

Lockyer's Middle School

Blandford Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, BH21 3HQ

Inspection dates

25–26 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and this has ensured that all staff and governors work together to drive forward the work of this rapidly improving school.
- Senior and middle leaders have high ambitions and a clear sense of purpose which have secured improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Teaching is securely good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Teachers are held in high regard by students.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers to provide additional support during lessons and in small group sessions. Consequently, disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress.
- The most-able students make good progress because learning activities engage and motivate them.
- Students enjoy learning, behave well and show enthusiasm for what they are learning during lessons.
- The broad range of subjects meets the needs of students well. The wide variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities support the development of students' academic, social and sporting skills.
- There are rich opportunities for students' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development. Consequently, students have great pride in their school and have strong empathy for those who are less fortunate than themselves.
- Students are well cared for and feel safe when in lessons and around the secure school site.
- The school has worked very well with the local authority and in partnership with specialist and national school leaders. Consequently, school leaders are very reflective and this has been a strength in securing improvements since the last inspection.
- Governance has been strengthened; governors provide very effective support for school improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop students' curiosity and interest in order to extend learning.
- Not all marking provides appropriate guidance for students about how to improve their work or deepen their thinking and understanding.
- Teachers' written comments in students' books are not always accurately spelt; some comments do not provide good models in the use of correct grammar or punctuation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, including 16 which were jointly observed with school leaders. Inspectors also conducted a range of shorter visits to lessons to observe students' attitudes to learning and the support provided by specialist teachers or teaching assistants.
- Inspectors conducted a scrutiny of students' work and looked at students' written work during lesson observations to check the frequency, accuracy, quality and impact of teachers' marking.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, teachers, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 78 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and two written comments from parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed attendance records, documentation relating to exclusions, behaviour logs and records of bullying and racist incidents.
- Inspectors took account of the school's work to support disabled students and those with special educational needs, including specific interventions and the impact of specialist teachers and teaching assistants.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to the school's spending of the pupil premium, the primary physical education and sport premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Inspectors looked at documentation relating to other areas of the school's work including the school's self-evaluation and action plan, information about the progress and attainment of all groups of students currently at the school, the work of governors and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Una Maria Stevens

Additional Inspector

Andrew Harris

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This middle-deemed secondary school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- School leaders have been supported by specialist and national leaders of education from the Hamwic Trust to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments of students' work and to validate judgements made about the quality of teaching.
- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. Seventeen of 26 teachers have been replaced within the last 18 months. The majority of middle leaders have been appointed within the last year.
- The governing body has been restructured and reduced in size. There are now 12 governors with a core group of six who have strategic roles.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds.
- Approximately one in 10 students is disabled or has special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs. This is below the national average.
- About one in seven students is eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding for those who are looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is approximately half the national average.
- Approximately one in ten students leaves the school at the end of Year 6 to take up places in local grammar or independent schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement by ensuring that:
 - all teachers' marking provides appropriate guidance for students, especially middle ability students, about how to improve or extend their work
 - all teachers' written comments in students' books are correctly spelt and set good examples in the use of grammar and punctuation
 - teachers build on students' curiosity and enthusiasm for what they are learning to deepen their thinking and understanding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has taken decisive and firm action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. This has been central to the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and in students' achievement.
- The family culture within the school ensures that there is good promotion of equality. Students behave well because they feel supported and cared for and know that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The headteacher's clear vision for the school has established a strong sense of ambition among leaders, staff and governors. All now work purposefully together as a team to drive forward the work of this rapidly improving school.
- The school's processes for assessing its effectiveness are rigorous and rightly identify areas for further improvement. Extensive work has been undertaken with the local authority and specialist and national leaders of education to confirm judgements made by school leaders. They have also confirmed the accuracy of teachers' assessments of students' work. Consequently, the information about students' achievement is reliable and judgements about the quality of teaching are accurate.
- Monitoring of the impact of teachers' marking does not always identify errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar by teachers. Consequently, marking does not consistently help students to improve these skills.
- There has been a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, including through new appointments. Seventeen of 26 teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. This has also had a positive impact on improving the quality of subject and other leadership. All subject and other leaders now effectively secure improvements within their own areas of responsibility. They work together to ensure consistency in the application of procedures to support students and to promote high standards.
- Effective work by pastoral leaders ensures that students are well prepared for transfer to secondary schools both at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8.
- Leaders hold all teachers accountable for the standards achieved by the students they teach through managing their performance. They have used well-devised training for staff very effectively to develop teachers' skills. For example, this has enabled teachers to devise learning activities that motivate students, especially the most able and disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed. They provide effective support during lessons and are skilfully able to help students to work things out for themselves.
- Systems to track students' achievement have been greatly strengthened. Information is collected every half term and all staff use this to identify where and when students need additional help or support. Consequently, those who are underachieving are quickly identified and helped to make good progress.
- Students have a broad range of opportunities to develop their academic, social and sporting skills, including through extra-curricular activities. Very effective use has been made of the primary physical education and sport premium to increase the opportunities for students, especially girls, to engage in physical activity and develop healthy lifestyles.
- The effective promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain. It is evident in students' pride in their school and in their great empathy for those who are less fortunate than themselves. This has resulted in students leading the school's work with charities and the introduction of a school tuck shop which sells only fairly produced stock.
- The school council, together with student governors, represents the views of students. These views are taken seriously by senior leaders and governors. Consideration is currently being given to the introduction of politics lessons for all year groups following students' interest in the lowering of the voting age to 16 in the Scottish Referendum.
- The pupil premium is used very effectively to fund additional support or to increase opportunities for students to engage in a wide range of activities. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers has narrowed significantly for students in the current Year 8 and is almost non-existent in all other year groups.
- The school meets the current statutory requirements for safeguarding effectively. Students recognise the extensive work that has been undertaken to improve site security and keep them safe.
- Support for school leaders from the local authority has been less prescribed this year in recognition of the improvements the school has made since the previous inspection. Training for newly appointed middle leaders is rapidly helping them to develop their leadership skills.
- Many of the policies and procedures developed since the last inspection have yet to fully impact on outcomes for students.

