

# Bilbrook CofE (C) Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124453
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380901
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Trefor Williams
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Marjorie Tunncliffe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Bilbrook Road Codsall Wolverhampton WV8 1EU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 434135
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 434141
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<b>Age group</b>	9–13
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380901



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Sheldrick

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector observed 13 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at communications with parents and carers, assessment information and the school's development planning. The questionnaires from students, staff and 32 parents and carers were scrutinised.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-size middle school. Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expected attainment and progress at Year 6. The school has recently been awarded full status as a dyslexia-friendly school.

From February 2012, the school became part of a federation with its main feeder high school and another local middle school. Since the start of this term, the school has been led by an executive headteacher who has overall responsibility for the federation.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. The school is not judged to be good because students do not experience enough consistently good or better teaching. However, students are making better progress because teaching is improving rapidly. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement of all groups of students in all subjects is at least satisfactory and improving. Until quite recently, students had not made enough progress in mathematics. Progress has improved in this subject through teaching that has better met the needs of students.
- There is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Universal strengths include planning which indicates that teachers have high expectations and the use of a good range of learning activities that students enjoy. Sometimes the needs of all groups of students are not fully met because insufficient adjustments are made to teaching, particularly during lessons.
- Students are very well behaved, both in lessons and around the school. Students and their parents and carers report that students feel very safe in school and that incidents of bullying of any kind are rare.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have a very accurate view about the school's current position. Succinct plans have been developed that communicate a very clear positive future vision and indicate precisely the steps that will be taken to achieve this. Leaders' monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching is very robust. Assessment information is being used far more effectively, particularly outside of lessons, to maximise student progress and to close any gaps in the outcomes for different groups. Performance management is being used well to identify appropriate staff training. The curriculum effectively underpins improvements to teaching and learning, but leaders have

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rightly identified aspects in need of development. The improvements made, particularly since the school became part of a federation, have noticeably enhanced the achievement and behaviour of students.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress all groups of students make by ensuring that:
  - adjustments are made to teaching in light of assessments made of learning, particularly during lessons
  - a greater variety of approaches to questioning are used to ensure all students engage more fully in the key learning and have increased opportunities to communicate their ideas
  - lessons are more consistently linked to interesting contexts that inspire students, particularly in mathematics
  - lesson endings provide students with opportunities to reflect on the progress made, apply their learning and identify the next steps
  - marking is more consistently linked to students' individual targets.
  
- Enhance the curriculum by increasing:
  - the opportunities students have to practise their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in other subjects.
  - the participation of different groups of students in extra-curricular activities
  - students' awareness of different cultures not represented in the local community.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Students join the school in Year 5 with broadly average attainment. Generally, all groups of students consistently make satisfactory progress in almost all subjects. In 2011, students did not made enough progress in mathematics. As a result, the outcomes in mathematics were disappointing in 2011. This situation has been rectified so that students are making at least the expected progress in this subject. Improvements to the monitoring of student progress are enabling the school to more rapidly intervene at the first sign that students are underachieving. Improvements made to teaching are enhancing the progress students make. Attainment at the end of Year 8 is at least at the expected level in all subjects. Students' reading and literacy skills are also average. Although there are inconsistencies in the progress students make in individual lessons, the school has ensured improvements in all year groups and in all subjects. During the inspection, students were observed to be making especially strong progress in information and communication technology (ICT).

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The school recognises that some groups have achieved less well in the past; for instance, students known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has taken effective action to begin closing this gap in their achievement. Students known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement, have benefited most from the improvements made to assessment. These students make progress that is at least on a par with their peers. The very large majority of parents and carers think their children make good progress. Inspection findings show that students are making better progress than in the past, but there are still too many lessons in which their progress is no better than satisfactory.

Students are developing their abilities to self and peer assess. They often work at a good pace and persevere when trying to solve problems. The inspector observed students working very well when given the opportunity to work with partners and in larger groups. Although students are able to explain their ideas they are often not given the opportunity to do so and this limits the development of their communication skills.

### Quality of teaching

Parents, carers and students all hold positive views about the effectiveness of teaching. Teaching in recent years is satisfactory because students have not experienced sufficient good teaching. Particularly since federation, more challenging targets are being emphasised in the plans teachers produce. Teachers identify outcomes at a range of levels but there are inconsistencies in how well lessons enable students to achieve these. In the better lessons, teachers ensure students work on tasks appropriate to their abilities. Crucially, teachers show a willingness to make adjustments quickly in response to their ongoing assessments of students' learning.

In the most effective lessons, teachers use a range of approaches to questioning to ensure all students think about the key ideas. However, at times, there is an over reliance on willing volunteers, and follow-up questions are not posed in order to encourage students to communicate their thinking. Generally, teachers ensure a fast pace of working through the use of timed targets, although learning sometimes slows because students are not given enough time to consider the most important learning points or too much time is devoted to tasks that students have already mastered.

