

St Osmund's Church of England Middle School

Barnes Way, Rothesay Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DZ

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and other leaders have successfully created a learning culture where pupils and staff thrive.
- All pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, have outstanding achievements.
- Pupils attain standards that are well above average by the time they leave the school and all pupils make rapid and sustained progress across subjects and age groups.
- High expectations and outstanding teaching inspire pupils' interest and curiosity for learning. Consequently, pupils persevere to improve and reach their full potential.
- Teachers employ an extensive range of methods to engage and extend pupils' experiences, knowledge and understanding and to meet their individual needs. In the very best lessons pupils have opportunities to initiate and lead their own learning.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is outstanding, especially for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils are articulate, polite and courteous and show high levels of care for each other.
- The curriculum offers breadth and depth and is extended extremely well through enrichment activities.
- Governors ensure pupils and staff are safe and they monitor the school's work thoroughly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made 15 other short visits to lessons and classrooms.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, teachers and support staff and a small number of parents and carers. Telephone discussions were held with the school evaluation partner and parents and carers.
- Inspectors took account of 198 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and staff responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on pupils' progress and attainment, planning and monitoring documents including performance management procedures and outcomes and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Rundle, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Richard Chalkey

Additional inspector

Malcolm Davison

Additional inspector

Penelope Orme

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school became an academy converter in June 2012. It is a larger-than-average-sized middle school and the number of pupils on roll has increased slightly in the last three years.
- It has specialist status for mathematics and science.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average, including pupils with a specific learning difficulty or identified with autism. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well below average as is the proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background or who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.
- The headteacher offers support to other schools through the role of a school evaluation partner and the school is part of the Dorchester Area Schools partnership that shares practice and moderates pupil outcomes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- While reviewing the curriculum, use identified best practice in the school to ensure more opportunities are planned for pupils to initiate and lead their own learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding.

- The attainment of most pupils when they join the school is usually high. However, staff are not complacent and ensure that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress during their time at St Osmund's in a broad range of subjects, particularly during Years 7 and 8.
- As a result of consistently high quality teaching and expectations, pupils' attainment is significantly above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8.
- Standards in English have improved since the inspection of the predecessor school. This ensures that all pupils can access learning across the curriculum because of their high levels of reading, writing and communication skills. Pupils skilfully use a broad range of phonic strategies (letters and the sounds they make) to help them to read unfamiliar words or texts, particularly when this relates to new subject terminology. For example, in science when pupils were learning about solids, liquids and gases, a small number of pupils worked out and then recognised the word 'molecules' to help them answer the task accurately.
- Standards in mathematics are extremely high, especially in the proportion of pupils who attain the highest levels by the time they leave the school. They are able to transfer these skills successfully into other subjects and teachers exploit all opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of the use of mathematical calculations in everyday situations.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, especially those on the autistic spectrum, make the same rapid progress as others in the school from their starting points because of the excellent targeted support they receive.
- The school has initiated the Forest School and 'eXelerate' programme to support its most vulnerable pupils and those entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium. Pupils are excited by the opportunities to work in an outdoor environment with the result that they are enthused by education, make accelerated progress in their academic achievements, gain in confidence and self-esteem and attendance has improved. The 'eXelerate' programme ensures speedy and effective one-to-one support to ensure all pupils reach their full potential.
- Following the success of these programmes, leaders have extended their use as induction activities for Year 5 to ensure that these pupils have the best possible start to their education at St Osmund's.

The quality of teaching is outstanding.

- The whole-school focus on the quality of teaching and learning has resulted in teaching that is never less than good, with much that is outstanding, and pupils making rapid progress. Teachers have very high expectations and this promotes positive pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning. The teaching of reading, writing and numeracy is highly effective across the whole curriculum.
- Teachers use their considerable subject knowledge to employ a wide variety of methods that engage, enthuse and inspire pupils and meet their individual needs in learning. The support of other adults is focused very effectively and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils have the confidence to take risks in their learning. They are unafraid to ask challenging questions of themselves and others to strengthen their learning further.
- Teachers are highly effective at checking pupils' understanding during lessons and to rapidly adapt their planning if necessary. However, there is inconsistency in the opportunities for pupils to initiate and lead their own learning across the curriculum and in lessons.
- The use of assessment and monitoring of progress have become much sharper since the inspection of the predecessor school. Consequently, any pupils not meeting expectations or falling below their potential are identified swiftly and receive specific interventions to support their need and accelerate their progress. As one teacher said, 'Few pupils fall through the net of achievement which has got smaller and tighter.'

