

Perton Middle School

Gainsborough Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, WV6 7NR

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement declined over the three years leading up to Summer 2012, mostly because of slow progress in Key Stage 2. Even though progress has now accelerated, some pupils still have ground to make up.
- The quality of teaching is still not good enough to secure good progress for all groups of pupils in all subjects and year groups.
- The work set for pupils is not always at the right level and so is sometimes too hard or too easy.
- Homework is not always used well to extend the learning that takes place in class.
- Teachers do not all create enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning so they can deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers ask few questions that help pupils to think more widely about their learning.
- Pupils are given only limited opportunities to reflect on their values and beliefs or develop an understanding of other cultures.

The school has the following strengths

- The creation of the federation is having a positive impact on the achievement of pupils.
- Under the leadership of the executive headteacher there have been many effective changes. Year 8 have made very rapid progress this year.
- Teachers engage enthusiastically in training opportunities and checks on the quality of teaching are bringing rapid improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe and they are keen to do well.
- Rigorous checking and tracking of progress is helping to improve standards, because those who need it are getting the right extra support.
- The strong governing body is supporting and challenging the school in making rapid and sustained improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons. There were two joint observations with senior leaders and 21 teachers were observed in total. Inspectors also visited two registration periods.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, a group of subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the trainee special educational needs coordinator and a group of five governors, including the Chair and the Vice Chair of Governors. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils from Key Stage 2 and a group from Key Stage 3, and listened to their views.
- The views of staff gathered by the school were taken into account by the inspection team, as were the 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the information from parental surveys carried out by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's improvement plan and the school's analysis of how well it is doing. Inspectors also looked at the system for managing the performance of staff, records of governing body meetings and a range of policy documents.

Inspection team

Liz Talmadge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Bennett

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Since autumn 2012 Perton Middle School has been one of two middle schools in federation with Codsall High School. It shares a single governing body with the other two schools. There is an executive headteacher responsible for all three schools.
- The school serves the large village of Perton in Staffordshire.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much smaller than average. This is additional government funding given to schools for students known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care, or from families with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is much lower than average. The proportion supported by school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - set tasks at exactly the right level for each pupil
 - create opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning in order that they can deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - develop their questioning skills so that they ask many more open-ended questions to encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills
 - set homework tasks and activities that support and extend pupils classroom learning.
- Make better provision for pupils' cultural and spiritual development.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Pupils join the school in Year 5 with attainment that is above average. For the pupils currently in Year 8 attainment in both English and mathematics is also above average. During their earlier years in the school the progress of the current Year 8 pupils was not good.
- The current Year 8 has made significant progress this year. They have made better than expected progress in English and much better than expected in mathematics. The reason they have not reached higher standards is that progress has been too slow in the past. For the three years leading up to Summer 2012, pupils underachieved in Key Stage 2. Recent changes have meant progress is now much faster in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Teaching has improved and additional support given to pupils is effective in helping them to catch up.
- Work in pupils' books and their progress in lessons confirmed that pupils in both Key Stages are now achieving better than they have done in the past, particularly in English and mathematics. Changes to staffing have resulted in improved teaching for all year groups and across most subjects. However, leaders know that these improvements are recent and there is still more to do to ensure that all teaching leads to sustained good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs similarly in the past made too little progress by the time they reached the end of Key Stage 2. By Year 8 however they have caught up. In Year 8 they make good progress in English and very rapid progress in mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making good progress throughout the school because they receive effective additional support.
- The attainment of those pupils supported by the pupil premium has also been too low in the past. Due to effective extra help they now receive these pupils are making rapid progress so that by the end of Year 8 they are attaining the same standards as the rest of their year group.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly due to the additional monitoring and training for teachers within the federation of schools. Teaching still requires improvement because a backlog of slower progress means it has not yet led to consistently good or better achievement for all pupils in all year groups.
- In the most successful lessons teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and carefully plan activities to engage and motivate pupils. They create frequent opportunities for pupils to work in small groups or pairs in order to find things out for themselves. The pace of learning is good and careful attention is paid to making sure that pupils are learning and making progress. Literacy is well taught.
- Teaching is not always as good. In less successful lessons activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities and some pupils, particularly the most able, are not always given sufficient challenge. Sometimes pupils are not given enough time to reflect on their learning and are not helped to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. In their desire to improve the pace of learning teachers sometimes miss out the time that pupils need to think about what they are learning. Too often teachers ask questions that require recall rather than reflection.

