

# Cranborne Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	113853
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	395464
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Paul Scott HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	377
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Frank Sims
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Craig Watson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Cranborne Wimborne Dorset BH21 5RP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01725 517348
<b>Fax number</b>	01725 517984
<b>Email address</b>	school@cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	9–13
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395464



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julieta Jaggs

Additional inspector

Dr Sean Thornton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 22 lessons. Meetings were held with students, staff and school leaders, including governors. Students' views were gathered and their work in books was scrutinised. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including development plans, students' progress tracking information and policy and monitoring documents. The inspection also took account of the 215 parental questionnaires that were returned.

## Information about the school

Cranborne Middle School is a small rural school serving Cranborne village and a wide surrounding area. Fewer students join or leave the school at other than normal times than do nationally. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is very low. A small proportion of students speak English as an additional language. Students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make up a slightly higher proportion of the school's population than average. The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Cranborne Middle School is a good school, with a team of staff that shows a strong commitment to students and their success. The school supports students with a variety of high-quality opportunities to develop personally and academically. Students have a strong sense of community and are able to demonstrate their understanding of good citizenship.
- Students’ behaviour and their attitude to learning are outstanding. Students are clear about the high standards expected of them and they make a significant contribution to the positive learning ethos of the school. They have a thirst for knowledge and take up the opportunities on offer with enthusiasm.
- Teaching is good overall. At its best, it inspires and challenges students to reach high standards. However, more could be done at times to challenge students, including higher-attaining students and offer them sufficient opportunity to learn independently.
- Students’ attainment is above average and they make good progress overall. The school’s overall effectiveness is good rather than outstanding as teaching is good overall and brings about good overall achievement.
- Senior leaders, led by a headteacher with a commitment and passion to giving students a strong foundation for their future, have a clear and effective strategic plan for improvement. This ensures that the school continues to strive for greater achievement and is not complacent about current success. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school, and particularly of the quality of teaching, and there are appropriate improvement plans in place to address areas of teaching to enhance the progress made by students.

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

- Accelerate students’ progress by ensuring teaching consistently challenges students by:
  - using classroom assessment during teaching to inform and direct learning for individual students and so maintain a higher pace of learning for all groups of pupils throughout the lesson

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- providing more opportunities for students to learn independently.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

The respect for individuals and the cooperation between students and adults in the school contribute to the school's strong, positive ethos. Students are highly motivated, behave exceptionally well and make a significant contribution to the school. They enjoy the range of opportunities in the school and are successful, engaging in learning activities with enthusiasm. Students' attitudes to learning are commendable and their commitment ensures that by the time they leave the school, their attainment is above average. Given the starting points of students in Year 5, which are above the national average overall, this represents good progress. A determined drive from the school's leaders has ensured that students' progress is beginning to improve further.

In the best lessons observed during the inspection, students enjoyed the high level of challenge and the individualised opportunities for learning offered by teachers. Students speak confidently in these lessons, listen attentively and ask questions that will help them to understand concepts. During one Year 8 lesson, for example, students analysed and discussed characters from a Shakespearean text, *Romeo and Juliet*, with skill and an impressive level of detail. Students were able to understand how the author used the text in different ways to convey a deeper understanding of the characters and how they were feeling.

The school has a successfully inclusive approach, adapting learning opportunities to ensure that students have access to all aspects of the curriculum regardless of their ability or individual needs. As a result, disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve at least in line with other students and there are no significant differences in achievement for other groups within the school. Parents' and carers' positive views about students' progress are supported by the inspection findings.

### **Quality of teaching**

Most parents, carers and students who responded to the inspection questionnaires believe that teaching in the school is good, a view confirmed by inspectors. Teachers have good subject knowledge and because they know the students well, they can support their personal development effectively. The school has established an appropriate assessment and progress tracking system. Formal targets for the most able students are not always as challenging as they should be and the school is developing these systems appropriately.

