

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Middle School, Puddletown

Puddletown, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8SA

Inspection dates: 18–19 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come willingly to school. They enjoy their learning and the many experiences that the school offers. Pupils are keen to do well. They manage their enthusiasm in a mature way so that it does not spoil their learning.

Pupils are safe and know how to stay safe. They know that staff will deal swiftly and effectively with any bullying that occurs. Leaders have taken every opportunity to help pupils understand the dangers of the internet and the modern world. As a result, pupils can speak confidently about what it takes to be a good citizen. They are tolerant and respectful of everyone in the school.

Leaders have very high expectations for pupils. Led by the headteacher's open approach, good team work is evident in every aspect of the school. Pupils, teachers and leaders support each other so that everyone can do their best. Staff know pupils very well as individuals and meet all their needs. No one misses out, whether this is going on trips or taking part in physical education (PE). Pupils' health, well-being and success is at the heart of the school.

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

Leaders offer a rich and varied curriculum to pupils. In key stage 2, pupils enjoy the specialist teaching and resources. This is evident in science, technology and PE. Leaders make sure that teachers work hard but do not do too much.

If there are things that pupils do not know, teachers help pupils to learn them in a supportive and timely manner. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can do every activity because of teachers' skills.

Curriculum leaders have planned carefully so that pupils build on their learning. They have received helpful advice from the upper school about what pupils need to know in Year 9. This has helped raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. Most curriculum leaders have considered the order of what pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils move on successfully at the end of Year 8. In humanities, leaders have not thought deeply enough about this. In English, pupils do not remember some of their knowledge well between key stage 2 and key stage 3. This is because leaders have not organised the learning as effectively in some areas, such as writing to persuade.

Most pupils read fluently and well. Teachers read stories to pupils frequently. Since the beginning of term, pupils in Year 8 have teamed up with pupils in Year 5 as reading buddies. This is another way that pupils can read more often. The books of lower-ability pupils in Year 6 are not checked, so some pupils are reading books that are too easy or too hard.

Pupils behave very well. No pupil speaks out of turn. They listen attentively to

teachers and each other. When teachers ask them to finish something and listen, they do this promptly. Even when enjoying their sports, they follow instructions immediately.

The church ethos is very strong. Pupils understand right and wrong. Teachers act quickly if pupils misbehave and explain to pupils why they must not do some things. Pupils enjoy helping in the school and doing things for other people; for example, pupils lead a dance club at lunchtimes which is very popular. As so many pupils come to school on a bus, leaders make sure that clubs happen at times when pupils can join in.

Pupils keep fit daily. Sometimes this is through exercise and at other times it is about being calm and thinking quietly. Pupils learn about relationships in a way that is suitable for their age. However, Year 8 pupils are not receiving enough information about careers.

Governors ask the challenging questions that help the school to keep on improving. The executive headteacher works skilfully with the five headteachers in the multi-academy trust (MAT). The MAT provides the school with good links to the four local first schools. This means that most pupils move easily from their first school into St Mary's.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those in charge of safeguarding take their roles very seriously. They make sure pupils are safe, especially those who are most at risk and in need of protection. Leaders train staff regularly and keep them up to date about what can happen to children. Staff know pupils well and make sure that they feel comfortable and cared for.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In humanities and English the curriculum content is not organised as well as in other subjects. Curriculum plans do not provide teachers with enough detail about what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in English and humanities is more carefully sequenced and delivered.
- This year, reading is a school priority. Leaders want to help pupils read more high-quality books. This is because leaders are determined that more pupils will read fluently by the time they leave school. However, some of the lower-ability pupils in Year 6 are not receiving the right help. Teachers are not checking what they are reading, so they are not making good progress because books are too easy or too hard. Leaders and teachers need to ensure that reading books are

suitable for pupils and more closely linked to their reading ages.

- The development of careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG) is at an early stage within the school. The leader knows the areas to be developed. Leaders must ensure that a clear and comprehensive action plan is put in place to fulfil the requirements for CEIAG and build on the start that has been made.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	138189
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10088319
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	481
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mary Miles
Headteacher	Darren Ayling
Website	http://www.stmarysmiddleschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school caters for the following types of SEND: speech, language and communication; specific learning difficulties (dyslexia); cognition and learning; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; autism spectrum disorder; visual impairment; hearing impairment; and physical difficulties.
- The school is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Salisbury.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors visited lessons with senior leaders and the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from Years 5 to 8, as well as with other pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders, teachers and members of the governing body and trust.

- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 105 responses and 86 comments on the online Parent View survey, the 126 responses to the online pupil survey and the 36 responses to the staff online survey.
- English, mathematics, science, humanities, geography, design technology, incorporating health and nutrition, resistant materials and textiles, and PE were considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

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