

# The Wey Valley School

Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 5AN

## Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Frequent staffing changes, including reduced numbers at senior leadership level, have hampered leaders' capacity to halt the decline in standards for some years.
- Leaders do not ensure that safeguarding practice is rigorous. Consequently, pupils are at risk.
- Leaders do not use additional funding, such as the pupil premium, effectively. As a result, vulnerable pupils are not making adequate progress.
- Leaders are not planning strategically or ensuring that key policies and practices are fit for purpose. As a result, there is confusion among staff, parents, carers and pupils about such things as behaviour management.
- Leaders do not ensure that the curriculum and teaching are planned well. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Middle leaders have received training on how to hold teachers to account but do not use it. Weak teaching continues unchallenged as a result.
- Pupils' attendance is significantly below average. Too many pupils fail to attend school regularly.
- Teaching does not match the needs of the most able pupils or those with lower ability. Pupils' progress is hampered as a result.
- Teaching does not enable pupils to develop depth in their writing. Errors in basic skills are not regularly corrected.
- Leaders do not provide a suitable curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils have no understanding of British values, so are unaware of democratic processes, the influences of extremism and the importance of tolerance.
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic education is provided through assemblies but fails to have any impact on their physical and emotional well-being or understanding.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is a calm and orderly place. Most pupils behave politely, in and out of lessons.
- Leaders work well with external agencies to protect the most vulnerable pupils from harm.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Urgently improve safeguarding so that:
  - vulnerable pupils on part-time timetables, and dual placements, are closely monitored and kept safe
  - there are suitable risk assessments of the school site
  - pre-employment checks on staff are rigorous.
- Improve the standard of education by ensuring that:
  - leaders monitor the impact of their plans, policies and practice closely
  - middle leaders have the skills to monitor the quality of teaching so that it improves quickly
  - expectations of what pupils can achieve rise
  - the use of additional funding is effective
  - the curriculum is organised, schemes of work are written and sequenced, so that pupils are receiving a consistent offer of what they need to learn
  - there is a clear and effective policy for improving pupils' behaviour, which is understood and accepted by parents, staff and pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - assessment informs future planning so that every pupil's needs are met
  - the most able pupils in all year groups, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with learning that is sufficiently challenging and deepens their thinking
  - pupils with lower ability are given structure and support to make better progress over time
  - pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive support that stretches their learning further so that they achieve their potential
  - pupils' writing is developed better in a range of subjects
  - pupils use grammatical and technical aspects of writing accurately in every subject.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - providing a meaningful and effective personal, social, health and economic education programme that prepares pupils as future citizens
  - providing a spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum that embeds British values so that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain

- ensuring that pupils' attendance improves.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- In recent years, there have been frequent changes to leadership. There are just three senior leaders currently and this has reduced the capacity to improve the school. Current leaders are managing to keep the school stable but have not been able to diminish the significant weaknesses in the standard of education it provides.
- New recruits to teaching do not benefit from secure whole-school policies that support them in their role.
- A local trust leader has supported school leaders in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school to plan improvements. However, the capacity of current leaders is so limited that this has not been completed.
- Leaders' expectations are too low. Middle leaders do not plan learning effectively. Many middle leaders have not made long-term plans in their subjects and have not paid sufficient attention to examination specifications. As a result, teachers do not consider pupils' prior learning and what they need to know and understand effectively. As a result, pupils' progress has been substantially below average for several years.
- Leaders changed the way assessment information is used in January 2019. Middle leaders are trained to analyse pupils' progress, but this innovation is too recent to have any impact.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved systems and processes to identify pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND have plans in place to address their needs. However, teaching for these pupils does not meet pupils' needs well enough. Teaching assistants and teachers are receiving training currently to ensure that the support they provide is more effective.
- Leaders do not use the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils have not made strong progress for several years. There has been some progress in reading for Year 7 pupils who enter the school with literacy levels that are below age-related expectations. However, pupils' progress in mathematics is limited.
- Leaders identify that the curriculum has been too narrow in the past and did not meet pupils' needs. There have been recent changes to improve the breadth of the curriculum. However, some of these changes will not be in place until the new academic year.
- Extra-curricular activities provide pupils with a range of sporting opportunities. Many pupils participate successfully in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Leaders have not planned an effective personal, social, health and economic education for pupils. Although pupils have an awareness of internet safety, there are many other aspects of life about which they know very little. Pupils are not aware of the fundamental British values and their importance in creating a democratic society. Pupils do not discuss diversity regularly, so, for some, their views are not developing with enough understanding of cultural differences or the dangers and influence of extremism.