The skilful use of questioning by some teachers enables the accurate assessment of students' levels of understanding and ensures that tasks are adjusted for individuals to maximise their success and ensure their best possible rate of progress. During the

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lessons observed, it was when teachers worked with small groups, or one to one, that students made the best progress. This was because teachers assessed the impact of the tasks they had set, then adjusted them and explained the steps the students needed to take to move on. In some lessons, teachers spent little or no time talking to the whole class but the individual attention students received and excellent management of learning meant that they made outstanding progress. Where students' learning was less successful, teachers did not build on their prior knowledge of individuals and too much whole-class teaching slowed students' progress. While students willingly completed the tasks set, the challenge was not at times great enough and the opportunities for more independent work limited. Some more able students explained that there were parts of lessons that were repetitious, they did not feel were helpful and just wanted to move on at a quicker pace.

The planned curriculum helps to ensure students have a very broad and balanced experience in the school. Opportunities to develop a wider understanding of the world, different cultures, sport, music and the arts are plentiful. Teachers instil a strong sense of what is right and wrong and students demonstrate caring and thoughtful attitudes to each other. Assemblies help students to reflect on life's dilemmas and to develop a stronger sense of belonging and community in a caring and safe environment.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Staff know and care for all students very well, including those with particular individual needs. Students' good attitudes to learning and their respect for others ensure that there is a highly productive learning culture throughout the school. Students' behaviour in lessons strongly supports their good progress and demonstrates that they value their education. They encourage their classmates to contribute positively in lessons and support their teachers in ensuring that everyone feels safe to contribute to discussions and ask questions in class. Students' courtesy, collaboration and cooperation in and out of lessons are outstanding. Students, parents and carers believe that behaviour is good and that the students feel safe in school.

Students demonstrate an exceptionally high degree of independence in managing their own behaviour. Systems for managing students' concerns and bullying are effective. Students explained that they can speak to adults in the school who will help them to resolve issues. They have a good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. Students enjoy the challenges of learning; they are punctual to lessons. Attendance is high and systems for monitoring attendance are rigorous. Students also believe that the school helps them to do as well as they can.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher demonstrates a high level of commitment to improving the achievement of students in all areas. He has ensured, with the help of the senior

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team, that the school has a clear direction and ambition for excellence. The school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and understands its priorities. The school has improved the use of assessment significantly since the last inspection. There have also been substantial improvements in developing the teaching of English across all year groups. There are some great strengths in middle leadership that are developing increasing impact across the school. The school's leaders are clear about how they can develop a deeper understanding of learning in students and, where this is happening, students' progress is enhanced. The curriculum gives students a wide range of experiences and helps them to develop personally within a strong moral framework. This meets students' needs well and ensures that their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is comprehensive. The school's capacity to improve further is strong.

The governing body is developing a more strategic approach to monitoring the school's work and supporting developments. Governors have links across departments and they work hard to support and challenge the school's leaders. Safeguarding arrangements meet the national requirements. Leaders promote equality and tackle discrimination very well. Staff feel that there is a real sense of teamwork throughout the school. They understand the goals and feel supported in their professional development. All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire said they are proud to be a member of staff in the school and that the school is well managed.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



9 March 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Cranborne Middle School, Cranborne BH21 5RP**

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we came to see your school. We were impressed by your attitudes to learning, how maturely you engaged in conversation, and your polite and courteous manner, as well as by how much you enjoyed being challenged in lessons. We think your behaviour is outstanding.

Cranborne is a good school, with many strengths. The adults in the school really care about you and work hard to ensure your success. The school is very well led by the headteacher and he is supported by leaders at all levels that want to improve things and make the school even better.

We agree with the senior leaders that teaching is good. We think it could be even better if the tasks you are set challenge you more so that you can make even faster progress. By the time you leave, you are achieving standards that are above the national average. With your positive attitudes, and lots of good teaching, you will become genuinely independent learners and will be able to take on even more responsibility for your own progress. We have asked the school to make teaching more individualised and for a greater range of small group or individual work and guided tasks to feature in your lessons.

You already attend well and you contribute a great deal to the school with your positive approach. You must keep this up and your good school will develop further with its committed team of staff.

I wish you every success in all that you do and hope that you will all strive to be the best and achieve the highest of goals.

Best wishes

Paul Scott  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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