

West Moors Middle School

Heathfield Way, West Moors, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 0DA

Inspection dates 23–24 April 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.

- Since the last inspection, there have been many improvements to this school's work.
- The new headteacher has been very strong in bringing about substantial improvements across the school.
- The capacity of the governing body to monitor and challenge the school's leaders has been strengthened and the governors now provide very effective support.
- Changes in the school's leadership team and within the staff body have brought about positive benefits.
- The relentless drive to bring about changes and ensure that all students make good progress has been highly successful.
- The school uses the funds allocated to it effectively to promote all students' progress.
- Students' progress in mathematics is now much more rapid than it was at the time of the last inspection.
- Teachers plan learning activities well, using information about students and their specific learning needs. This promotes good progress by all groups of students.
- The school's work in keeping students safe is good.
- Students demonstrate good standards of behaviour; they are courteous and respectful to each other, to staff and to visitors.
- Students develop confident life skills, and benefit from a wide range of activities and clubs, including visits to France, London and other cultural visits.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and prepares students well for the next stage of their education, and their future adult lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not yet promote consistently rapid learning and high achievement.
- Teachers sometimes give work that is too easy and do not encourage all students to think deeply. Students do not always act on the advice given by their teachers about how to improve their work.
- Students' attitudes to their learning are good rather than excellent because too few display a passion and eagerness for learning.
- The attendance of a very small proportion of students is below average.
- Teachers working in this small school have relatively few chances to work collaboratively with other teachers, and so they have few opportunities to improve their skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning in 15 lessons. Senior staff accompanied inspectors on some visits to lessons. In addition, inspectors made short visits to tutor time and looked at the school’s provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. One inspector listened to individual students reading aloud and talked to students about their reading.
- Meetings were held with four members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, teachers and two representative groups of students. Informal conversations were held with students around the school between lesson times. An inspector had a conversation with a senior officer from the local authority and a meeting with the school’s evaluation partner focused on reviewing the progress made since the last inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined samples of students’ work to look at the rate of progress and the quality of the assessment and marking processes. They also looked at progress data, documents about the school’s development and evaluation, safeguarding information and records about attendance and behaviour. The records showing the impact of professional development for staff were also examined.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 30 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View). All members of staff were invited to contribute their views in a questionnaire and 16 responses were received and taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Trigg

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Moors Middle School is considerably smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The school roll had fallen in recent years, but in the last year it has started to grow again.
- The current headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. There have also been several changes to the teaching team over the last two years.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage. Very few students do not speak English as their first language. A very small proportion of students are of Gypsy or Romany heritage, or are from Traveller families.
- The proportion of students known to be supported by the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. This is additional funding to support students eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- In Years 7 and 8, a tenth of students benefits from additional help in mathematics and English, funded by the government's catch-up programme.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school does not offer any alternative provision; all students on roll are educated on the school site.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Support has been given to the school by a national leader of education from Allenbourn Middle School, which is a member of the Wimborne Teaching School Alliance and provides support to other schools across Dorset and beyond.
- The governing body has also received support from the local authority and from independent consultants since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all students learn exceptionally well and make more rapid progress by:
 - teachers getting the most out of every student in their class in every lesson, both in terms of their work rate and in the amount of thought and effort students are required to put into their work
 - checking that students act on the feedback they are given and carry out any improvements that are needed to help their learning
 - helping students to develop a strong desire to learn new skills and knowledge and show a love of learning.
- Improve the attendance of the small minority of students who do not attend regularly.
- Provide more opportunities for staff to work with teachers from other schools, in order to develop skills and share professional expertise more widely.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The very high expectations of the headteacher and other leaders are clear to all members of the school community. The standard of teaching has been improved and students are keen to learn. This has resulted in current students making much faster progress. The morale of members of staff is high; they fully support the school's leaders in raising standards.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school, recognising both its strengths and weaknesses. Their determination to improve standards and the learning for all students is shared by all staff.
- Teaching has been improved through strong leadership. Senior staff and other teachers, members of the governing body and the school's evaluation partner carry out very regular reviews of teaching standards. Support has been given by the Wimborne Teaching School Alliance, including some opportunities for teachers from this school to work with teachers from schools judged to be outstanding.
- The local authority has actively supported the school in improving the quality of teaching and securing more rapid progress for students. Regular monitoring visits have taken place, and records show a positive impact on the leadership and management of the school.
- The school's system for checking progress of students efficiently identifies those who are in danger of falling behind. The school has developed highly effective ways of intervening and giving additional support to these students, so that issues can usually be sorted quickly.
- This is a small school with relatively few staff; as a consequence, the opportunities for working with other teachers are limited and this means that teachers do not often have the benefit of sharing with others. To counterbalance this, the school has devised ways for teachers to meet and share ideas with teachers from other schools. Teachers confirmed that this has been very helpful for them to develop their skills, and so the school intends to expand these opportunities further. The school has worked painstakingly to meet the challenge of recruiting teachers who are suitably qualified, particularly to lead the teaching of mathematics. There has been good success to date and subject leadership is now good. Middle leaders have worked with all colleagues to develop effective teaching programmes so that better progress is being made.
- Through a broad and balanced curriculum, the school ensures that students are being well prepared for the next stage of their education, and for life in modern Britain. The school promotes democracy and British values, for example through the participation of students as hosts in a weekly social lunch club for senior members of the community, this helps students to develop respect and understanding of different age groups in society. Students develop leadership skills by involvement in fundraising for charities; the selection of the particular charity helps to develop an understanding about democracy and joint decision making.
- Opportunities are widely used to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences. Activities include visits to places of cultural interest, such as museums in London, and an exchange partnership with a school in France. African artwork forms a focus for a piece of artwork. The school's leaders are aware that in their locality there are limited chances for students to meet representatives from other cultures and so they plan to balance this by generating opportunities for students to meet people from other cultures and faiths. The school invites visitors to give presentations to students, enhancing their experiences and understanding. The school plans to extend these events even further because they are bringing worthwhile benefits to their students. .
- Students also have numerous opportunities to participate in sports activities and school clubs. These activities increase their enjoyment and help to develop personal skills and confidence.
- The pupil premium funding is used to help disadvantaged students very effectively, so that there are now no significant gaps in the progress made by these students compared with others in the school, or nationally. The school ensures that disadvantaged students are able to make good academic progress and personal development by using the funding in a variety of ways to support them.
- The sport premium funding provided by the government for the younger students is used effectively. A particular emphasis is to provide swimming lessons for students in Years 5 and 6. Students spoke about these sessions with obvious enjoyment, and progress with their skills is acknowledged.
- High importance is given to ensuring that there is equality of opportunity and any sources of potential discrimination are removed.
- The school's arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet all statutory requirements. Systems are robust and given the highest priority, including the regular and appropriate training of staff.
- There is strong evidence of the focus on developing literacy skills throughout the school. Teachers were

