

Churnet View Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124436
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292996
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	David Anstead 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 on roll	
School	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Julia Turner
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2001
School address	Churnet View Leek ST13 6PU
Telephone number	01538 384939
Fax number	01538 373753

Age group	9–13
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Inspection number	292996

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Churnet View Middle School is a 9 to 13 school. It is of average size when compared with other middle schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a much lower proportion than the national average. The school provides a full extended service to its local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school sees itself as playing a key role in raising aspirations within the community. It has very high expectations for its pupils and for its own performance, which are met. The overall effectiveness of the school is outstanding.

The school is part of a government project which enables pupils in Years 7 and 8 to complete three years worth of work for English, mathematics and science in just two. This is made possible by a carefully planned curriculum which enables pupils to cover the programmes of study at a tremendous pace. Individual progress is carefully tracked so that the school has an extremely accurate view of each pupil's current level of performance. Extra support is carefully targeted to help any pupils identified as struggling to keep up and to boost the performance of others in tests. Family learning is strongly encouraged through the extended school provision. The school does exceptionally well in providing highly effective personalised support to individual pupils and their families. Accordingly, despite their low starting points on joining the school, the majority of Year 8 pupils is able to sit the Year 9 national tests a year early. Standards by the time pupils reach the end of their school career at Churnet View have risen to be above average. Achievement is outstanding. It is the combined impact of the excellent curriculum, the outstanding care, guidance and support provided to pupils and their families, together with consistently good teaching and learning, that results in pupils' outstanding achievement.

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe there. Older pupils would like more opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school and to make a greater contribution to the community. Teaching and learning are good overall and outstanding in some subjects. In other subjects, where teaching is good, assessment is used inconsistently to inform the planning of future work and in showing pupils what they need to do to improve.

The headteacher's and senior staff's leadership of the school are outstanding. There is a shared sense of purpose amongst all the staff and a pride in the school and its achievements. Teaching and support staff all go the extra mile to ensure pupils get the best possible education and care. The school is strongly improving on a range of fronts and has an excellent capacity to continue to do so. Parents are highly appreciative of the outstanding quality of education their children receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the consistent use of assessment in all subjects.
- Develop opportunities for older pupils to make a greater contribution to the community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Results of tests taken by pupils just before they join the school show that attainment on entry is well below average. At this stage boys are behind girls and particularly so in English. Pupils make good progress during the latter half of Key Stage 2 so that by the time they take the national tests at the end of Year 6, standards have improved to be below average. The differences between the attainment of boys and girls have begun to narrow by this stage.

The school enables the majority of pupils to sit the national tests for Year 9 at the end of Year 8. Even though pupils are taking the tests a year early, standards in mathematics are above those expected of Year 9 pupils nationally. Overall standards in English, mathematics and

science at the end of Year 8 are above average. Boys have caught up with the girls by this point and there is very little difference in their performance. The progress made by pupils from joining the school to the end of Year 8 is outstanding.

The school follows national guidance in setting targets based on prior attainment. The targets for the older pupils are extremely challenging because they are appropriate for pupils who are a year older.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show this through their high levels of attendance. Behaviour is good. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is good. This, together with the very supportive atmosphere that exists within the school, enables pupils to develop into mature and confident young adults who show an improving sense of responsibility and a genuine concern for others. This is a strength of the school that is currently under utilised. Although some pupils do paired reading or act as librarians, others who have been trained in peer mediation are not putting it into use. Opportunities for older pupils to contribute to the community are underdeveloped.

Pupils know how to live healthily and how to stay safe and the recent Healthy Schools award has endorsed this. Pupils are pleased the school responds quickly to any concerns that they make and feel secure and well cared for. Pupils' views are valued by the school. The pupil council is very effective and acts as a catalyst for bringing about improvements. For instance, a Year 8 common room was provided in response to pupils' requests. Pupils are well prepared for their future well-being, particularly by developing valuable skills and gaining good results. Enterprise projects are carried out in Year 8 which give pupils an insight into commerce and industry. Overall, the school works hard to develop pupils' positive attitudes and values. It recognises and nurtures the uniqueness of individual pupils' abilities and talents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Lessons are good because they are well planned and pupils are clear about appropriate learning objectives. Frequent reference to National Curriculum levels ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and what they are working towards. The majority of subjects provide consistent, sharp and challenging learning opportunities for pupils, closely focused on meeting their individual learning needs. In the best lessons, pupils tackle tasks at a cracking pace. Pupils respond well to both the challenge of the tasks and the speed at which they need to complete them. In these lessons they make outstanding progress.