■ The governance of the school:

- Following the last inspection the governing body restructured and the number of governors reduced from 18 to 12. A core group of six governors holds strategic roles; all governors are committed to the school and have the skills necessary to support and hold school leaders to account. As a result, governance is effective. Governor training has strengthened the way in which governors scrutinise the information provided to them about the progress of students. Governors have a good understanding of the management of teachers' performance and how the school tackles any underperformance. They are therefore robust in exercising their role in the arrangements for teachers' pay progression. The work to hold school leaders accountable for the spending of the pupil premium is very thorough and carefully focused on securing rapid improvements in the achievement of disadvantaged students. Governors have a good understanding of how students' progress in a middle school is measured. They use this understanding to compare the school with other schools locally and nationally. Good use of financial expertise ensures that the school is financially stable. Governors have received appropriate training in child protection and safe recruitment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students display good attitudes towards learning; they are keen to learn and are enthusiastic about what they are learning. Their natural curiosity means that they ask interesting questions in lessons and try to find links between the things they are learning. However, when learning activities are not carefully matched to students' needs they sometimes lack the confidence to try harder work and this can slow progress, especially for middle-ability students.
- At social times students integrate well and play together in mixed groups. They readily and sensibly engage in board games or other structured activities during wet breaks.
- Students are appropriately equipped for lessons and punctual. They take pride in their work. This is evident from some of the high quality of work in books and the absence of graffiti or doodling.
- Students are all polite and courteous towards staff and visitors. They are caring towards each other and understand the hurt that can be caused by bullying or teasing. Consequently, incidents of bullying are extremely low. All students spoken to know who to go to for help and express confidence in the ability of staff to act appropriately and quickly to address any concerns they may have.
- There were no incidents of racist behaviour last year and none this academic year.
- The use of fixed-term exclusions is very rare. Effective use has been made of adult mentors to help students understand why their behaviour was wrong and there have been no incidents of students re-offending. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last 10 years.
- The behaviour policy has recently been reviewed and strengthened. Students appreciate the now clear linking of rewards to good behaviour and positive attitudes. They are keen to be recognised in the 'Rewards Book' and in assemblies.
- Students aspire to hold positions of responsibility within the school which include student governors, house captains, 'rights respecting champions' and librarians. They are proud to wear the badges that denote their role and take their duties seriously.
- Attendance has improved and is now slightly above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students are rigorously carried out. Records are meticulously kept and child protection training for all staff is comprehensive.
- Effective action is taken to keep students safe at school and there have been significant improvements to site security. These include new fencing, locking of gates and a high staff presence at the start and end of the school day. Staff ensure that students are easily able to see the adult in charge during break times.
- Students spoken to are very appreciative of the reception staff who they see as caring and interested in their well-being.
- Students are required to be signed out by a responsible adult if they need to leave the school during the

day. However, lesson-by-lesson checks are not routinely used to monitor attendance throughout the school day.

