

Churnet View Middle School

Churnet View, Leek, ST13 6PU

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of students make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their low starting points. They are excited by their learning and are keen to do well.
- They particularly enjoy opportunities to undertake practical tasks and to work as a team.
- In the best teaching, teachers plan a variety of exciting tasks that promote students' spiritual, moral and social development well.
- Teachers new to the profession are very well supported.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Relationships with adults are warm and supportive. They have a good understanding of personal safety and older students support younger pupils well.
- The inspirational headteacher is passionate about driving improvements. She is very well supported by her senior team, by governors and by other leaders, who share her vision for the school and share responsibility for bringing about rapid improvements in teaching and students' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers plan tasks that closely match the range of students' needs in lessons so that some find them too easy and others too difficult.
- The quality of written marking is inconsistent and students have too few opportunities to respond to the advice given.
- Although students' spiritual, moral and social awareness is good, students' understanding of the different faiths and ethnic backgrounds in Britain's multi-cultural society is underdeveloped.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with one of the school's senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and staff, including subject leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about students' progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students' work.
- The views of the 57 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, in addition to three written communications from parents and carers. Inspectors also took account of 28 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Robert Bourdon-Pierre

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized middle school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and students who have a parent in the armed forces, is average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A small number of students currently attend full-time off-site alternative provision at the Cedars Pupil Referral Unit and Cicely Haughton Special School.
- The school is part of a federation that shares a governing body and the leadership of an executive headteacher, with Westwood High School and Leek High School and is part of the Leek Education Partnership of ten local schools.
- A daily breakfast club is provided by the school and holiday care for 9-13 year olds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers consistently plan work at the right level of difficulty to match the individual needs of students, so that all students are appropriately challenged or supported
 - all written feedback identifies students' next steps in learning, offers opportunities for reflection and expects students to respond to advice by attempting a new challenge or practising skills.
- Promote students' cultural development by making sure that they gain a wider experience of life in today's multi-cultural society, to develop their understanding and respect for different faiths, races and cultures.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with well below the expected levels for their age in the basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Externally validated baseline assessment confirms this. Standards at the end of Year 6 rose in 2012 but remained below national expectations. This is because, although pupils make good progress during years 5 and 6, there is not enough time to catch up lost ground.
- Students continue to make good and sometimes outstanding progress through Key Stage 3. In 2012, levels of attainment by the end of Year 8 were above national expectations.
- The school enters students early for GCSE mathematics. Over a quarter of Year 8 students gained a good GCSE pass in 2012. The school checks carefully that the most-able students are able to follow extended mathematics courses on entry to the high school.
- Well-established strategies help to speed up progress in reading. Year 7 catch-up premium is used to run courses for the weakest readers, establishing a systematic approach and laying the foundation for effective individual support throughout the school.
- On entry to the school, around 60% of pupils are regularly below the nationally expected reading level. However, by the end of Year 8 in 2012, almost all had achieved the reading level expected for their age. This demonstrates rapid progress. Students are frequently encouraged to read out loud, for example, in an outstanding English lesson, the lowest-ability readers were supported in their reading of a challenging text. Here the teacher checked carefully that all understood new or difficult vocabulary.
- In 2012, by the end of Year 6 after five terms at the school, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was a year behind their classmates in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 8 in 2012 these students had caught up further and were only a term behind. This is because students known to be eligible for the pupil premium are extremely well supported both to promote their achievement and in the provision of care and support. The school's close tracking of attainment and progress indicates that the gap in performance between this group and other students in the school is continuing to close rapidly.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the wide range of support that they receive, both in the classroom and in support groups. The outstanding care and nurture provided in the 'Den' further supports the achievement of groups of students facing challenging circumstances.
- Students following alternative courses off site achieve well. Their progress and well-being is closely monitored to make sure that their long- term needs are being effectively met.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations during the inspection showed that students are extremely well motivated and keen to do well in all their lessons. For example, in an outstanding design and technology lesson, students were totally engrossed as they undertook a practical task to make an electric circuit. They showed great excitement when this was successful and turned on a light.

