

Bredon Hill Middle School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116956
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	379334
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2012
Lead inspector	Mark Sims HMI

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	10–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Umpelby
Headteacher	Steven Charlton
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
School address	Elmley Road Ashton-Under-Hill Evesham WR11 7SW
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Age group	10–13
Inspection date(s)	25–26 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed 24 teachers teaching 27 lessons, of which three were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. A telephone conversation was held with the school's improvement adviser. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the recently revised self-evaluation form, the school development plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of governing body meetings. Also, they analysed 266 questionnaires from parents and carers and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This rural middle school is much smaller than the average secondary school. It is one of only a small handful nationally which admits pupils from Year 6. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds although there are a very small number of pupils from White Eastern European backgrounds who speak English as an additional language. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is well below the national average for secondary schools. The school meets current government floor standards. The school specialises in languages and has the International Schools award. Since the previous inspection, the school has had few staff changes.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school which is improving. The pupils, parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, particularly the extent to which they say their children feel safe in school. Pupils achieve well and attain standards in English and mathematics that are high by the time they leave in Year 8.
- Teaching is mostly good, particularly in English and in Years 7 and 8. There is some variability, particularly in Year 6 where pupils make satisfactory progress and not all teachers are teaching their specialist subject. Some of the teaching in mathematics is outstanding and very recently groups with lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have benefited from the introduction of a 'focus group.' The extent to which pupils receive detailed feedback on how they can improve is varied.
- Almost all pupils behave very well and feel safe in school. They are keen and eager to learn, even in lessons that are less stimulating. They work very well together in pairs and groups and support each other. Very few parents and carers have concerns about behaviour and safety in school, and both they and the pupils feel that any very rare incidents are effectively dealt with.
- Senior leaders know the school well. They lead by example and have secured improvements in teaching and achievement. The governing body makes a significant contribution to school improvement. Its members are well informed and provide a high level of challenge to the school. The school has identified and taken action to address the issue of girls' underachievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 but it is too early to see the impact in test results. Not all middle leaders are sufficiently engaged in formal processes to review pupils' progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in the school by ensuring that:

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- leaders at all levels have the opportunity to meet on a formal and regular basis to review the progress of pupils and consistently monitor the impact of strategies to raise achievement
 - data on individual pupils' progress are shared more widely across subjects and are readily available to all teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
- using assessment data rigorously to plan next steps for pupils' learning based on what they have already achieved
 - ensuring that all feedback to pupils, including marking, matches that of the very best in informing pupils how they can improve and achieve the next step in their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils do well at Bredon Hill Middle. They join from a wide range of first schools and there is some delay in the progress they make as the school establishes the level they are working at, as transition arrangements are not fully developed with all the main feeder schools. Attainment on entry is broadly average. Pupils in Year 6 make satisfactory progress from their starting points at the beginning of the year to when they take their tests at the start of their third term. By the time they leave at the end of Year 8 they have achieved a level of attainment in English, mathematics and science that is above what would be expected of pupils at the end of Year 8 nationally. This is because of the rapid progress they make, particularly in Year 7, and which is built on in Year 8. Similarly pupils do well in modern languages as a result of the positive impact of the languages specialism. The large majority of parents and carers agree that their children are making good progress.

In Year 6 the school has identified a widening gap in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics. Although standards are broadly average in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, boys do better than boys nationally in mathematics while girls do less well than girls nationally. A focus group of lower-attaining pupils who are mostly girls has been very recently established. In the lessons seen they were making outstanding progress, and predicted results indicate that girls currently in Year 6 are now closing the gap on girls nationally. In English, pupils attain broadly average standards at the end of Key Stage 2, including in reading, but above average standards at the end of Year 8. Learning is consistently good in English lessons while there remains some variety in mathematics lessons, where not all mathematics teachers are specialists. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress in line with their peers. Pupils learn well in those lessons where they have the opportunity to work in groups to discover things for themselves or to support each other in their learning.

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Quality of teaching

The majority of teaching is good. The large majority of pupils and parents agree with this. Lessons are planned well to be lively and stimulating and pupils spend a good proportion of their time engaged in group or independent tasks which they enjoy. In the very best lessons learning is active and engaging and pupils collaborate with each other to support each other's progress. Questioning is varied to challenge higher-attaining pupils and encourage those who are lower attaining to participate. The school has worked hard to encourage girls to participate more in discussions in mathematics lessons and has been successful in achieving this through a variety of strategies, including directed questions and group activities where girls have the opportunity to express their views and take leadership roles. Pupils are set a variety of objectives, depending on their different starting points, which build well on what they have previously learnt. The curriculum ensures pupils experience a wide range and good balance of subjects. Teaching is stronger in Years 7 and 8 where pupils have more access to specialist subject teachers.