Teachers establish good working relationships that are reflected in pupils' willingness to work productively in groups, pairs and independently. Although at times there is some low level disruption in lessons, it is managed well by teachers. The school is determined that 'staff should know every child's strengths, weaknesses and learning needs'. Evidence from lesson observations and discussions with pupils indicate that the school uses this knowledge about them very well to support, stretch and challenge individual pupils. Information about how pupils are doing is

detailed and meticulously collated. However, not all teachers use assessment consistently to inform planning or share it with pupils so that they are clear about the level they are at and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent and has a significant impact on pupils' outstanding achievement. The school works hard with its feeder schools to ensure that the transition from one school to the next operates well. Outstanding systems ensure pupils settle quickly and are challenged with work appropriate to their individual level of attainment. A potentially difficult time is made easy. Being in a middle school enables Key Stage 2 pupils to benefit from specialist French teaching.

The pace at which Years 7 and 8 progress through the curriculum is outstanding. Pupils complete their Key Stage 3 programmes of study before they transfer to high school and effectively cover three years worth of work in two. Timetabled 'booster classes' address any specific weaknesses and are highly effective in raising standards across all levels of the ability range.

The school is open from 08.00 to 18.00 to deliver its extended school programme. A wide range of exciting and innovative activities is offered before lessons begin, at break times and after school. Many of these, such as the 'Chefs' Club', are extremely popular and all activities are well attended by pupils and many by parents. A good range of activities is provided during school holidays. The brightest Year 8 pupils have the opportunity to study GCSE mathematics after school. Last year all the group were successful and attained top grades. One parent wrote to inspectors that 'the extra-curricular activities are exceptional'. Areas of the curriculum are very well supported by outside speakers and agencies. Local businesses, for example, are actively involved in school projects. Pupils are encouraged to take part in residential activities, after school clubs and trips locally and abroad. This creates an excellent climate for learning and raises pupils' aspirations for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all its pupils. It knows pupils' personal circumstances and their difficulties very well. The excellent care and support are very much valued and appreciated by parents who are actively encouraged to be involved in efforts to enhance learning. One parent commented that 'we cannot praise the school highly enough for the care of our child'. The school instils an ethos of care into pupils and they look out for each other. Very good use is made of external services to provide guidance, and careers education is supported well by the high quality information in the learning resources centre. Tracking and monitoring of individual pupils' progress is excellent. The school identifies with precision what every child needs to do to improve and intervenes where it will have maximum impact. Pupils told inspectors that 'our teachers know what each of us needs to know next'. The school is highly effective at securing exceptional achievement for its pupils whatever their individual needs.

The school is a safe and supportive environment for learning and pupils know they have a trusted adult they can turn to should they feel vulnerable. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are rigorously adhered to and understood by staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. At all levels leadership is focused on achieving the best for all students. The headteacher's exceptionally effective leadership has been key in sustaining the rapid improvement of the school. Strong teamwork among the staff has developed a notable culture of success among pupils. There is a shared passion about involving parents and the community in the life and learning of the school.

The school sets itself challenging targets in a large number of areas. These targets are rigorously monitored, evaluated and adjusted so as to ensure that improvement is maintained.

Self-evaluation is well founded and accurate, and used effectively to raise pupils' achievement. The school has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

Strong leadership has had an impact on a variety of fronts. Issues identified during the previous inspection have all been successfully tackled, attendance and behaviour have been appreciably improved and achievement has been raised significantly. The school has recently reviewed and restructured its senior posts of responsibility. The new structure is innovative and more clearly aligned towards delivering the school's long-term strategic plans. The professional development of staff is given a high priority. There is a robust system of performance management that is rooted in developing leadership and improving achievement.

Governors are involved in the life of the school and its direction. They are appreciative of the strong strategic leadership skills of the headteacher and the assistance that she provides in helping them fulfil their role. The day-to-day organisation and management of the school are excellent. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet and go beyond current government requirements. The school gives exceptional value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank those of you we spoke to for the friendly welcome you gave us. Your thoughtful responses to our questions helped us decide what is good about your school and what needs to be improved. The education you receive at your school is outstanding.

These are the main strengths of your school.

- You enjoy coming to school because you are very well cared for and helped to achieve your best.
- The progress you make from Year 5 to Year 8 is outstanding.
- The pace at which you work through the National Curriculum is outstanding.
- The range of clubs and activities you can choose to join in with is exceptional.
- Your headteacher and senior staff are outstanding and making the school better.

There are two aspects of the school's work which we think can be better. The use of assessment by teachers is inconsistent. In some subjects you are less clear about what level you are working at and what you need to do to improve. Some of the older pupils told us that they sometimes feel like they are treated like little children. They feel they could contribute more to the school. I have asked your headteacher to improve the opportunities older pupils have to take on greater responsibility within the school.

I wish you every success in the future.