- The quality of marking and feedback is consistently high. Feedback indicates clearly how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next to improve further.
- Staff are particularly enthusiastic about the recently introduced buddy system to observe and share good practice between subjects. This extends further the highly effective professional development opportunities through whole-school training, within subjects and through external courses.
- Teachers recognise the learning culture that has been created for both pupils and staff where 'there is never a silly question' and 'everyone is willing to share to improve'. As one member of staff said, 'I have learned more in the last five years than in my previous five of teaching.' Staff feel valued and morale is high because leaders recognise, nurture and reward their contributions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding.

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They display very positive attitudes towards school and lessons, demonstrating perseverance and resilience in their learning. This is reflected in attendance being well above average and no exclusions having occurred in recent years. Pupils are courteous and polite with each other, staff and visitors. Many pupils say 'Ossie's is the place to be'.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to take responsibilities and make decisions about the school, especially through the eco-school work and the school council. They are particularly appreciative of the 'buddy+' scheme where older pupils act as buddies, wear purple for easy identification and 'are especially good if you are feeling unhappy'.
- A few parents and carers raised concerns regarding how effectively the school deals with bullying. Most pupils said they felt safe in school and most parents and carers agreed. Inspectors found procedures to deal with bullying were secure, although not always communicated to parents and carers fully. Pupils spoken to have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, were clear on who to speak to if they had any issues and almost all were happy that any bullying stopped quickly when teachers intervened.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have extensive opportunities for personal reflection and pupils independently access the prayer corner, frequently writing moving thoughts and feelings about others. Pupils know right from wrong and show great care of each other. The excellent links with a school in Sudan help them develop empathy for others and to better understand the democratic workings of the United Kingdom.

The leadership and management are outstanding.

- All leaders have extremely high expectations for the outcomes of pupils including the most vulnerable. They are tenacious in ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunities and access to the curriculum, and achieve to the best of their ability.
- All senior and middle managers continually review and improve provision to ensure it consistently meets the needs and interests of pupils in the school. One teacher summed up what many others said, 'This is a place where people want to stay. The headteacher is not afraid to take risks as long as it leads to better outcomes for pupils.'
- Performance management procedures are secure with comprehensive plans to extend systems even further. The leadership of teaching and performance procedures ensure consistently good and outstanding teaching, sharing of best practice and professional development opportunities that meet both school and individual staff priorities.
- The curriculum is fit for purpose and enables all pupils to achieve outstanding outcomes. It is currently being reviewed as part of the conversion to academy status. Extra-curricular activities are broad and well attended. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about enrichment Fridays where they choose from a menu of activities that utilises staff expertise and interests to extend learning experiences beyond the formal curriculum. They enjoy gaining

'stripes' for their commitment to clubs and enrichment activities such as sign language, working in the local community or for winning events during sports activities.

- Parents and carers are well informed about the school's work, curriculum developments and how well their child is achieving. A broad range of strategies are employed for communicating with parents and carers, including the school's website, newsletters and text messages. Parent and carer volunteers are also encouraged. Leaders are clear that they 'demand' much of their parents and carers in order to generate a genuine and productive partnership. Most parents and carers would recommend this school to others.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very experienced and between them hold a broad range of educational experience. This enables them to challenge robustly the school's work and provide exceptionally high levels of support based on improvement priorities, including the recent conversion to an academy.
 - They are fully engaged in monitoring the school's work, the headteacher's performance and in maintaining the high standards everyone sets for themselves across the school. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and meet all requirements.
-

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	138165
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	406770

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 – 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Harold Stephens
Headteacher	Ron Jenkinson
Date of previous school inspection	16 – 17 January 2008
Telephone number	01305 262897
Fax number	01035 251395
Email address	office@stosmunds.dorset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

