

Inspection of St Osmund's Church of England Middle School

Barnes Way, Dorchester DT1 2DZ

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' expectations of pupils are clear and ambitious. These help pupils to make good progress. Most pupils are keen to take part in lessons and behave well in class.

Pupils are happy at St Osmund's. They feel safe at school and attend well. The atmosphere is warm and friendly. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Bullying is uncommon and is dealt with well when it happens. Staff and pupils understand how the school's Christian values of hope, community, respect and love apply to them. Most strive to live by these values.

Parents and pupils appreciate the many opportunities for personal development that the school provides. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama, dance and art. Parents comment on how inclusive these activities are. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged get the support they need to take part.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is ambitious. It promotes equality and diversity. Leaders ensure that new knowledge builds on what pupils have already learned. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects which prepare them well for their studies at upper school. Leaders have made sure that pupils catch up with learning and experiences they missed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The overwhelming majority of pupils follow the same ambitious curriculum. However, the needs of pupils with SEND are not always considered enough when the curriculum is designed.

Teachers know the subjects they teach well. They are clear about the essential knowledge pupils need to learn. Teachers adapt learning activities to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. All staff know how to support pupils to learn well. Teachers check that pupils have understood what they have learned. They ask questions that probe and deepen pupils' understanding.

Reading is a top priority for leaders. All pupils read books that help them to improve their vocabulary and to learn about issues such as race and migration. Leaders know which pupils cannot read well enough. These pupils get the support they need to catch up with their peers.

Behaviour in lessons is usually good. Serious disruption to learning is rare. Pupils say there is some low-level disruption in lessons. School records confirm this. The support given to those who do not behave well enough usually helps them to improve. Some pupils are boisterous when out of lessons and are not always considerate of their peers.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Many take on leadership roles such as 'eco warriors', anti-bullying ambassadors and 'buddies' to younger pupils. Leaders support pupils to set up groups and run activities that match their interests. Examples include a recent clothes swap to reduce 'fast fashion' and the LGBT+ club.

Leaders provide all pupils with a rich education that goes beyond the academic. This includes many residential trips and curriculum visits. Pupils and families are supported to make sure they do not miss out on these opportunities. For example, there is a local overnight camp as an alternative to the many local, national and international residential trips.

Pupils begin to learn about different types of employment, further education and apprenticeships. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Leaders promote positive well-being and help teachers manage their workload. Trustees and governors know the school well and provide both support and challenge to the senior leadership team. Leaders are aware that they do not always use all the information they have, for example, about behaviour, to take the actions needed to bring about change. Nonetheless, they have improved the areas that they have prioritised for development, such as reading.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. They keep detailed records of these checks.

Staff, governors and trustees receive regular safeguarding training. They are clear about their responsibilities. They know about the risks that exist in the local area that might affect pupils. Staff know how to spot signs that a pupil may not be safe and how to report any concern they have. Leaders act on concerns that are passed on to them and make referrals to other agencies to secure the help pupils need.

Pupils know who they can talk to if they are worried. They learn how to stay safe in different situations, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not always consider the needs of pupils with SEND when designing the curriculum. This means that they do not always learn as much as they could.

Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum enables all pupils with SEND to make the best possible progress.

- Pupils do not always treat one another with respect. This means some pupils feel uncomfortable, particularly at social times or when moving around the school. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils are tolerant of their peers and treat them with respect.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	147904
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10227924
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	716
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Garry Batt
Headteacher	Saira Sawtell
Website	www.stosmunds.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- St Osmund's Church of England Middle School converted to become an academy school in March 2020. When its predecessor school, St Osmund's Church of England Middle School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, trustees, governors and staff from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a selection of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors met with school leaders including the special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator and the pupil premium lead.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online surveys. Few pupils responded to the online survey so inspectors held additional meetings to seek their views.
- Inspectors spoke to the alternative providers used by the school.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fran Gormley	Ofsted Inspector
Carl Thornton	Ofsted Inspector
Lydia Pride	Her Majesty's Inspector

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