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to inspire their students. They provide a range of appropriate and relevant tasks that engage students' interest and promote their independence. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, the teacher skilfully linked a challenging Shakespeare text with modern life, by asking students to write a newspaper report summarising the plot. Newspaper headlines were used to promote discussion and reflection on topical moral issues and extended students' knowledge of current affairs. Here opportunities were provided for students to work closely in teams and to research the task that had been appropriately matched to the different abilities within the class.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' planning. Activities are not always sufficiently well matched to students' individual abilities. As a result, some students have to wait for others to finish before they can move on with their learning. Although most teachers' planning identifies those students who require additional support, they do not always follow this through by identifying how this support will be provided.
- Although teachers often provide clear feedback for students during lessons on how well they are doing, not all provide clear written feedback on how students can improve their work and reach their targets. Opportunities are being missed across most subjects to enable students to reflect on the advice they are given and to respond by practising skills, correcting mistakes or being set an additional challenge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students display positive attitudes to learning and this is the case even when activities lack sufficient challenge. They are polite and welcoming and keen to explain to visitors what they are learning. Behaviour in whole-school assemblies is exemplary.
- Students say that behaviour is usually well managed and staff and parents agree. Students have a clear understanding of the school's high expectations for behaviour and are quick to apologise should they fall below these expectations.
- Students told inspectors that they feel safe and well cared for. They value the fact that they are treated as individuals and that the school will listen to their views. Students show great care for each other and in many lessons inspectors observed students supporting each other in their work and older ones supporting younger ones around the school.
- Students enjoy taking responsible roles such as looking after the hens, representing others through the school council, or Year 8 students helping younger pupils improve their reading.
- Most students say that bullying is rare and that they are very well supported should it occur. A very small minority expressed their concerns but say that adults support them well, particularly the student counsellor and the teaching assistants who are always available in the 'Den'. They are well informed about different forms of bullying and other aspects of safety.
- Some students show a lack of understanding for those from different backgrounds. This is because they have little or no first-hand experience of different religions, races or cultures. The school makes clear that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The quality of care for students and their families facing challenging circumstances is outstanding. The school is particularly vigilant in securing the safety of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Parents and carers of disabled students and those who have special educational needs praised the way the school cares for their children and

makes sure that staff are suitably trained to be able to provide effective support.

- Attendance is consistently above average and punctuality to lessons is good. The breakfast club and holiday care are greatly valued by parents and students because they provide opportunities for students who live in isolated rural areas to socialise with their friends.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is extremely passionate about driving improvement and commands a high level of respect from students, staff and parents. Her highly committed and supportive senior leadership team share her vision and work unstintingly to move all teachers' practice to outstanding. They and the effective subject leaders are provided with a wide range of opportunities for professional development, not only through training but also through having well-supported first-hand experience of shadowing leadership roles.
- A wide variety of training is closely matched to teachers' needs. They are effectively held to account for meeting the national 'Teachers' Standards' and for students' progress. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their effectiveness and to identify areas where they can improve as part of the management of their performance. There are many opportunities for sharing good practice across the school, the wider Federation and local partnership. Newly qualified teachers are closely supported and mentored, enabling them to develop their practice.
- The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is very well used to provide support that includes booster classes in English and mathematics, one-to-one tuition, support for behaviour, and professional counselling. Individual mentoring and support is provided in the 'Den' before and after school and during breaks. The breakfast club and other activities before school also support students' well-being.
- The school knows itself very well and appropriate priorities are identified for improvement that strongly focus on raising the aspirations and achievement of all groups of students and make sure they are fully included and have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The subjects that students study are very well matched to their needs and interests, focusing on rapidly addressing students' low basic skills when they join the school. There is therefore a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, including the provision of intervention groups and individual support.
- An exciting range of activities and courses in Key Stage 3 raise aspirations and prepare students for their next steps. This includes visits to universities for the most able, outdoor pursuit activities, business and enterprise and the option to take GCSE mathematics. Individual talented students are able to gain other qualifications, for example, GCSE French. Practical subjects such as music, sport and design and technology, are greatly enjoyed by students across the school and further promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has forged close partnerships with parents, providing a wide range of opportunities for family learning, including using computers, woodwork, gardening and cookery. 'Dads, granddads and lads' sessions are also popular, promoting male role models. The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed and qualified. It provides strength through the partnership while ensuring individual support and challenge for each school. Governors have a

close working relationship with the senior leadership team. They understand the complex issues of comparing the school's performance with those nationally. Governors are well deployed according to their expertise so that every aspect of the school's work is scrutinised. They are fully aware of the spending of pupil premium funding and check its impact on raising the achievement of the students it supports. They have ensured effective management of financial resources and that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary. Governors take an active part in promoting high quality teaching, taking part in lesson observations with senior staff and making sure any pay increases are linked to performance. They know about how the school manages teachers' performance and tackles any underperformance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124436
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	411894

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	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mandy Bennett
Headteacher	Julia Turner
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2010
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