

# Bromsgrove, Catshill Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116958
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312457
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nada Trikić 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	375
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frank Fletcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Spurr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	Meadow Road Catshill Bromsgrove B61 0JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 872431
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 837113

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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

Catshill is of average size for a middle school although numbers have been declining in recent years. The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. The school achieved the Healthy Schools Award and Sportsmark in 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Catshill is a friendly and welcoming school and provides a satisfactory standard of education. Leaders have created a safe and secure learning environment, which contributes to a caring and inclusive ethos. As a result, pupils' personal development is good, and this is shown in positive attitudes to school, good relationships and above average attendance. Pupils enjoy their time at school and value the good range of activities available.

Attainment on entry varies each year but is broadly average. Standards across the school are in line with national averages, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In 2007, national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 were close to national averages although fewer pupils than expected reached the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. Rates of progress vary between subjects and groups of pupils. Pupils made less than expected progress in English and science, especially boys. Progress of some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was weak as provision was not adequately in place to meet their needs. However, more effective arrangements are now in place to support these pupils in nurture groups, and steps have been taken to tackle progress in English through regular assessment of reading. Leaders have been slower to tackle the trend of underperformance in science. In Key Stage 3, progress is good in mathematics because of stability within teaching, good leadership and the effective use of assessment information. Systems for tracking progress have been developed for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and actions are now being taken by year leaders to more effectively identify pupils who are falling behind. This is yet to extend systematically across all subjects and this is acknowledged as a school priority. Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

The variations in progress are reflected in the quality of teaching and learning across subjects and teachers. Teaching is generally satisfactory or better with a very small percentage of inadequate teaching. It is judged to be satisfactory overall. Lessons do not consistently meet the needs of all learners as not all teachers are using assessment information well enough to plan activities that provide good levels of challenge to promote achievement. Pupils are mostly willing to listen attentively, show interest and take pride in their work. Monitoring of lessons by senior leaders is not yet sufficiently systematic or rigorous to ensure that lessons are consistently good or better. The curriculum is satisfactory. The current initiatives for a creative cross-curricular curriculum are appropriate, but the links between departments are not strong enough to secure a coordinated approach to raising standards and achievement.

Staff, pupils, parents and governors recognise and appreciate the improvements led by the headteacher since the last inspection. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with aspects that are good, such as the promotion of personal development and well-being, good pastoral care, and effective partnerships which have extended opportunities and support for pupils. The school's leaders have a broadly accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses although the improvement plan is not used strategically to coordinate priorities for development. Governors have increased their knowledge of the school through visits, training and meetings. Falling rolls have led to financial constraints but this situation is well managed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' progress is assessed and monitored regularly and consistently across the school, so that timely support and guidance can be focused where they are most needed.

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by using rigorous and consistent monitoring to ensure that the best practice in the school is more widespread.
- Ensure that subject departments work together in developing the curriculum.
- Ensure that the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation inform priorities to drive coordinated and effective improvement planning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Assessment information from the first school is processed efficiently and further tests are given soon after entry to assess pupils' capabilities. Average standards were maintained at Key Stage 2 in 2007 despite a slight dip from 2006 attributed to weaker performance by pupils with learning difficulties and the more able. Leaders have focused attention on English and mathematics by introducing additional strategies to improve provision through targeted support.

Use of assessment information has primarily focused on evaluating progress at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. Assessment does not adequately inform provision and planning across all subjects. National Curriculum levels are not used or shared well enough with older learners and parents in Key Stage 3 to support improvement. Setting of targets is stronger at Key Stage 2, although they are not consistently challenging for pupils that are more able. School leaders recognise the need to formalise target setting and assessment across all subjects in Key Stage 3.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a response to the previous inspection, pupils now have a greater understanding of different cultural groups within Britain, and express the view that everyone should be treated with respect. Most pupils are polite, confident and behave well. However, when supervision is less evident, a few pupils sometimes lack self-discipline. A small number of parents express concerns about behaviour and bullying although during the period inspection, the school was well ordered and calm. Pupils say they get on well together and feel safe and free from intimidation.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school's development and the wider community by taking responsibility through school council activities and the house system, as prefects and through participation in charity events. Pupils adhere to routines and adopt safe practices well. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most engage in extra activities after school. Pupils speak highly of staff and the support they receive. Pupils have good attitudes towards lessons and homework and take great pride in their personal presentation.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Staff have much greater access than before to a range of school and national assessment data on which to base their lesson planning to provide appropriate challenge. However, implementation of these improvements is relatively recent and the use of assessment information to meet the needs of learners is inconsistent. Lesson plans do not routinely identify learning objectives that match levels in the National Curriculum to raise expectations, and promote progress. Good or better practice is not systematically shared to improve consistency.

