

Catshill Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116958
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	358063
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif HMI

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	288
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Paul Essenhigh
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 26 lessons taught by 16 teachers. The majority of the joint observations were undertaken with the Headteacher. Meetings were held with a range of staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including information about pupils' progress, improvement plans, policies and procedures, teaching records, and health and safety information. An analysis was undertaken of 113 parental questionnaires, together with 248 questionnaires from pupils in Years 5 to 8 and 31 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective is teaching and learning in ensuring pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those identified as being gifted and talented, make progress in lessons and over time? How well are the needs of the small but growing number of minority ethnic pupils met?
- How effectively is the school responding to the variation of progress made by boys and girls?
- How well does the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils and in particular those who are less academic?
- How effectively do leaders at all levels ensure greater rigour with monitoring and evaluation to sustain and bring about improvements?

Information about the school

Catshill is smaller than the average size for a secondary school. The numbers of pupils have been and are continuing to decline. The majority of the pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just below the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The number of pupils from a minority ethnic background, although well below the national average, are steadily rising as are those for whom English is an additional language. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy Schools status, Sportsmark and the International School Award.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Catshill Middle School is providing its pupils with a good education. It has improved in several ways since its last inspection and has good capacity to build further upon its strengths. Leaders and managers have introduced some good developments since the last inspection as a result of robust school self-evaluation. These have resulted in improvements to pupils' achievements and in the care offered to them. The most obvious improvement can be seen in pupils' much improved achievement at the end of Year 8. These improvements are particularly evident in mathematics, where pupils attain above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and continue to make good progress to the end of Year 8. In English, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national average despite the dip in 2010. This was affected by staffing issues which are now largely resolved. The school has been successful in improving pupils' overall attainment in reading, mathematics and science. However, the school recognises the need to continue to improve the standards in writing. Although boys outperform girls in most subjects by the end of Key Stage 2, girls catch up and do equally well by the end of Year 8. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of pupils from the minority ethnic background also make good progress. This is because the school has robust data and most teachers use assessment information to plan their lessons to meet the needs of pupils. This, however, is not yet consistent across the school. Inspectors judged teaching to be good overall and observed none that was less than satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development is good as are their behaviour and contribution to the school and wider community. Attendance is above average. Pupils relish taking responsibilities in a wide range of activities. They particularly enjoy, for example, being representatives on the school council, prefects and working on the Bromsgrove and Catshill regeneration projects. The school's care, guidance and support are good and all staff play their part in enabling pupils to feel safe. The school is outward-looking and there are real strengths in its links with local schools as well as links with schools in Sandwell and Gambia. This enables pupils to have first-hand experience in understanding different cultures both nationally and internationally.

The governing body is pleased with the recent developments and long term plans for continued improvements since they appointed the headteacher. Strong leadership is beginning to permeate across the leadership team. The subject co-ordinators are aware that they need to sharpen their practice to evaluate their areas of responsibilities better, so that they can take action to bring about school improvement. They are also aware that they need to ensure that all teachers in their subject areas use assessment information to make sure that they challenge all pupils, particularly those who are less able. Parents and carers are also complimentary about the changes. One parent commented: 'I am very

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happy with the school and the way it is managed. My children are very happy at Catshill Middle School.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' overall attainment particularly in English by improving, for example, the quality of their extended writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by further strengthening the consistency with which teachers use assessment information to plan and adapt lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils particularly those who are less able.
- Develop the skills of subject co-ordinators to evaluate provision better and enable them to take action to bring about school improvement

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress because effective support is given to help them to address misunderstandings and consolidate their learning particularly, as some of the pupils 'play catch-up' for the first term in Year 5. Achievement is good and all groups of pupils enjoy learning and tackle work with enthusiasm. They are highly motivated and work well both independently and in groups. However, some pupils lack the confidence when they are asked to respond to questions or present their ideas in front of the whole class. When activities are well adapted to their needs and interest they maintain a high pace of work. They appreciate receiving feedback about the quality of their work and take seriously the opportunities to comment on their own and others' efforts. The pupils make good progress in mathematics and science but satisfactory progress in English, particularly in extended writing at Key Stage 2. Pupils identified as being gifted and talented thrive as do those with special educational needs and/or disabilities because of the personalised curriculum and a range of teaching strategies, for example, literacy across the curriculum. By the end of Year 8 there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils say they feel safe and are entirely confident that the school will deal with any matters if and when they were to arise. Good behaviour contributes hugely to the quality of learning, a feature commented on by pupils themselves. The school's healthy status and Sportsmark reflect the fact pupils are aware of how to stay healthy. Pupils readily take opportunities to take on responsibilities as prefects, members of the school council or when interviewing new staff, including the headteacher. Their contribution extends beyond the school through links with the local parish church and a range of charities, as well as with other schools within and beyond Bromsgrove. Pupils are proud of their International School Award, a testament of their work with children in Gambia. These and other activities all help in developing pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good because a large majority of it enables pupils to make good progress. During the inspection there was no inadequate teaching. Teachers plan their lessons with a view to meeting the needs of different groups so that all are challenged, though in practice expectations are not always accurate. The better lessons observed by inspectors were stimulating and had a fast pace, with plenty of opportunities for the pupils to contribute. In these lessons pupils are given very clear information about what they need to do to succeed and the teachers are usually quick to spot and intervene when pupils are struggling. This is because the curriculum has been enhanced and is more stimulating and teachers have a clear understanding of what they need to do to ensure that the different needs of pupils are being met. Year 8 pupils particularly enjoyed the recent visit to their school by Giovanni Esposito, the poet laureate for Birmingham, who worked with them on writing poetry. Teaching which is satisfactory sometimes misses signs that pupils lack the necessary understanding or knowledge to attempt new work, particularly those who are less able, or does not tell pupils clearly enough how well they are doing, either in class or through marking. Some teachers have a tendency to give over lengthy introductions and explanations dominate the lesson unnecessarily.

