

# Perton Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124437
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	302306
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Smith 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	423
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sian Rudling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerin Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Gainsborough Drive Perton Wolverhampton WV6 7NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 758244
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 746411

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average middle school serves a very stable population with decreasing numbers of families with young children. As a result, the school roll is falling. The pupil profile changes at the end of Year 6 when a significant number of pupils transfer to selective or independent schools to start their secondary education. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few who are learning English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Perton Middle is a good school which meets well its aim 'To help children develop lively enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills.' As one parent commented, 'My children have been encouraged to be self-confident and develop an "I can" attitude.' Pupils feel very well supported by good pastoral care and staff guide them well so that they make good progress with their work and personal development.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. The school has good systems to track pupils' progress and set targets in English, mathematics and science but similar systems are not as well developed for the other subjects. Very high attendance shows that pupils enjoy school and they behave well in lessons, corridors and play areas.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school with very few bullying incidents; when these occur they say they are dealt with effectively and swiftly. They are all confident that there is a member of staff to whom they can turn for advice and support. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. They are able to drink water in lessons and many pupils eat the healthy meal options. Many pupils walk or cycle to school and pupils were instrumental in the decision to build the cycle shed. Behaviour is good and there are very few exclusions. The good curriculum meets pupils' needs well and issues identified in the previous inspection regarding the teaching of citizenship have been improved so that now the subject is a strength. Pupils work well to support the community within the school but have limited opportunities to participate in activities outside of school or enhance their understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.

Teaching is good and ensures pupils learn well and make good progress. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff often make good use of the whiteboards and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities which aid learning and maintain pupils' interest. Assessment information is generally used well so that work is well matched to the pupils' needs and they are informed how they can improve their work. However, this is inconsistent and at times assessments are not used well to match activities to the ability of pupils or to involve them in their own assessment, particularly at the end of a lesson.

Good leadership and management have been effective in improving the quality of the provision and raising standards within the school. The highly effective headteacher gives a clear steer and direction and is well supported by the senior leadership team, subject and pastoral heads. Subject leaders have a good overview of their department's strengths and weaknesses and they work closely with the senior leaders to overcome problems. In mathematics, English and science, close analysis of test results is undertaken and then schemes of work are changed to improve standards. In some areas teachers work well together to consider how particular topics are to be taught in a lively and engaging way. The school's accurate self-evaluation, including inputs from parents, staff, pupils and governors, is used to identify areas for improvement. This, along with improvements to the teaching of citizenship and English and increased attendance, demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve further. Governance is good and the governing body supports the school well, challenging when appropriate.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a consistent approach with best practice to match the work to the ability of pupils and involve them in their own assessment, particularly at the end of a lesson.

- Build on the good practice in the core subjects by improving systems to track pupils' progress and set targets in all subjects.
- Enhance opportunities for pupils to work with the community outside of school and to extend their understanding of multi-cultural society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enter the school with standards broadly average for their age. They make steady progress and reach above-average standards in the tests at the end of Year 6. Standards in science are higher than those in English and mathematics, and standards in reading are higher than those in writing. Girls achieve slightly better than boys. The school analyses work carefully to make sure schemes of work address weaknesses. For example, boys' writing has been an issue and results from the 2007 English tests show that these have improved significantly.

In Years 7 and 8, pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school accurately assesses pupils prior to their transfer to the high school for mathematics and English. Their records show standards are above those expected from pupils at the end of Year 8. Pupils generally meet or exceed their individual targets, which are challenging. The school carefully analyses results to identify areas for development and also to ensure different groups perform equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties respond well to extra support and make progress at a similar rate to their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and are actively involved and interested in their work, especially when it involves practical or group activities. Their spiritual development is good, especially when work is linked to the strong emphasis on citizenship across all subjects. Pupils work cooperatively in pairs and small groups and collaborate well. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Attendance is excellent.

Pupils' moral and social development is good and they behave well. They see bullying as wrong and support the school's efforts to eradicate it. When bullying occurs it is mainly name calling, and the school works well to support pupils involved. A few parents expressed concerns over behaviour and bullying.

Pupils are aware of how to live safely and healthily, with many eating the healthy school meals option or eating the fruit from the stall at breaks. A significant proportion walk or cycle to school and many take part in voluntary sporting activities. Pupils make a good contribution to their own community as mentors or members of the influential school council and pupils often take on responsibility willingly. This, along with good work in numeracy and literacy, ensures they are well prepared for life beyond school. Many pupils enjoy performing or learning to play musical instruments and respond well to the 'artist in residence' experience. These make a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development but this is only satisfactory overall because pupils have limited involvement with the community beyond school and do not have enough opportunities to develop an awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their pupils very well and have high expectations of them. Teachers' good subject knowledge and very good relationships between staff and pupils contribute well to ensuring pupils learn effectively. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are effectively shared with pupils to make sure they understand what they will learn. These are often concerned with skills as well as content. Homework is set frequently and is purposeful.

Pupils are managed well, which ensures good behaviour in lessons and sets a good learning environment so that pupils engage willingly and effectively in independent and collaborative work. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and this is often supported by the good use of ICT as a teaching resource. This improves the motivation and engagement of pupils. Some lessons are too teacher-led and pupils do not get involved in learning quickly enough. Also, activities are not always planned to take account of the different ways pupils like to learn. Teaching assistants are well directed and provide good levels of support.