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not effective. Pupils are not taught about the importance of becoming well-balanced citizens.
- Careers guidance is insufficient and concentrates on Years 10 and 11. Consequently, pupils are not prepared well for their next steps for post-16 or post-18.
- The policy for managing the behaviour of pupils is vague. Leaders are in the process of changing it. However, for the few pupils who misbehave on a regular basis, there are no clear sanctions. Staff, pupils and parents are unaware of the systems. The proportion of pupil exclusions for short periods of time is above average.
- Leaders have tried several initiatives to improve the attendance of pupils. However, leaders' actions are not yet effective in remedying this weakness. Too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, do not attend school regularly.
- Leaders should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have concentrated on becoming part of a multi-academy trust (MAT) for the past four years. This has dominated their meeting schedule to the detriment of the strategic overview of the school. For example, they have not evaluated the reasons for the poor examination outcomes in key stage 4 or planned for effective improvements.
- Governors have a weak understanding of how to spend additional funding. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND have made poor progress and too many fail to attend regularly. Governors have not established systems to monitor the additional funding for pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up in their literacy and numeracy. Therefore, these pupils make poor progress.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not established a secure safeguarding culture. The oversight of the single central record of vetting for staff has not been stringent. Leaders have failed to check the processes for safer recruitment effectively.
- Leaders have not undertaken risk assessments of the school site and the potential dangers to pupils, especially from vehicles.
- Leaders do not monitor pupils on part-time timetables and in alternative provision well enough. Therefore, leaders do not ensure their safety. School documentation is incomplete as it does not include timetables, attendance data, dates for reviews and, in pertinent cases, dates for reintegration into school. Leaders do not communicate effectively with alternative providers. They do not visit these educational establishments regularly. These are minimum expectations to ensure that the pupils are safe, attending and making progress.
- Leaders work more effectively with social services and other agencies to protect pupils from abuse and neglect. Leaders escalate issues when necessary to safeguard pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- In recent months, middle leaders have increased their monitoring of the quality of teaching. Despite this, there is still too much variability in teaching within subjects and between subjects. As a result, pupils' progress is too inconsistent over time.
- Middle leaders do not plan effectively on a long-term or short-term basis. They do not consider the prior knowledge of pupils and build on this systematically. This means, for example, that pupils undertake activities in Year 8 that they have already done in Year 7.
- Teachers' expectations are too low in too many subjects. The most able pupils are not challenged in their learning. Some teachers ask them to do more of the same, so pupils become bored and disaffected. Similarly, pupils with lower ability do not receive the support and structure they need to achieve well.
- Pupils are making better progress in practical subjects, such as technology, art and physical education (PE). In these subjects, pupils develop their initiative and learn well.
- Parents receive reports that show the progress their children make over time and their attitudes to learning. Two thirds of parents who replied to the online survey, Parent View, feel that they receive valuable information about their child's progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils do not receive an effective personal, social, health and economic education. Less than half of the pupils who responded to the online survey felt that the school encourages them to look after their emotional and mental health. However, a larger proportion of pupils felt that the school encourages them to consider their fitness and physical health.
- Some pupils say that bullying is not dealt with effectively. A large minority of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online survey also felt this. Pupils do not feel that leaders listen to them or consider their views. A minority of parents also raised concerns and commented that the school does not deal with bullying promptly.
- Pupils receive advice about the dangers of social media and use of the internet within technology.
- Pupils are unaware of how to keep themselves safe from the influences of extremism or how to detect signs of indoctrination among their peer group.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils' attendance has been below the national average for over three years. It is showing little sign of improvement. Rates of persistent absence are also very high. Over one fifth of pupils are persistently absent. A large proportion of disadvantaged

pupils do not attend school often enough. Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attendance are not having the impact required. Leaders do not consider the root causes for pupils' poor rates of attendance. Staff are not linking safeguarding concerns stringently enough with absence.

- Most pupils are polite and conduct themselves in an orderly fashion. Pupils acknowledge that not all pupils behave well. They say that teachers are not consistent in how they deal with this. The processes for dealing with disruptive behaviour are not sufficiently secure, so a few pupils repeat offences.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils enter school with prior attainment that is average. However, current pupils are making poor progress. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. As a result, pupils' progress at the end of Year 11 in every subject included in the English Baccalaureate is significantly below average and has been for at least three years.
- Poor use of the pupil premium has limited the progress of disadvantaged pupils. At key stage 4 in 2018, there was very little difference between disadvantaged pupils' progress and that of others in school, because every pupil was making progress in line with the lowest 20% nationally. In 2018, the most able pupils and pupils of lower ability were in the lowest 10% nationally for progress.
- The work of the SENCo is changing the profile of progress made by pupils with SEND. However, progress is still limited.
- Leaders have initiated a programme of daily reading for pupils. The librarian supports this by analysing which books are suitable for different ability levels and age groups. Tutors do not take an active role in reading activities at tutor time. This limits the value of these activities and the progress that some pupils make. However, the reading undertaken has helped pupils who enter the school in Year 7 with literacy levels below age-related expectations.
- Leaders do not use the Year 7 catch-up funding to enable pupils who enter the school in Year 7 with low literacy and mathematical levels to catch up with their peers well enough. Very recently, more stringent leadership of this funding has been in place. However, there has been too little time to see discernible improvements to pupils' progress.
- Boys did significantly worse than girls by the end of key stage 4 in 2018. Leaders have not evaluated why this occurred, beyond noting the facts that there were more boys and many had behaviour issues.
- Leaders receive termly updates about pupils' progress in alternative provision. However, there is no evaluation of home tutoring.
- The weak progress made by pupils over time means that pupils are not ready for their next stage of education, training or employment. The lack of careers guidance makes this situation worse.

## School details

Unique reference number	138616
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10088320

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	829
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Day
Principal	Carol Watson
Telephone number	01305 817000
Website	<a href="http://www.veyvalley.dorset.sch.uk">www.veyvalley.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@veyvalley.dorset.sch.uk">office@veyvalley.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27–28 September 2016

## Information about this school

- The Wey Valley School converted to an academy in 2012. The members, trustees and governors are one and the same.
- The interim principal was appointed in January 2019 following the retirement of the previous principal.
- There have been three principals in the last five academic years.
- Ambitions multi-academy trust has been supporting the school since September 2018.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, often jointly with senior leaders.
- A sample of pupils' work, from a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 10 and 11, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- Documentary evidence was evaluated, including that relating to safeguarding, assessment and external reviews of the school's performance.
- Inspectors took account of the 111 responses and 109 comments on the online Parent View survey, the 131 responses to the online pupil survey and the 65 responses to the staff online survey.

## Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dorian Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Wring	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Davison	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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