

# Cranborne Middle School

Cranborne, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 5RP

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The headteacher was absent throughout the previous academic year. He has been back full time in his post for just four weeks.
- Governors did not provide enough support and challenge to the school while the interim leadership was in post. As a result, there has been a decline in standards.
- Although the previous year's results in writing were broadly in line with the national average, the results in mathematics were significantly below the national average. In 2016, the results were not strong in either writing or mathematics. Interim school leaders have not taken remedial action quickly enough.
- Expectations are not high enough in a range of subjects. Pupils are unsure of the subject specifics in their learning, particularly in geography, history and science.
- Some teachers do not ensure that pupils are learning skills and content at an appropriate depth according to their age.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. The monitoring of teaching is not rigorous. Pupils receive inconsistent learning experiences.
- Frequently, teachers are not following the school's marking and feedback policy. They are not providing specific guidance on what pupils need to do to make better progress.
- Pupils are not offered enough challenge in their learning. Hence, the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils are not achieving their potential.

### The school has the following strengths

- The pupils are kept safe and feel safe at the school.
- The pupils' personal development and welfare are supported well. They are prepared for life in modern Britain. Their understanding of tolerance and respect for diversity is good.
- Pupils behave well and show respect and courtesy to each other and to staff and visitors.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding are achieving as well as others in school and nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good care.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that senior and middle leaders are more rigorous in the monitoring of teaching and learning so that:
  - teaching becomes consistently good
  - subject leaders have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - the school's assessment, marking and feedback policy is applied consistently so that pupils understand the next steps to make in their learning to improve further.
- Ensure that governors hold leaders to account rigorously so that standards improve rapidly.
- Ensure that the website is compliant so that parents and members of the wider community have a full understanding of all aspects of the school's achievements, use of government funding and school policies.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The governors and interim leadership of the school did not maintain the high standards that had existed with regard to the progress and achievement of pupils.
- The systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching are not focused sufficiently on key aspects, such as the challenge for the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils. They do not pay detailed attention to teachers' expectations and subject knowledge. Pupils' potential to achieve has not been met as a result.
- Teaching is not consistently good and does not support the progress of pupils effectively.
- The curriculum of the school is broad and balanced. However, the content of the topics and subjects is limited. Planning for the development of skills does not test pupils sufficiently in deeper knowledge and understanding in their learning.
- The self-evaluation of the school is not incisive and accurate. It presents an inflated picture and does not focus on the critical areas for improvement. As a consequence of this, the school's planning concentrates on some, but not all, of the most important aspects.
- Leaders have improved the processes for managing the performance of teachers. However, there is room for further development. Targets are not securing enough impact in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school has a calendar for quality assurance of the crucial features of school life. The practice needs to be applied rigorously so that it influences better outcomes more swiftly.
- The enrichment activities that the school offers are wide-ranging and successful. Pupils have ample opportunities to gain leadership skills in sports, mathematics, languages and promoting safer play at breaktimes.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent wisely. It enables pupils to play musical instruments and engage in school trips, as well as make good progress in their learning.
- The sport premium funding provides coaching in football, rugby and gymnastics, which benefits both staff and pupils. Pupils are able to take part in more competitive activities as well as keeping fit.
- The school is a very caring community. The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are given effective support. Many have highly complex needs. One parent commented that 'the school has saved my child'.
- Pupils are taught an effective curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in assemblies, religious education and the personal, social, health and economic education lessons. The culture of the school ensures that this curriculum is evident in all areas of the pupils' school life. The promotion of British values is secure, apart from pupils' understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. The school is aware of this and wants to introduce the topic sensitively.

### Governance of the school

- There has been a high turnover of governors in the recent past. This has had an

impact on their ability to lead strategically and efficiently.