seen to use opportunities to check and promote students' understanding, including subject specific terminology. Good attention is also given to strengthening students' use of numeracy skills across all subjects.

- The school works closely with the local first schools so that when students transfer at the end of Year 4 they are well prepared to make the change. In a similar manner, the school works diligently with the other local middle school and the upper schools to which its students progress to ensure a smooth transition. Older students are well prepared for the change to the upper school, and know about the curriculum choices that they will have.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The work of the governing body is now very effective in supporting the school's senior teachers to bring about improvements. Since the last inspection, the governing body has received additional training and advice from the local authority and from independent consultants. As a result, the governors are in a strong position to challenge the school's leaders and monitor the progress of students.
 - Governors understand the importance of the data produced nationally and within the school. They receive regular reports from the senior leaders and other teachers about the school's work, and governors make regular visits to the school to see how students are learning and progressing.
 - The school manages its financial assets so that staff and resources are used effectively. Governors review the effectiveness of teaching and make sure that the pay of teachers is linked to the progress of students.
 - Members of the governing body ensure that they are represented at all school events to provide an opportunity for parents to communicate with them. They meet all their current statutory duties, including arrangements for the safeguarding of students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students are polite and courteous to each other, to members of staff and to visitors. Students are confident when talking to visitors and engage in reflective conversations.
- Students have consistently good attitudes to all aspects of learning and this has a positive impact on their progress across all subjects. Students confirmed to inspectors that they enjoy learning across a wide range of subjects.
- Too few students show a deep love of learning or a strong desire to learn new skills and acquire knowledge. This is one reason why achievement is good rather than outstanding.
- Uniform is worn smartly and students are well organised with the items they need for their activities. When they move around the school they do so quickly and arrive at their classrooms promptly. They cooperate well with staff and each other, and respond to teachers' instructions quickly. Inspectors witnessed no low level disruption of learning, records show that disruption is very uncommon, and if it occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Students are proud of their school, their own work and their achievements. All users respect the buildings and facilities; for example, there was a total absence of litter on the school site. Artwork and samples of students' work are displayed, and students enjoy participating in activities such as gardening.
- Attendance of students at school is broadly average, and improving. The vast majority of students have good attendance records. There is, however, a small group of students who have particularly challenging circumstances, who do not attend regularly enough. The school is helping those who experience difficulties in attending in a variety of ways, following up absences rigorously and supporting students' learning and development so that these students are keen to attend school. Other agencies are closely involved in this work when necessary.
- The school has a well-developed recognition system to encourage good behaviour and promote good progress.
- A very small minority of students are challenged by the expectations of acceptable behaviour at break and lunchtime and the school has invested in a programme of supervision which is combined with catch-up work. These students are now behaving more positively and are clearly enjoying their successes; very few of them do not look forward to attending school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school engages the help of other agencies, including local police officers, so that, considering their

ages, students are exceptionally well prepared to face the challenge of keeping themselves safe. They are very aware of potential dangers when using the internet, for example.

