	7	5%	2	2%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	26%	71	53%	14	11%	1	1%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	18%	85	64%	8	6%	3	2%
The school is led and managed effectively	35	26%	73	55%	9	7%	3	2%
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	44	33%	78	59%	4	3%	0	0%

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 all 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupils' 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.



18 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Perton Middle School, Perton, WV6 7NR

Thank you for your enthusiastic welcome to my inspection team. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers as we discovered for ourselves why your school is so good. We were particularly impressed by the good teaching we saw in most of the lessons we visited. Your teachers are using their expert subject knowledge very well to give you interesting, yet quite challenging tasks in lessons. Teachers also give up their own time to help run extra clubs and activities, and organise trips and visits. This gives you a wide range of valuable experiences that are preparing you well for your future.

We think your participation in school life, and your working with nearby first and high schools, are very good; you have a very strong say in what the school is doing, and contribute a great deal to your local community as a result. It is clear from your excellent attendance, and good behaviour, that you really enjoy school life. We appreciate how hard you work, and as a result, you are making good progress. The school rewards your efforts through house points and certificates, and we liked how 'healthy lifestyles' contribute to one such reward with 'time on the Wii'.

The school's day-to-day provision is good, but there are two areas for improvement. Governors need to develop further opportunities for you to learn about other faiths and cultures in Britain. They also need to check that school policies are fully up to date, and are having a useful impact on school performance.

Best wishes for your future

Yours faithfully

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

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