

Churnet View Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124436
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340569
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	John Rutherford 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	474
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judy Gregg
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Turner
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They spent the majority of their time looking at learning; they observed 26 lessons and saw 20 teachers and two higher level teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior and middle leadership teams, groups of pupils and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's information on pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work, a range of management documents and 122 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school uses assessment to enable all groups of pupils to make good progress
- the impact of the school's work to improve pupils' skills in making a positive contribution to their community
- how effectively the school's strategy for community cohesion increases pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to most middle schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is broadly similar to most schools nationally. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. After the school day and during holidays the school makes extended provision for pupils and the wider community. The school has the following awards; National Support School Status, Leading Parent Partnership, International School, Investors in People, Dyslexia Friendly School, Healthy School and Artsmark (silver). Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable discontinuity in the membership of the senior leadership team, which is still not fully resolved.

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

This is a good school. It enables the majority of pupils to make good progress and achieve above average standards by the time they leave in Year 8. The school provides exceptional care, guidance and support for pupils and has developed an excellent partnership with parents and carers in raising pupils' aspirations and standards.

When pupils start school, attainment overall is below average. In Key Stage 2, pupils get off to a good start in English; however their progress in mathematics and science is slower. They accelerate their progress considerably in all subjects in Key Stage 3 and achieve above average standards by the time they leave. The acceleration of progress is much stronger in mathematics than it is in English and science. The rapid progress in the upper years of the school is helped by good planning of the Key Stage 3 curriculum so that it can be taught in two years instead of the usual three. The variability between subjects and key stages occurs because teachers do not consistently use assessment information to provide work at the correct level for all groups of pupils. For example, some of the work for lower attaining pupils is pitched too low.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and they work very hard in lessons. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their progress. They feel very safe in school, confident in the care provided by a number of adults with a specific pastoral responsibility. Pupils seek additional responsibilities and involvement in important decisions. Their views have been considered in planning changes to the building and they have taken a leading role in promoting the safe use of the internet. They have responded well to the school's work to develop community cohesion. Although they do not have a great deal of direct contact with people from different backgrounds, they have a good understanding of how to live harmoniously in a diverse society.

The headteacher sets very high standards for the quality of education and care provided for the pupils. Her strong leadership secures the full commitment of all staff in meeting these standards. The senior leadership team, containing many new members, shows a good capacity to improve the school further. They have a clear and accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision and can take effective action to improve teaching across the school. For example, they are introducing new assessment methods which are quickly helping pupils to have a better understanding of how to improve their attainment. Through regular lesson observations and evaluation of pupils' work, senior leaders are gathering a wealth of information about pupils' progress. They are not yet analysing this information in sufficient depth to help them to target their efforts more sharply on those areas where pupils are not achieving as much as they can. Although there are aspects of pupils' progress that can improve, the school provides good value for money.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the consistency of good or better achievement for all pupils in English, mathematics and science in both key stages by rigorously evaluating information on pupils' progress. The school should use this evaluation more systematically to:
 - ensure work is suitably challenging for all groups of pupils, especially those who are lower attaining
 - provide challenge and guidance to teachers for those groups of pupils who are not achieving as much as they can
 - target the work of leaders more precisely on those areas where pupils' progress is too slow.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in most of the lessons where they are organised into sets of similar attainment level. This is because teachers recognise that, within each set, pupils still present different learning needs and they adapt their lesson plans accordingly. For example, all pupils make good progress in a higher attaining mathematics set because the teacher has correctly assessed that some groups need more challenging problems than others. Where pupils' progress is slower, it is because they are all expected to work at the same level and, in the case of some lower attaining sets, this level is too low.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their progress is best when they are taught in groups on their own. This is because work is carefully planned to meet their needs and they have the opportunity to learn through enjoyable and challenging practical activities. They make very good progress in the one-to-one tuition they receive after school

Pupils are gaining a good foundation for their future economic well-being. They work very well independently and they use discussion with partners effectively to help solve problems. They have good skills in information and communication technology which they use well to support their learning in other subjects, such as design and technology and mathematics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show high levels of creativity in art and music and they are very interested in learning about the natural world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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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	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the majority of lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting activities which enthuse the pupils. They provide clear explanations and interesting problems which motivate the pupils to try hard. They carefully build new skills on what pupils have previously learnt. There is plenty of opportunity for pupils to practise their new skills by working independently on practical tasks. Teachers have effective methods for checking pupils' progress during lessons. However not all of them are using the feedback from pupils to increase the level of challenge where required.