- The vast majority of parents and carers and school staff believe that the school's arrangements for keeping students safe are at least good.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations through computer lessons and tutor periods. Local police officers visit the school to teach students about the dangers associated with the use of the internet and social media.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Teaching across the curriculum is good and there are some examples of outstanding practice.
- Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with students. This means that students have confidence in their teachers which helps them to learn well. As Year 8 students said, 'Teachers know what they are doing and the work has become more challenging.'
- Teaching of the most-able students is very effective. The work set for these students in different subjects is demanding and enables students to apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, the most-able students were able to make suggestions about the impact of environmental change and inherited characteristics on the evolution of the human skull.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is good. Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that the work challenges students to think for themselves, to consider different solutions and to explain their ideas. Consequently, students make rapid gains in their learning and achieve well.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. Students respond well to the challenge and clearly aspire to complete the most difficult aspect of the work provided for them.
- Skilful questioning is used to test and check students' understanding during lessons. Students are keen to contribute and often ask interesting questions about what they are learning. However, sometimes teachers do not develop this curiosity to deepen students' understanding or to help students make links in their learning.
- Teachers carefully plan work to interest and motivate students. There is a buzz in classrooms that clearly evidences students' enthusiasm and engagement in learning. However, when learning activities are not carefully matched to students' needs they sometimes lack the confidence to try harder work and this can slow progress, especially for middle-ability students.
- All teachers mark students' work regularly and students are expected to respond to their teachers' comments. In the best practice there is evidence of purposeful dialogue between the student and the teacher which ensures that students improve their work and learn the lessons from making corrections. However, not all marking provides appropriate guidance for students about how to improve their work or deepen their thinking and understanding and this can limit progress.
- Teachers' written comments in students' books are not always accurately spelt; some comments do not use grammar or punctuation correctly. This gives a poor example to students in improving their written work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All students are assessed in mathematics, reading and writing on entry to the school in Year 5. Leaders set ambitious targets for students' progress from these starting points. Information provided by the school about the progress and achievement of students currently on roll indicates that students in each year are on course to achieve very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014 almost all Year 6 students achieved the expected standard in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.
- In 2014 the attainment of Year 8 students was above that expected for their age and higher in mathematics than in reading and writing. Students in all year groups are on track to reach levels above that expected for their age by the end of the year in each of these subjects.
- The school has worked effectively to accelerate the progress and achievement of the most-able students. Challenging work is consistently set for these students across the curriculum. Students entered for the Level 6 tests in mathematics continue to make good progress and information provided by the school

shows that the majority are currently working at Level 7. Similarly very high standards are evident for the most-able students across all year groups in mathematics, reading and writing.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar good progress to their peers. This is because they are well supported and carefully planned interventions, including specialist teaching, small group work and one-to-one support, help them to acquire the necessary skills to make gains in their learning.
- In lessons, teaching assistants do not do the work for the students they support. They skilfully coach and support students to do the work themselves. This helps to deepen learning and accelerate progress.
- Very effective use has been made of the Year 7 catch-up fund to help students who fall below the expected level in the Key Stage 2 tests to catch up with their peers. Intervention is carefully matched to the students' needs. Within one-and-a-half terms almost all students in receipt of support work securely within Level 4 in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school. The gap between the progress and achievement of these students and their peers is closing rapidly. In 2014 these students were approximately three terms behind their peers, and similar students nationally, at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Information provided by the school shows that these gaps have been halved in all subjects. The gaps between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers are very narrow in all other year groups.
- Students are encouraged to read widely and often. There are daily opportunities for guided reading which means that students' reading competency is steadily improving. Students confidently read out loud during lessons and there are frequent opportunities for students to read and assess each other's work. Students select books which are appropriate for their age and which help them to develop their reading skills. This ensures that the material they read is meaningful and appeals to their interests.

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	113862
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	453700

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ernie Battey
Headteacher	Mark Legge
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 March 2013
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