- Students are appropriately knowledgeable about different forms of bullying including cyber-based bullying. They know how to seek help if they need it, and representative students told inspectors that they are totally confident that if a matter is reported to the school it will be dealt with effectively and quickly. Staff and parents also expressed the view that students behave well and are safe in the school environment.
- Whilst nearly all students are respectful towards others, on very rare occasions the school has to deal with incidents poor behaviour. These exceptional incidents are handled sensitively and effectively so that students do not repeat the offence.
- The school's student support team gives very effective support and guidance for all students, responding to the various needs of different users. Students know that they can access support and guidance to help them to be safe and successful.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the last inspection there has been a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching. Inspectors gathered evidence from observations, students' work and assessment records to endorse the school leadership's view that teaching is typically good now, and sometimes better.
- The school has developed processes to collect information about the progress made by individual students, and identifies their specific strengths and needs. Teachers use this information effectively to plan activities so that all learners are given opportunities to make good progress.
- Where teaching is not yet outstanding, learning is held back because students sometimes dwell for too long on work which is at the same level and does not help to extend their thinking or deepen their skills further. This is the main reason why achievement is good rather than outstanding.
- In all subjects, emphasis is given to improving students' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. In a science activity about fuels there was a good example of using an opportunity to develop skills in mathematics as students made calculations about the energy values.
- Varied tasks and learning activities engage students' interest, and teachers are skilful in asking questions which are designed to check the understanding of students. Where there are difficulties, teachers usually follow this up with adjustments to the tasks to address problems quickly.
- Generally the written feedback given to students about their work is helpful, but it is not always followed up by checking that students carry out the corrections or changes that were advised.
- Students usually respond positively to the clear and high expectations of their teachers and other adults.
- Students with special educational needs or disabilities generally learn as well as other students. The school has made special provision for these students; this is helping these students to make faster progress. This year even more provision is in place for a particular group of students who had fallen behind; they are now catching up with their peers.
- The school also makes appropriate provision for the most-able students so that they are given challenging tasks and are helped to make good progress.
- Good attention is given to developing reading skills and all students become confident readers. The well-stocked library is in a central location and students regularly borrow books. Many students indicated to inspectors that they enjoy reading. A small sample of students read aloud to an inspector, they were confident in using a variety of techniques to tackle unfamiliar words. Time dedicated to silent reading, for example in tutor time, has helped to improve students' skills.
- Inspectors saw many examples of the effective promotion of literacy skills throughout the school. Key words are clearly displayed and teachers carefully check that students understand words and terms.
- Homework is used to support all students' learning, with an increasing emphasis as student's progress through the school.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school in Year 5 with standards which are broadly typical of other students nationally. The school thoroughly assesses all students soon after they arrive to gauge their skills and knowledge, and identifies the particular strengths and needs of individuals so that teaching is matched to their requirements.
- The school sets challenging targets for students' progress, these are clearly conveyed to all members of staff. This has helped to make teachers more ambitious for their students, and has had a clear impact on raising standards throughout the school.

- In 2014, the proportion of Year 6 students who achieved at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average for students aged 11 years. Students made faster progress in 2014 compared to students in previous years. There was particularly rapid progress made in mathematics and writing. Spelling was identified as a particular issue and numerous strategies have been successfully used to address the shortcomings in this skill area.
- Inspectors looked very closely at the school's assessment of students currently in Year 6 and Year 8. These records, and samples of students' work, demonstrate that further improvements have been made in this academic year and current students are making more rapid progress. Progress in mathematics is now good, a significant improvement over previous years. Inspectors saw that particular attention was being given to building the confidence of students when solving problems, students were able to use a variety of valid techniques to perform calculations.
- The school has checked the accuracy of its own assessments by using the local authority representatives to carry out monitoring assessments. It has also worked closely with teachers from other schools in all cases; the school's accuracy has been confirmed.
- In Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged students made better overall progress than others within the school. Disadvantaged students were about a term ahead of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics, but around two terms behind in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In 2014, compared with other Year 6 students nationally, these disadvantaged students made similar progress. In writing, they were ahead by over a term; there were gaps of about half a term behind in mathematics and reading, but a bigger gap in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Current students of all ages in the school are making more rapid progress than they did previously. Gaps are closing rapidly across the school, and in some areas the disadvantaged students perform better than their classmates.
- In 2014 every one of the most-able students in Year 6 made good progress in all subject areas. The progress made by the most able students overall is in line with that made by similar students in other schools.
- Good progress is being made by students with disabilities or special educational needs; the school is meeting the needs of these students well.
- For students who have fallen behind in English or mathematics in Key Stage 2 there is effective help so that they nearly all catch up with their peers during year 7.

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	113861
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	462482

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Whale
Headteacher	Cindy Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2013
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