Most pupils know their levels and targets but there is inconsistency in how well they know how to achieve them. While some pupils are able to identify precisely the skill they need to work on, such as fractions or the past tense in French, others feel they need only 'work harder' or 'practise more' in order to achieve the next step in their learning. The quality of marking is varied within and across subjects. At its best pupils receive detailed written guidance on how they can improve. Elsewhere marking is more limited to brief comments praising pupils and, at times, work goes unmarked for long periods.

Pupils show a very positive attitude to their learning and their interest does not flag even in the minority of lessons where the pace of lessons is slower. They work well with each other in mixed gender groups and have good relationships with all the adults who work with them. Most of the additional support pupils receive is effective, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Just occasionally, teaching assistants are not fully used in lessons because their focus is not clear. There are lost opportunities in some lessons to extend pupils' cultural development through greater knowledge of diversity in the wider world.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils understand very clearly how to keep themselves safe. All groups of pupils feel safe in school at all times and this is reflected in the questionnaire returns of pupils and their parents and carers, of which the vast majority are overwhelmingly positive. The high profile of senior leaders around the school ensures the consistent and systematic management of the application of the school's 'behaviour for learning' policy, which in turn leads to consistently very good behaviour in lessons. This, coupled with pupils' positive attitudes in lessons, contribute to their good progress over time. The school has a family ethos where pupils are known as individuals and, as a result, there are high levels of courtesy and consideration towards others during social times. This is reflected in the comments of parents and carers, one of whom

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stated, 'The school has a happy, open and supportive atmosphere.' There is very calm, orderly movement around the school, strongly underpinned by pupils' respect for each other.

Pupils are punctual to lessons and attendance is above the national average and on a rising trend. Strategies that involve working with outside agencies to reduce the number of pupils persistently absent have shown a marked improvement, and the number has halved over the last year.

Exclusions have fallen and there is a decrease in the number of repeat offenders. Incidents of bullying of any type are very low. Communication between the key staff and other agencies is good and although sometimes this is informal it is very effective in making sure that pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are safe.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders lead by example in the good quality of their teaching and are highly successful in harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of all staff to bring about improvements in achievement. The quality of teaching has improved and there are specific instances where support and training from leaders has led to the quality of individual teachers' lessons improving. The school has good capacity to improve further.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Through its good work in promoting equality and tackling discrimination it has identified and addressed the trend of girls' previous underperformance in mathematics at Key Stage 2. The curriculum has been revised to give pupils more opportunities for literacy and numeracy without adversely affecting any other subject. The curriculum provides well for pupils at all levels of attainment, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.. It promotes the achievement of higher-attaining pupils through encouraging enquiry and independent thinking through thematic work.

The members of the governing body have a good knowledge of the school and hold it to account, not least through the work of the data committee in analysing and challenging outcomes for pupils. The school works well with parents and carers, who in turn give a high level of support to the school. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Although the school has acquired a range of data on pupils' achievement there is inconsistency in the way it is analysed and challenged by leaders, particularly those middle leaders who are not involved enough in regular formal procedures to review and monitor pupils' progress.

Provision for pupils' social and moral development is particularly strong although their spiritual and cultural development, particularly their knowledge of diversity in

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the United Kingdom and wider world, is less well developed despite the international school status.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bredon Hill Middle School, Evesham, WR11 7SW

You will know that we recently came to inspect your school and I thought you would like to know what we have said in our report. Bredon Hill is a good school that has improved since it was last inspected. Your behaviour and safety are outstanding features of the school. You and your parents and carers have told us there is very little poor behaviour in the school. We know this from the questionnaires some of you completed, and saw it in the way you behave in lessons and around the school and the way you get on with each other. The school does all it can to make you feel safe and you have told us that you would be confident to report any incident that arises, knowing it would be dealt with.

Although initially in Year 6 you make satisfactory progress, you do well in English and mathematics by the time you leave because of the good progress you make in your learning in Years 7 and 8. The school has recognised that not all girls have done as well as they could in mathematics in Year 6 and has taken steps to address this. The teaching in most of your lessons is good and you have told us how much you enjoy the lessons that are fun and active and give you the chance to find out things for yourself. Your leaders know the school well and are taking effective action to make improvements.

We have asked the school to do a few things that we think will help it to improve further.

- The school's leaders must check your progress regularly to make sure you are all doing as well as you can, and regularly check that the measures they have taken to support any of you needing additional help are effective.
- The teachers should regularly let you know how you can improve your work, so that you know clearly how to reach the next stage in your learning.

I hope you will play your part by checking what teachers say about your work and responding to their comments. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

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