The school has begun to enhance the quality of its curriculum at Key Stage 2 by introducing some of the strategies earlier, for example literacy across the curriculum and by adopting some of the recognised strengths of its Key Stage 3 provision. In particular,

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the pupils have appreciated the greater emphasis on creative arts and more active ways of learning, for example, through practical work in science and problem-solving in mathematics. Enrichment activities are also a marked feature of the school's work with over 84% of the pupils participating in one or more extra-curricular activities. These activities are further supported by the school's offering good care, guidance and support to enable all pupils to make the most of these opportunities. Particular attention has been paid to pupils whose circumstance may make them vulnerable. The school has good links with outside agencies to give these pupils and their families the support they need. The responses to the pupils' and parental questionnaires were emphatically positive on this point.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has quickly gained the trust of parents and carers, teachers and pupils. He has wasted no time in ensuring that the staff are clear about the school's potential and in what they need to do to achieve the best for the pupils at Catshill. He is extremely well supported by dedicated governors, and the team of senior leaders and middle managers, who are rapidly developing new skills and confidence under his guidance. A range of monitoring activities ensure each member of staff is held accountable for the pupils' success. The headteacher recognises, despite the falling number on roll and staffing difficulties, the school will need to respond to some of the challenges currently being faced by the leadership and management of English. Detailed information about the pupils' achievement is being used to reset targets and ensure they are suitably challenging. Improvement planning has sensibly embraced the whole school with a particular focus on Key Stage 2. Rigorous monitoring and advice, coupled with consistently high expectations about implementing the school's new policies on learning, have had significant success in lifting the quality of teaching and learning.

The school's effective systems for evaluating assessment data have ensured that it is well placed to promote equality and eliminate discrimination by identifying individuals in groups who perform less well, particularly girls in Key Stage 2.

Measures to keep pupils safe are robust and the governing body plays an active part in guaranteeing that all the government's requirements are fully met. There are good relationships with other agencies to ensure the care and safety of all pupils. The headteacher has taken a lead role in creating greater partnerships, particularly with its feeder lower and upper schools. Parents and carers themselves are overwhelmingly positive about the school's engagement with them. The school has a good understanding

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of community cohesion particularly the socio-economic characteristics in a local, national and global context. Consequently most pupils show a good level of understanding of other cultures and their role as local, national and global citizens.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding a mbition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire agreed with all 13 statements in the survey. All who responded are happy with their children's experience at the school and in agreement that the school keeps their children safe, it meets their needs and that the school is effectively led and managed. Inspectors endorse parents' and carers' positive views of the school. A few concerns that were raised relate to individual matters rather than whole-school issues. Her Majesty's Inspector discussed some of these with the senior leadership, while preserving anonymity. The school intends to respond to these issues raised by a very small minority of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Catshill Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 288 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	47	59	52	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	45	60	53	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	47	57	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	43	57	50	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	42	62	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	40	62	55	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	30	74	65	5	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	34	71	63	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	40	65	58	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	42	58	51	7	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	35	62	55	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	53	52	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	51	55	49	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Catshill Middle School, Bromsgrove, B61 0JW

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we recently inspected your school. Listening to your views, watching you in lessons and looking at your work helped us to find out the good things about Catshill and the things that the school could do better. We found Catshill to be a good and improving school.

You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and we can see why. You said how much you enjoyed having visitors to your school. You particularly enjoyed having Giovanni Esposito, the poet laureate for Birmingham, visit your school and work with you. You shared some of your poems, and we were impressed. These are our main findings:

- we think you have good attitude to learning and are a credit to your school
- you are making good progress in your lessons
- the adults at the school look after you well and make sure you have the right support if things are not going well in school or at home
- there are lots of clubs and activities for you to take part in after school
- we saw how you played your part in the school's success by joining in with activities enthusiastically and taking responsibilities, such as being prefects and being involved in appointing new teachers.

The school is very good at knowing what it needs to do to continue to improve. We agreed with the headteacher that it would be helpful to focus on these areas:

- make the teaching even better by making sure that teachers use the assessment information to plan and adapt lessons to meet your individual needs
- help you do as well in English, particularly in writing, as you are doing in mathematics and science
- help the subject co-ordinators play a greater role in evaluating their work and to take action to bring about school improvement

You can all help your school improve further by continuing to try your best. We wish you all the best for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif

Her Majesty's Inspector

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