

Lockyer's Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113862
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	338256
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Battey
Headteacher	Mr A Argles
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
School address	Blandford Road Corfe Mullen Wimborne BH21 3HQ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with senior and middle leaders, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school's plans for improvement, monitoring reports by senior and middle leaders, reports from local authority visits, and pupils' and staff questionnaires. Parents' questionnaires, numbering 167, were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils' achievement in writing had improved since the last inspection
- how effectively teaching meets the needs of different groups in each class or set and how well the teachers use assessment to guide their teaching
- how well leaders at all levels are monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work to improve pupils' achievement
- how well governors are finding out about the work of the school and providing appropriate challenge.

Information about the school

The school is situated close to the local authority's boundary with Poole and serves mainly pupils from Corfe Mullen and Sturminster Marshall. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Around 10% of pupils transfer to one of the two grammar schools in Poole at the end of Year 7 and their places are taken up by pupils transferring from other schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average and their needs are mostly associated with moderate or specific learning difficulties, or behaviour. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Lockyer's Middle School is providing its pupils with a good education. It has improved in several areas since its last inspection and has good capacity to build further upon its strengths. Standards are now above average by the time pupils leave in Year 8 and good teaching means pupils learn and make progress at a good rate. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and enjoy the support of staff, who confirm they are proud to be part of the school and clear about its direction.

Good planning and high expectations are features of many lessons. As a consequence, pupils often show interest and apply themselves well and work hard. Their commitment to learning and getting the most out of school and their good behaviour are strong factors in their good achievement. Many pupils readily participate in a range of clubs and activities, including those that promote their fitness and well-being. Physical education and sports shine through as a favourite area for many pupils. There is no doubt that pupils are keen to discuss their work and experiences, but they have limited opportunities to contribute ideas and suggestions, take on a range of responsibilities or influence decisions about provision and school life.

Pupils' progress is monitored and checked effectively at an individual level and any pupils who fall behind are helped to catch up. This is because senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers are highly aware of any pupils not doing quite as well as their classmates. This is a strong feature. In contrast, monitoring of lessons does not always focus sharply enough on learning, and assessments and data are not used to full effect to check how well the school provides for the different groups in the school, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented.

The school is a caring place in which to learn and pupils are well supported and looked after. The pupils themselves feel safe in school and are confident that any serious problems or difficulties will be sorted out, should they occur. Governors have developed their role and knowledge of the school and many have benefited from a range of training. However, they are not yet sufficiently informed of the progress that pupils make to help them fulfil their role in challenging the school and holding it to account for its standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to contribute to and influence the work and life of the school.
- Ensure monitoring is closely focused on the learning of different groups and develop

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the way assessments and data are analysed to check and consistently promote good learning for all groups.

- Strengthen the role of governors in challenging the school, particularly in relation to pupils' progress, to guide its further improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are punctual and attend regularly. They are very open and approachable and also very adaptable. They get on with their work and often respond enthusiastically, for example when working in pairs and small groups in lessons. Most pupils persevere and work hard in lessons and maintain their concentration and attention. All in all, pupils have well-developed personal and social skills and positive attitudes to school life, all qualities that set them up well for their future steps in education and later life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because provision for them is well managed and they receive good, focused support in class and in small groups. Achievement is improving further for gifted and talented pupils. This has been a focus area for the school over the last year, and the school's data show it is having some impact, though more so in mathematics, at this stage, than in English and science. For the most part, pupils' behaviour is good but a small minority of parents' and pupils' questionnaires report that a few pupils do not always behave as well as they would like. This was pursued during the inspection and found to relate to a small minority of pupils. Pupils were very clear that, in the main, behaviour was good. The school's data, and pupils' work in lessons in English, mathematics and science, reflect standards in Year 8 that are generally about a year ahead of national expectations for their age. Some subjects are not quite as strong as this, for example information and communication technology (ICT). Tests and assessments show a strong, improving trend in mathematics at both key stages. Standards in writing have improved, particularly over the last year, and there are clear signs that this is being sustained.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well, whether working with individuals or small groups. This is often because in the most effective lessons, the teachers' plans show exactly how they are to be involved and what they need to do. During the inspection, several instances were seen where teachers and teaching assistants were enabling pupils who have some difficulties with their behaviour and concentration to achieve well in lessons and remain motivated. Assessments are generally used well to plan and pitch work to meet pupils' needs and this is particularly the case in English and mathematics. Teaching has less impact on pupils' learning and progress in the small number of cases where teachers talk for too long, leaving pupils largely passive. Links are good with other schools and transition is well managed. The curriculum is adapted appropriately to support different needs. Pupils benefit from extra opportunities, including trips, themed days and initiatives with the upper school, such as in mathematics and ICT. There is a strong emphasis placed on pupils' well-being. Those who have specific difficulties, or who are particularly vulnerable, are supported well. The school works closely with a variety of other agencies when support and advice from beyond the school are required.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff are positive about the leadership of the school and teamwork is strong. Leaders set a clear direction with pupils' outcomes at the heart. As a result, staff at all levels show clear commitment to equality of opportunity. This is evident in the extent to which the