The curriculum and well attended after-school activities provide pupils with a wide range of academic, creative and sporting activities which contribute to their progress and enjoyment of school. The curriculum also makes good provision for pupils' personal development and well-being, incorporating such aspects as safe use of computers and mobile telephones. There are some good examples of the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills in other subjects; however the provision for improving literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is less well developed. A well planned programme of additional support enables pupils with special educational needs to make progress at the same good rate as most other pupils.

Excellent transition arrangements help pupils from a wide range of feeder schools to come together harmoniously and settle in to their new school quickly. This work also helps staff to start meeting the needs of pupils requiring additional support at an early stage. A key strength of the school is adults' caring and supportive relationships with pupils, which encourages the pupils to take advantage of all the school has to offer.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides many opportunities for staff at all levels to develop leadership skills. She is quickly helping the new senior leadership team to develop their skills in monitoring the quality of teaching across the school and introducing improvements where required. Their guidance to teachers ensures consistency in the use of new techniques and this results in good teaching and pupils' progress in most lessons. However, they are not yet focusing sharply enough on the progress of all groups of pupils and providing guidance in those lessons where it needs to improve. They collect a considerable amount of useful information on pupils' personal and academic development but it is not being used sufficiently to inform priorities in the school improvement plan or to measure the success of the plan in bringing about improvements to pupils' outcomes where they are most needed.

The governors' committee structure enables a very effective partnership with senior leaders in monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan. They use a wide range of information to evaluate the school's effectiveness but this does not include a sufficiently detailed analysis in pupils' progress.

Senior leaders and governors ensure that the work of the school enables children in vulnerable circumstances to have the same opportunity to succeed as all other pupils. The impact of this is seen in the enjoyment and good progress of pupils who are looked after by the local authority and of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a clear understanding of priorities for promoting community cohesion in the local context. There is a strong emphasis on learning about global issues which is recognised by the International Schools Award. From their own evaluation, the school recognises the need to increase pupils' engagement with a wider range of the faith and ethnic groups that make up British society.

The school has excellent processes for keeping parents and carers informed about their children's progress, the planning of which takes account of parents' views. The school also provides very useful guidance to parents and carers on how they can support their children's learning. The school has excellent partnerships with community organisations and support services which make a very strong contribution to the quality of the school's curriculum and after-school activities and to the quality of care provided for pupils.

The school gives high priority to safeguarding, regularly checking with parents, carers

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and pupils for areas of concern. Staying safe is an important aspect of the curriculum and older pupils are engaged in promoting safety. The school ensures that all the required checks are carried out on any adult who comes into contact with pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

The vast majority of parents and carers say that they are happy with their children's experience in the school and that the school helps their children to be healthy and safe. They agree that the school meets their children's needs and enables them to make good progress. They also say that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. They have full confidence in the way the school is led and in the quality of teaching. The inspection findings support parents' and carers' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Churnet View 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 474 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	40	68	56	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	54	55	45	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	49	59	48	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	48	60	49	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	45	66	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	34	70	57	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	34	78	64	0	0	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)	54	44	59	48	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	42	68	56	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	45	58	48	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	35	72	59	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	57	50	41	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	57	52	43	1	1	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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 pupil's 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.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churnet View Middle School, Leek, ST13 6PU

Thank you for your help when I came with my colleagues to inspect your school. You gave us some very valuable information in your questionnaires and when we talked to you. This helped us to make the judgement that your school provides you with a good quality of education.

Your teachers give you many interesting lessons which help most of you to make good progress. You also make good progress because you come to school wanting to learn. We noticed how well behaved you all are in class and how eager you are to do your best. You told us how much you enjoy your work and the wide range of activities after school. You feel safe and comfortable in school because of the exceptional care that the staff provide for you. We know that many of you have been asking for more responsibilities and we were pleased to hear that the staff act on your views when making important decisions. Your parents and carers also tell us that they like the school very much and this is largely due to the outstanding way that the school works in partnership with them.

The headteacher, staff and governors are very keen that your school should be even better. We have agreed with them one area to work on in order to help even more of you to make good progress. They are going to look in much more detail for aspects of your work in which your progress slows down so that they can quickly take the necessary action to improve it. You can help your teachers by making sure you always work hard to meet your targets.

My very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

Her Majesty's Inspector

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