

# Church Hill Middle School

Wood Piece Lane, Church Hill, Redditch, B98 9LR

**Inspection dates** 31 January–01 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils are making good progress over their four years in the school.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 8 is at least average and often above.
- There is a clear trend of improvement in pupils' achievement over the last three years.
- Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and the very large majority is now good or better.
- Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and give them challenging work to do. They use precise and well-targeted questioning in lessons to guide pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are clear what they have to do to improve in their subjects and are keen to succeed.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe at school.
- The governors and senior leaders are having a clear impact on teaching and the achievement of pupils. As a result the school is improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of all pupils in reading does not yet consistently match their performance in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always provide opportunities for independent, imaginative and creative activities to engage their pupils further.
- Teachers' planning does not always allow more-able pupils to make the quick start in lessons that they are capable of making.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, middle leaders and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the three responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of a recent parent questionnaire carried out by the school. Inspectors also considered the 20 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined the school's own data on pupils' current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Lafford

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Church Hill is a smaller than average sized middle school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- Nearly a half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services).
- The proportions of pupils who are supported through school action or at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards (the government's expectations for pupils attainment and progress) with the exception that in 2012 Year 6 pupils did not make the expected progress in mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club on the premises.
- All pupils are educated on site. The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.

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

- Maintain the improvements in pupils' achievement by:
  - developing further the teaching and learning of reading across all subjects
  - ensuring pupils make more rapid progress in mathematics in years 5 and 6.
- Ensure more outstanding teaching throughout the school by:
  - making sure the most able pupils are given enough challenge early on in the lesson
  - designing activities that allow pupils to give more creative and imaginative responses in their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school in Year 5 the majority are working at levels below those expected for their age and some are well below, particularly in reading.
- The schools' robust assessment data, standardised with partner schools, show that pupils make good progress at Church Hill in mathematics, reading and writing. As confirmed by inspection evidence, by the time they leave school at the end of Year 8 pupils are at least in line with national averages in reading and many above national averages in writing and mathematics. Writing is a particular strength in the school and evidence from pupils' books show that they have plenty of opportunities to write for different audiences and at length.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because pupils are not making the same very rapid progress in reading as they are in writing and for some pupils progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it should be in Years 5 and 6.
- The majority of pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs make at least as good progress as their peers. Progress in mathematics from Year 5 to Year 8 is particularly good for these pupils.
- Those pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium make at least as good progress as others and make particularly good progress in mathematics. As well as ensuring all pupils have access to school trips and activities, the school uses the money to fund one to one support and mentoring. As a result, the attainment of these pupils in reading and writing is in line with pupils in similar circumstances nationally and compares favourably in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The very large majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good or better. This confirms the senior leadership's own evaluation of the quality of teaching in the school. In the majority of lessons, learning moves at a brisk pace with pupils concentrating well and responding positively to their work.
- All teachers show a detailed knowledge of the progress that each pupil is making across the curriculum. Work is carefully planned and constantly reviewed so that it provides challenge and interest.
- Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and give them appropriate targets that are challenging but within the pupils' grasp. They use questioning well to make sure that pupils have a secure understanding of the topic. In a very effective Year 8 English lesson, for example, all pupils were fully engaged in a moral debate about how good or bad humans might appear to visiting aliens. This led to a very effective exercise in writing speeches which demonstrated different perspectives.
- There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour in class and they are often encouraged to work together. In a Year 7 music lesson, for example, a large class experimented with the different elements of music by creating a train journey. Working in small groups, all the pupils developed their skills and understanding by using a range of instruments to great effect. They were thinking hard and making decisions for themselves.

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because some teachers tend to 'play safe' and do not set tasks which are open-ended, creative and imaginative. In some of the best lessons, pupils were encouraged to experience different points of view by reading, writing or speaking in role.
- Some teachers gave lengthy introductions to lessons to ensure that all pupils knew what was required of them, when some more-able pupils could have begun to practise and develop their skills earlier.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants both in the classroom and in very effective intervention groups.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils show a clear understanding of the school's systems for managing it.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground and around school is good and they are courteous and respectful to one another and to adults. The school is a very inclusive community and pupils show tolerance and understanding towards others.
- Pupils show independence and take on responsibilities such as being a 'language leader', which involves preparing a lesson for younger pupils and presenting it at the school next door. They have a keen awareness of their wider community and, for example, are involved in cleaning and gardening for those in need as well as participating in art exhibitions and music festivals.
- The school has good systems of care and support for pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The behaviour recovery unit is used well on the rare occasions when pupils misbehave. This allows those pupils who may need it to consider their actions and to return to their classes as soon as possible.
- Attendance is improving and is in line with other schools in similar circumstances. Punctuality has also improved as a result of use of the breakfast club and the school working closely with the education welfare officer.
- School records show that there are very few instances of bullying and discussions with pupils confirm that they feel happy and safe at school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they have any concerns, and are confident that they will be listened to.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The senior leadership team has a strong, recent track record of improvements resulting in better progress for pupils. Over the past three years subject leaders have been given greater responsibility. This has led to all staff having a detailed understanding of the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils in their classes.
- Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection as a result of sharing best practice and well targeted training and development.
- Where dips in pupils' performance have been identified the school has responded quickly, as has

been the case with reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2. The school has swiftly put in place a range of strategies that are already showing improvements in both of these areas. For example, guided reading sessions have been introduced for every year group, every week for four out of the five school days; and identified pupils receive one-to-one catch up work in English and mathematics and increased support by teaching assistants in lessons in both subjects.

- Pupils commented very positively on the curriculum, which is designed to encourage them to 'aim high' and broaden their horizons. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has a strong emphasis on literacy in particular.
- Every Wednesday afternoon is given over to 'enrichment activities' with pupils' choices being taken into account. Some of this time allows for extra work on the core subjects, such as the 'Science for Girls' session, while other activities include working towards 'Arts Award' and an examination in musical theatre; preparing pupils for the sports leadership award; and the care and upkeep of the school's own hens. Music is a thriving activity in the school with a remarkable 70 strong choir and performances in the local community and at the town theatre.
- The headteacher manages teachers' performance closely and the good and increasingly outstanding quality of teaching in the school is reflected in the number of teachers who are making progress on the salary spine. The local authority offers strong support to the school and shows a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed about the school from a variety of sources and recent training has improved their awareness of its strengths and the challenges it faces. They have a clear understanding of the relevant data and how Church Hill compares to other similar schools. They offer good support to the headteacher in improving the school and in tackling any underperformance. They also hold the senior leadership to account and minutes from governors' meetings reveal a robust interrogation of data, policies and spending. This includes ensuring that the budget from the pupil premium is used to close the gap between those eligible and other pupils. The governors were instrumental in the recent appointment of a business manager and the school finances are on a sound footing. All safeguarding arrangements are in place and fully meet statutory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116974
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401633

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Stanley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Hume
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 585580
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