Assessments are often used well to match work to pupils' needs and abilities. Marking of pupils' work is frequent and sometimes provides pupils with very good feedback on how well they are doing and what to do to improve. Good questioning helps assess pupils' progress and pupils are often involved in their own assessment. However, this is inconsistent and in some lessons assessments are not used well to involve pupils in checking their progress during lessons or to consolidate learning at the end of lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets pupils' needs well and makes good provision for literacy, numeracy and French from Year 5. It is particularly enriched by pupils' access to, and use of, ICT and prepares them well for the transfer to high school at the end of Year 8. Staff have developed good transition units of work, with the first schools, to support the induction of pupils at the end of Year 4 and start of Year 5.

Citizenship is now provided for very well and has a high profile.. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibility and contribute to the school community but only limited opportunities beyond school. There are examples of provision which help promote the development of inquisitive minds and rational argument, which is a focus for the school. Pupils are consulted and their views are valued and used to help modify the curriculum to meet their needs. There is a strong focus on healthy lifestyles and on safety and pupils are well prepared for their future well-being. The school has rightly identified that its current sex and relationships policy is out of date and they are working with all partners to ensure a more coherent curriculum is implemented.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and music, with a high take-up by pupils across the school. Many pupils enjoy ICT clubs. All pupils are also provided with the opportunity of an outdoor pursuit residential visit in Years 6, 7 or 8 and there are appropriate challenges for pupils who are able and talented, some in conjunction with the high school.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good because pupils' social and emotional development is supported well through the very good pastoral system. Safeguarding meets current requirements and suitable risk assessments are in place to ensure pupils keep safe within school.

Pupils feel that the very good induction they receive when they join the school in Year 5 helps them settle in well. They value the work of older pupils who act as mentors during the whole year. The school works hard to ensure attendance is very high but a few parents take their children on holiday during term time. Provision of health education, and inputs on drugs, alcohol and smoking awareness is good. The school liaises well with external agencies to provide expertise as and when needed. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities helps to ensure they make comparable progress to their peers. Pupils for whom English is not their first language also receive good support.

Pupils' progress in the core subjects is tracked well so that underachievement can be quickly identified and dealt with. However, systems to track progress in other subjects are not as well developed. Parents are kept well informed about and are involved in their children's progress through interim and end-of-year reports and parents' evenings.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The highly effective headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team and they work closely with subject leaders to ensure improvements to the progress pupils make and to their achievement. The senior leadership team closely monitors the quality of teaching and subject leaders are taking more responsibility for improving the overall quality of learning in their subjects. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within their areas through effective departmental reviews, which include inputs from pupils.

Leaders at all levels, including governors, have a good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to improve. Appropriate areas for development have been identified and used to formulate a clear improvement plan. The school regularly gains the views of parents and pupils and has used pupils' comments to improve the standard of the toilets and changing facilities, as well as building a cycle shed, which many pupils use when cycling to school. This strong input from pupils into school evaluations makes them feel that they have ownership of developments and that they are valued. Although the school works hard to gain the views of parents and to ensure they are fully informed of developments, a few still feel they are not adequately consulted and kept informed.

Governance is good and the governing body rigorously challenges and supports the school through its well-structured committees. At a time of falling roles and staffing cuts, resources are deployed well. For example, the use of a full-time member of staff to cover for absent colleagues has ensured lessons are well taught when staff are absent and pupils respond positively to the stability this gives, as it was a concern they raised with the school.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Perton Middle School, Perton, Wolverhampton WV6 7NR

We visited your school recently and met with some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. We were very pleased with the friendliness you showed us and how helpful you were. Your good school seems a happy place to be and many of you told us how much you enjoyed school.

Staff support and guide you well, which helps you to make good progress and achieve well before you move on to your next school. Standards are above average. Many of you told us how much you enjoy taking part in sports clubs and also that you enjoy learning an instrument. We were sorry we could not visit your concert but the feedback we received said it had gone very well and many of your parents were rightfully proud. We were impressed with how many of you take responsibility within the school and how important older pupils feel the role of mentor is.

Teaching is generally good and you enjoy a large number of lessons. But sometimes lessons do not use assessments to make sure the work is matched to what you can do or you do not get opportunities to assess your own work, especially at the end of the lesson, and we have asked the school to improve this. Behaviour is good and you told us that any bullying was dealt with quickly and well by staff in the school.

Many of you have a very good understanding of what you need to do to become healthy and you thought the school helped you. The curriculum is good and really meets your needs well. We were very impressed with the work you do in ICT and citizenship. You also make a good contribution to the school community but your school needs to increase opportunities for you to work outside the school and to learn about a variety of different cultures.

We feel your school is well led and that it has a good understanding of its main strengths and areas which it needs to improve. Like all schools we feel there are areas it needs to improve further. In addition to the areas noted earlier, we have asked your school to track the work you do in all subjects as well as they do in English, mathematics and science.

We wish you well in this improving and supportive school and thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith Her Majesty's Inspector