

Canford Heath Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113701
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	341986
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Youlden
Headteacher	Mrs S Pelham
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2008
School address	Learoyd Road Canford Heath BH17 8PJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with senior and middle leaders, staff, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's action plan, the governing body's minutes, and leaders' evaluations of lessons. Samples of pupils' work were also scrutinised.

Questionnaires were issued to staff and pupils during the inspection and these were analysed. The school's analysis of its own questionnaire that was issued to parents in July 2009 was also scrutinised.

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

- how well pupils make progress and how well those who have underachieved in the past are catching up
- the effectiveness of teaching in meeting the needs of pupils, particularly those who need extra support or challenge
- how well pupils behave in school, in lessons and at break times
- the extent to which senior and middle leaders are bringing about improvements successfully and how well these are embedded.

Information about the school

Canford Heath Middle School is located to the north of Poole and draws its pupils mainly from the local area. At the last inspection, the school was judged to require special measures. Shortly after the inspection, the school was federated with Canford Heath First School, which shares the same site, with a joint governing body. The headteacher from the first school was appointed as executive headteacher of both schools. There have been several changes of staff since the middle school's last inspection, including senior leaders, and three teachers started from this term. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Canford Heath Middle School is improving rapidly and offers a satisfactory education for its pupils. The views of staff, pupils and parents show that the school is a very different place to what it was at the last inspection. The vision, determination and perseverance of the executive headteacher and senior leaders have been instrumental in the school's improvement. They have monitored the work of the school well, and tackled systematically all the issues that required improvement. The governing body has also played a crucial role in providing challenge as well as support. There is strong teamwork at all levels and a shared commitment to the school's continuing development. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Standards are rising and pupils make satisfactory progress. In reading, writing and mathematics, some made very good progress during the latter part of last year, quickly making up the lost ground that had stemmed from their past underachievement. There is, however, a small minority of pupils who still need to make better progress. Leaders and teachers have secure procedures in place to help them do this and to check that they succeed. The teachers have worked hard to develop an interesting and lively curriculum, which pupils find motivating and enjoyable. Teaching has improved significantly and much of it, including the work of teaching assistants, is good. Some is inspiring and highly effective, particularly in English and mathematics. At this point in the school's journey of improvement, however, teaching is satisfactory rather than good because it is not yet at the stage where it is bringing about good learning and progress for all groups of pupils. There is still work to do to bring the quality of some lessons up to the standard of the best. The partnership and communication with parents are good and much improved since the last inspection. Through close links with outside agencies, and the strong teamwork within the school, pupils receive good care and support.