- Governors do not understand assessment information well enough to ensure the immediacy of action to improve outcomes, as and when necessary. They ask questions but accept some responses too readily.
- Governors' understanding of the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of pupils currently in the school is at an embryonic stage. School leaders have worked with them in this area comparatively recently.
- The management of finances is a strength and governors have maintained a positive budget in difficult times.
- Governors are transparent in their activities and accountable. They are keen to do their best. The external review will help those new to governance, which is the majority, to understand their roles fully and take more exacting steps when needed.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have moved beyond compliance by upholding a culture that encourages personal safety and well-being for all pupils and staff. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns. Staff are trained on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Staff work with parents and external agencies to monitor and support the more vulnerable pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Teaching is too variable as assessment information is not used precisely enough to plan learning. Some pupils are not provided with work that builds on prior learning; this limits the progress they make.
- In subjects such as geography, history and science, work is not sequential. Pupils transfer to new topics without embedding skills in any depth.
- The school's marking and feedback policy is explicit in its expectations of what teachers should offer to pupils as guidance to help them make good progress in their work. Nevertheless, too often teachers do not comply with the school's policy. The best practice inspires pupils to reassess their work and enables them to make rapid improvement when learning, but this does not happen regularly.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are not being stretched or helped to deepen their thinking.
- In order to provide more opportunities for successful extended writing experiences, teachers of English have been teaching history as well. The planning of this change has not been precise enough. Evaluation has not considered the teaching of subject-specific outcomes. In history, learning is not focused on the acquisition of skills that pupils need if they are to succeed in this subject through secondary education.
- Pupils read well. The most able pupils are fluent and able to add characterisation and tone to their reading. Pupils with lower ability are resilient and use phonetic methods to work out more difficult words. Their understanding of the texts is sound.
- Pupils are encouraged to read. They are given reading lists that appropriately reflect their age and interests.

- The relationships between pupils and teachers are good in lessons. Where disruptive behaviour exists, it is dealt with quickly and does not interfere with the learning of others.
- Pupils are given appropriate homework tasks. The majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, agreed with this.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are respectful and keen to do well.
- Pupils are punctual to school and lessons.
- Pupils value the opportunities provided for them, especially in the extra-curricular pursuits and leadership opportunities.
- The school employs a counsellor to support the mental health and other complex issues of pupils. Her involvement with some pupils has helped them to remain in school and continue with their learning.
- The majority of pupils feel safe at school. They understand how to protect themselves from risk, including online. All parents who responded to Parent View wrote that their child feels safe at school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. Pupils confirm that bullying is not tolerated. On the few occasions that bullying occurs, it is dealt with promptly.
- Healthy attitudes are encouraged. The school's catering is of a high standard and nutritious. There are plenty of sports activities during and after school.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education from an emotional and social perspective. A headteacher from a local secondary school said that the pupils integrate well.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour is, typically, considerate and polite. It reflects the care given by staff to pupils. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils.
- Leaders are proactive in checking behaviour logs. When a problem occurs with groups of pupils, action is taken which reduces repeat offences. In this way, high expectations of behaviour are maintained.
- The site is respected and there is no evidence of litter.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride.
- The attendance of the more vulnerable pupils has improved because of the focused attention by staff.
- Attendance and persistent absence have been better than the national average for many years.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Require improvement

- The outcomes at key stage 2 in 2016 were low for the ability levels of the pupils.
- In English, the progress in writing is significantly below the national average and attainment is in the lowest 10% nationally. This is reflected in the achievements of disadvantaged pupils, too. Progress and attainment in reading were better. Pupils were achieving in line with the national average overall. The most able pupils achieved well in reading.
- At key stage 3, too many pupils do not make good progress. This was reflected in the work seen in pupils' books in many subjects.
- There have been improvements in mathematics, as outcomes were significantly below the national average at key stage 2 in 2015. Pupils are now achieving in line with other pupils nationally overall, although too few of the most able pupils are achieving their potential. There is a similar pattern in key stage 3.
- The school has recognised that girls are not making good progress. As yet, there has not been enough time for any significant impact.
- The school's new assessment system underpins pupils' learning from Year 5 to Year 8. It ranges from 'emerging in learning' to having a 'mastery of learning'. Pupils make progress but not enough of the middle- and high-ability pupils make progress to the 'mastery' level.
- The gap in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others in most year groups and subjects has diminished in the school. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in comparison with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are cared for well, but some pupils could be making better progress. Progress in mathematics is better than it is in English. Some of these pupils struggle with grammar, spelling and punctuation, in particular.
- School leaders have recognised that spelling is an issue for some pupils and have made this a focus for improvement. They have invested in tried and tested methodologies to ensure that progress is rapid.

## School details

Unique reference number	113853
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10001049

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Walter
Headteacher	Craig Watson
Telephone number	01725 517 348
Website	<a href="http://www.cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk">http://www.cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk">office@cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2012

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the detail of the curriculum, spending of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, and the business and financial interests of the governors, on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized middle deemed secondary school. It has a higher proportion of girls, fewer pupils eligible for the pupil premium and more pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons of which nine were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with pupils from Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 representing all ability levels, disadvantaged pupils as well as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities in formal meetings, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- Information was evaluated, including that relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online Parent View survey, the 25 responses to the staff online survey and the 61 pupil responses to the online survey.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Roger Garrett

Ofsted Inspector

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