- Inspectors saw some examples of good marking, with most teachers using the school's marking policy correctly. This enables teachers to set meaningful targets for pupils. Most teachers create opportunities during lessons to check pupils understanding. Pupils are well practised in assessing their own progress and to a lesser extent, the progress of others in their group or class. In mathematics lessons particularly good use is made of 'learning partners'.
- Pupils and parents reported that homework is set by some teachers. However, the setting of homework is inconsistent. Homework activities are not used well enough to support and extend the learning that takes place in the classroom.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special needs and pupils who receive the pupil premium generally receive good help and support from specialist teachers and teaching assistants. In the best lessons teaching assistants create opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn in almost every lesson. Their behaviour during lessons is almost always good and this has a very positive impact on their learning.
- Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree with them. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have good knowledge of internet safety. They say that bullying is rare but if it does occur they are confident that the school will deal with it quickly. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility and trains older pupils as Peer Mentors. This ensures that there is always an older, responsible pupil available to talk to if any pupil is upset or worried.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual. There are very few pupils who are persistently absent.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite and courteous towards visitors and happily engage in conversation with adults, sharing their views about the school. The relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are positive.
- The proportion of pupils who are excluded is below average. Now that the school is a part of the Codshall High School Federation alternatives to exclusion, within the federation, are becoming more usual.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good because decisive actions taken by the executive headteacher and the federation governors during the last year have had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. Changes to staffing, and the additional support given to Year 8 pupils has, for example, redressed the lack of progress that they had made during the years beforehand.
- The executive headteacher and her senior team are clear about what the school needs to do to sustain the current improvements. Their judgements about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making are correct and they have well thought out plans in place for the future.

- The weaker aspects of teaching have been identified by the senior team and there are clear strategies in place through training, monitoring and support to ensure that all teaching results in pupils making better progress. The training programme, introduced by the federation, is having a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Inadequate teaching has been rapidly eliminated and much teaching is now good.
 - Pupils' progress and attainment are tracked regularly and information is shared with subject coordinators. Their leadership of teaching and learning is well supported and is improving.
 - Pupils are offered a suitably broad range of subjects which are taught by specialist teachers. They also benefit from access to interesting clubs and activities which take place during lunchtimes and after school.
 - The provision for pupils' moral and social education is good. Their cultural and spiritual understanding is less well developed. Pupils have limited knowledge of other cultures and they seldom have time to reflect deeply about their own beliefs and values.
 - Safeguarding and child protection processes and procedures meet current national requirements.
 - The local authority has provided the school with limited support in the past, but has engaged in the process of forming a federation of schools so that standards at the school can be improved.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body of the federation of schools makes a strong contribution to the leadership of Perton Middle School. They work closely with the executive headteacher and are committed to improving the prospects for pupils and the community. Governors have a good understanding of the data about pupils' attainment and progress. They have a clear view about the improvements that have taken place during the last year and know what still needs to be done. A well-informed and skilled group of people, governors have a vision for the school that centres on the growth and development of the federation of schools. Governors are very clear about the quality of teaching and what is being done to tackle any underperformance. They play a key role in the performance management of all staff and understand the impact of all the funding that comes to the school, including the pupil premium. The governors check on the work of the school through their committees and challenge the executive headteacher and her senior team appropriately.
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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

Unique reference number	124437
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	412243

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	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trefor Williams
Headteacher	Marjorie Tunncliffe (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2009
Telephone number	01902 758244
Fax number	01902 746411
Email address	headteacher@codsall-high.staffs.sch.uk

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