In most lessons pupils make at least satisfactory progress as relationships are good and most pupils readily engage with the work set. In some satisfactory lessons, learning is too teacher-directed. Pupils do not have enough time to complete tasks and activities planned are not always relevant to their own experiences. In these lessons, pupils show less interest and often move off task. In good lessons, teachers are actively involved in supporting groups and individuals, provide a good range of stimulating and motivating resources and encourage pupils to explain their learning. Pupils enjoy opportunities in mathematics to evaluate their own work and that of others.

Although systems are in place to monitor the quality of lessons, the focus is not directed sufficiently on the progress pupils are making or on identifying strategies to accelerate rates of progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum has significant strengths in the provision for mathematics, design and technology, and personal, social and health education. Educational visits, residential experiences and extra-curricular activities contribute greatly to pupils' personal development, and stimulate an interest in the wider world. However, staff are aware that curricular activities are not consistently interesting, challenging and relevant enough to raise achievement and standards. The curriculum is currently being revised in order to promote basic skills across all subjects and to make learning for lower attaining pupils in particular more motivating. Pupils report that they generally enjoy their learning and say that practical activities are particularly popular. The experience of at least two hours of physical education each week contributes well to pupils' attitudes towards leading a healthy lifestyle.

Recent changes have begun to tackle provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with individual needs through the introduction of nurture groups and additional teaching assistant support. These initiatives have been well received and are already influencing pupils' attitudes and confidence.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school has a caring ethos; staff know pupils very well and they feel supported. Pastoral care is good. Improvements to the behaviour policy have led to greater consistency in managing behaviour, an emphasis on rewards, and a reduction in detentions and exclusions. Pupils feel confident about approaching staff with their concerns. Arrangements for health and safety

and safeguarding are effectively in place. Child protection arrangements are in place although staff training is not planned as a routine feature.

The school council feel that their views are taken into account and that they are able to offer ideas for improvement such as changes to the school uniform and improvements in recycling. There is an effective programme to ensure a smooth induction for Year 5 and transition for Year 8 pupils.

The use of assessment information is not sharp enough across the school and monitoring is not developed sufficiently to impact consistently on the rates of pupils' progress. Older learners are not confident in assessing the standard of their work against National Curriculum levels, and feel this would help them to improve. Marking is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with guidance on how to progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has clear commitment and drive to make improvements within the school, and is supported by an increasingly effective leadership team. Links with the community are developing well through extended provision, although leaders rightly recognise that parents are not yet fully engaged in the work of the school. School leaders and staff are working hard to make improvements but their work is not sufficiently coordinated to bring about sustained and consistent improvement in standards and achievement. Plans do not always focus sufficiently on the precise steps needed to make improvement or detail ways in which progress will be measured and evaluated.

Subject leaders are increasing their role in checking the quality of work, and many have undertaken training to enhance their skills. However, there are too few opportunities for subject leaders to share practice and to coordinate the curriculum. Good practice that exists within the school, such as in Key Stage 3 mathematics, has not been utilised to strengthen consistency across subjects. Despite financial constraints, resources have improved in information and communication technology and specialist facilities provided in subjects such as art and design.

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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	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Catshill Middle School, Bromsgrove B61 0JW

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when we came to inspect your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you, and hearing your views about the school.

We were impressed with your positive attitudes to work and the school. You told us that Catshill is a busy school because there are always different popular activities taking place. You really value the support and care you receive from staff. Catshill is a satisfactory school and pupils, staff, parents and governors all agree that it has continued to improve since the last inspection. You have played your part in this through your school council by making suggestions and taking on responsibilities such as prefects or on the eco committee. You were very pleased with how the new behaviour policy was working because more of you receive rewards. You felt that this had improved behaviour in school.

The standards you reach are similar to those in most schools but the progress you make can vary between subjects. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 do not always know whether their standards are high enough as National Curriculum levels are not referred to widely across subjects, or in lessons. You may have heard that, at the end of the visit, we decided that your school needed to improve certain things to be more successful. We have asked the school to make regular checks on your progress across all subjects so that you can all be supported to achieve well, and have asked the school's leaders to check on the quality of lessons so that good ideas can be shared across the school. For example, you told us that you learn best when lessons are practical and when you have the opportunity to work in groups to help each other.

We have also asked subject leaders to work more closely together to share good ideas and to improve the curriculum so that it is more interesting and challenges you to do your best. We want everyone in the school to work together on the most important areas for improvement so that progress can be faster.

You, too, can help the school to improve further by thinking more about what you are learning in the classroom, and what you need to do to improve.

Our very best wishes for the future.

Nada Trikić, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

22 February 2008



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