Over the last year, when inspectors have visited the school to check its progress, pupils' behaviour has been good. However, a small minority of pupils report this is not always the case and that a few pupils behave inappropriately and sometimes disturb their learning or enjoyment of school. They are also not fully confident that instances of misbehaviour are dealt with fairly and effectively by all staff, especially when incidents occur outside lesson times. They were very clear indeed that behaviour is much better than it used to be but it is not as good as they would like it to be.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science by focusing particularly on the small group of pupils who have made slow or limited progress over the last year and making sure their progress accelerates.
- Further improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring:
 - a clear focus on the learning of different groups of pupils in all lessons
 - planned activities have a degree of rigour and challenge for all groups in the class or set
 - best practice is shared and all teachers draw upon a wide range of teaching strategies to promote and check learning and to engage and motivate pupils.
- Establish the underlying reasons for a small minority of pupils feeling that behaviour needs improving. Work together to address their concerns and ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff, have equally high expectations for behaviour, both indoors and outside.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment have improved significantly since the last inspection and are satisfactory. Many pupils added comments to their questionnaires highlighting things they enjoyed about school. Their good relationships with teachers came through strongly. During the inspection, pupils' enthusiasm was evident in several lessons due to well-planned, interesting and enjoyable activities and well-chosen resources. They are particularly involved when the teachers' explanations and questions catch their attention and interest from the beginning of the lesson. Pupils often responded well when they worked in pairs or groups on interesting tasks, for example activities where they had to solve a problem, come to a joint agreement, interview one another, or describe something quickly to a partner within a time limit. In contrast, there are lessons where the tasks and the teachers' methods do not hold their attention as well and some drift off and do not make as much headway. The provisional 2009 test results for Year 6 show a marked increase in standards, particularly in English. This year group of pupils caught up on their past underachievement and achieved satisfactorily from their Year 2 test results. The progress of pupils in Year 7, who left last year, also picked up considerably over the last year as they made up ground from their past underachievement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Many teachers use a range of strategies to keep learning lively and effective, whether this is through imaginative ways of capturing pupils' interest from the start, for example a variety of questioning techniques, or through a timely change of activity. Teaching assistants provide effective support for individual pupils and groups. They have benefited from training and are clear about their role and focus whether this is in lessons or when working independently with small groups. Marking has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a clear consistency across the school in how pupils' work is assessed. Pupils are very clear about the system and like having 'stars' and 'clouds' to point out things they have done well and give them tips on what they can work on next. The curriculum plans enable good links between subjects. Visits are used effectively and link well with subsequent lessons. This has led to increased motivation and enjoyment for pupils. The school has established a wide range of programmes for supporting pupils who need an extra boost with their learning, which are having a positive impact on achievement. These are not only in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. More able pupils, who have not quite reached the level expected of them, are also getting extra help. The pastoral care is good in the school and staff work closely with the pastoral care workers, as well as outside agencies, to ensure that pupils who are encountering challenging times or difficulties are supported and included.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	
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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
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 senior leadership team has focused relentlessly on achieving a consistency in approach across the school and in communicating high expectations. Since the last inspection, there has been a determined effort to make sure that teachers' assessments are accurate and reliable. This has been an important and successful development which, in many ways, has been at the heart of pupils' improved progress. The school draws upon a good range of additional programmes, from within the school and from outside agencies, to support pupils. This illustrates the commitment to equal opportunities and to giving all pupils the best chance to achieve their best. The school ensures that the requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. The governing body has provided strong leadership. The chair of governors has established a good system to enable governors to find out about the work of the school and he ensures a sharp focus on pupils' standards and achievement. While the school has been required to focus on the areas of weakness from the last inspection, promoting community cohesion has not been a priority. Senior leaders know which aspects of community cohesion require strengthening and have plans in place to do this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
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Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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 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

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 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 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.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Canford Heath Middle School, Poole, BH17 8PJ

You may know that I visited your school recently with another inspector. I would like to thank all of you who spoke to us, whether this was in lessons, around the school or at a meeting with an inspector. Almost all of you filled in a special questionnaire for us during the inspection and we very much appreciated your comments and views. Every one of them was read!

Your school has improved a lot since it was last inspected and it no longer requires 'special measures'. This is because the weaknesses have been sorted out and it is giving you a satisfactory education. Your headteacher, the senior staff, governors and teachers have worked together extremely hard to improve your school. You are making better progress and reaching higher standards than was the case in the past, many of your lessons are more interesting and more challenging and, most importantly, many of you told us you were enjoying school. The older pupils, in particular, were very clear about all the improvements they have seen.

A lot of you have made good progress over the last year, and particularly in the summer term. We hope that you will continue to work hard and get the most out of school so that you leave in a strong position to do well in the future. There are a few pupils in some sets and classes that still need to make better progress and catch up, and we have asked the senior leaders and teachers to keep a careful eye on how well this group are learning. One of the ways of achieving this is to make sure that all lessons are interesting and challenging for you so this is also an area that we have asked the school to continue to improve. Although many of you told us that behaviour was much better, some of you still have concerns about how some pupils behave. We have asked the school to find out more about what the issues are and to work with you to improve this. Those of you who sometimes slip up with your behaviour have a responsibility here, whether you are in lessons, in the playground or moving around the school. We hope that everyone will play their part in helping behaviour to improve so that it becomes good.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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