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school works extremely hard, and successfully, to support its most vulnerable pupils. Equally, leaders at all levels place good emphasis on establishing a caring school with a sense of community, where pupils respect each other regardless of backgrounds or differences and feel safe and well supported. The requirements for safeguarding are met. There are some good examples of focused monitoring at subject level, linked closely to subject development plans and clear priorities, English being a strong example. These are clear factors in the improvements in pupils' achievement. Strong and well-established links exist with other schools in the pyramid. Nevertheless, the headteacher acknowledges that the school has not yet built similarly strong links with schools further afield which have a very contrasting pupil population, in order to broaden pupils' understanding of different communities. The governing body has appropriate systems in place to ensure safeguarding requirements are met. Governors' links with subject leaders are well established and give governors a good feel for provision and enable them to ask focused questions relating to their subject area. However, they have insufficient information on the progress pupils make to help them exercise an appropriate degree of challenge in relation to pupils' achievement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are happy with the work of the school and report that their children enjoy school. Where they added comments to the questionnaires, positive views outweighed negative ones. A few have some concerns about how well the school handles behaviour. Although pupils think some teachers handle inappropriate behaviour better than others,

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they are very clear that the vast majority of pupils behave well and inspection evidence supported their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

All the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lockyer's Middle School completed a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 167 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 447 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	35	101	60	6	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	59	35	103	62	4	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	29	105	63	10	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	26	109	65	8	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	31	107	64	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	23	113	68	12	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	25	112	67	8	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	22	114	68	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	29	104	62	8	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	18	107	64	19	11	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	23	98	59	13	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	62	37	97	58	4	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	39	93	56	6	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lockyer's Middle School, Wimborne, BH21 3HQ

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for welcoming us to your school recently and helping us in our work. We were very pleased to be able to talk to many of you and would particularly like to thank the groups of pupils who met with an inspector on the second day.

The senior leaders have worked successfully over the last few years, with your teachers, to improve the school in several important areas. It has certainly improved and is giving you a good education. You make good progress, and by the time you leave school reach above average standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school tracks your progress well at an individual level so that, if you start to fall behind in your work, teachers pick this up and arrange support. We have asked the school to develop this further to check regularly whether all groups of pupils are achieving well, such as pupils with particular gifts and talents and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We have also asked the governing body to make sure it finds out information from the school to help governors ask searching questions about how well the school is helping pupils to develop, academically and personally.

You have very good attitudes to school and take your learning seriously. In many lessons, we saw you working hard, persevering and enjoying tasks. We found that you do not have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through taking responsibility, sharing ideas and giving feedback to the senior leaders, and we have asked the school to develop this area. We hope that you will take advantage of any new initiatives because your views are very important in helping the school to make decisions about what it provides for you.

With all good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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