In an ICT lesson where the teaching was outstanding, students' motivation to improve their literacy was raised though their involvement in producing a music quiz for Year 12 students at the high school. Teachers often use National Curriculum levels to motivate students but, in the less effective lessons, they do not help students to appreciate the significance of what they are learning. For instance, Year 8 students indicated that they do not have sufficient opportunity to undertake practical mathematics. Students are made aware of their achievements and,

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frequently, the next steps in learning are identified. Only relatively rarely are these linked to students' individual targets. Teachers often use reviews during lessons well to reinforce learning, although lesson endings are sometimes rushed. This means that students are not able to apply their learning or consider what the next steps might be.

Generally, teachers are adapting lessons to meet the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement. Teaching assistants are used well to support these students both in and outside of lessons. Effective arrangements are being made to teach reading to those students with more profound difficulties with this aspect of their learning. A systematic reading scheme is taught effectively by teaching assistants, and students spoke positively about the strategies adopted across the school to cater for those with dyslexia. The large majority of students are being motivated to read through the rewards given when students complete a book.

Teachers use a wide range of activities to enhance students' enjoyment of learning. Students are taught a clear set of values, for instance in considering how we care for the planet. This is doing much to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although students are taught about global issues, relatively little attention is given to different cultures within the region.

### **Behaviour and safety of students**

Inspection findings confirm the views of the very large majority of parents and carers who think that behaviour is good. In virtually all lessons, behaviour is impeccable and students only occasionally require reminders of what is expected. Around the school, students are considerate towards each other. The inspector also agreed with the very large majority of students and their parents and carers who believe that students are safe. Bullying of any kind is rare. Students spoke about how well virtually all staff manage behaviour, particularly since the school became part of a federation. The much stronger links with the high school that have been brought about through federation have improved the care that the school provides. The transition of students to the high school is now smoother and the few students at risk of exclusion are able to benefit from the more extensive services that are now available through the federation. Exclusions have reduced noticeably. Although broadly average, attendance has also improved, particularly among students known to be eligible for free school meals. Even where teaching is less than good, students' positive attitudes to learning makes a strong contribution to the progress they make in lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

The formation of a federation has enabled the school to benefit from the involvement of leaders with an impressive track record of success. During the inspection, it was clear that the leadership team has successfully implemented a wide range of improvements. Leaders make very accurate judgements about the quality of

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teaching, in part because they are very focussed on the quality of learning. This detailed knowledge of teaching is being used to establish a highly relevant training programme that is using the full potential of the federation. In a relatively short time, leaders have noticeably improved the quality of teaching. The self-review is impressive because it identifies precisely the priorities that need to be addressed. School development plans are succinct and communicate a clear vision of the improvements that are required. The high expectations of senior leaders have been communicated effectively to all staff. Middle leaders are growing in confidence as they experience success in their roles. Middle leaders are playing a key role in raising attainment through the much more effective use of assessment information to identify gaps in students' learning. As a result, attainment is rising sharply, particularly in mathematics. Interventions are now taking place immediately it becomes clear that any students are not making at least expected progress.

The new governing body, formed following federation, was instrumental in ensuring the school has much better information about the outcomes for students. The school is monitoring the outcomes for different groups well so that it can check the effectiveness of its policies designed to promote equal opportunities. The governing body is very aware of the need to preserve the existing strengths in the school; for instance, through continuing to promote a set of values associated with its church school status.

The curriculum ensures all students experience a rigorous approach to learning in all subjects but there are some areas for development. Leaders have plans to ensure the subjects of the curriculum even more effectively promote literacy, mathematics and communication skills. Future curriculum plans are correctly focussed on providing all groups with greater access to extra-curricular opportunities and on enhancing students' cultural development. Leaders have successfully worked with first schools to ensure there is confidence in the assessment information the school receives. The arrangements for safeguarding meet government requirements.

## 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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 July 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Bilbrook CofE Middle School, Wolverhampton, WV8 1EU**

I would like to thank you for making me feel very welcome when I visited your school recently. Special thanks go to those of you who I interviewed, for your perceptive comments that informed my judgements.

I decided that the overall effectiveness of your school is satisfactory but it is improving quickly. The main reason for this judgement is that teaching is satisfactory, therefore you make satisfactory progress during your time at school. I could see that substantial improvements are being made that are enhancing achievement in all subjects and in every year group. Leaders have very good plans to improve the school further.

Your behaviour around the school is very good. Your behaviour in lessons is particularly impressive, but it is also good around the school. Bullying is very rare and you are generally considerate to others. I was pleased to see that you all know your challenging targets and that you are expected to work hard in lessons. You are enjoying lessons because teachers make sure that you are actively involved. Teachers give you some helpful feedback, although this would be even more useful if it was linked more strongly to your targets. In the very best lessons, you have good opportunities to share your ideas with others in the class and teachers adjust the lesson in response to their assessments of your learning. However, you experience rather too many lessons where these strengths are less evident.

The plans the school has to improve the curriculum should further enhance your education. You can help improve learning by being willing to taking advantage of the the opportunities you have to share your thinking with others. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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