

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's Church of England Middle School, Colehill

Colehill Lane, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7AB

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

St Michael's Church of England Middle School, Colehill continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Darren Ayling. This school is part of Initio Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Elizabeth West, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Kingston.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Michael's Church of England Middle School, Colehill has its core values of 'Aspiration, Belief and Creativity' at the heart of the school. Pupils enjoy school, attending well and actively engaging in the opportunities provided. Pupils take on significant leadership responsibilities within the school, for example as members of the student council, as reading ambassadors and as sports leaders. Pupils say they take up these roles because 'they want to make things even better' for others.

The school has high expectations for behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because they understand how their behaviour impacts others. On the rare occasion where behaviour does not meet expectations, leaders take swift action. They make sure that pupils understand why that behaviour was not acceptable. As a result, pupils feel safe and fairly treated.

Reading is very important at St Michael's Middle School. Pupils read a wide range of texts for interest and pleasure. They are keen to share their views about books and offer recommendations to others. The weakest readers are quickly identified and expertly supported by adults. These pupils share the same enjoyment of reading as their peers because they are building their skills and confidence.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well and develop a wide range of transferable skills. For example, pupils develop confident communication skills through the English curriculum. The school has set out what pupils will learn in each subject and how that knowledge builds each year. This includes learning how each subject is unique. For

instance, pupils learn what it means to be an artist so that they can use creative techniques in their own work.

The school uses assessment well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. In most cases, it uses this information well to adapt the curriculum to address any gaps or misconceptions. Pupils are keen to make improvements to their work. This means that in most subjects, pupils can recall their learning well and are ready to continue to learn more challenging content.

The school accurately identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils with SEND effectively. These pupils learn the curriculum as well as their peers. The school includes the voice of pupils and parents when planning and reviewing the support provided. This is particularly evident when planning for pupils' transfer to Year 9. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school is passionate about developing pupils' talents and interests. Large numbers of pupils take part in musical performances such as concerts and 'Battle of the Bands'. Pupils learn a range of musical instruments, enjoying performing individually and as groups. Handbells and the school orchestra are just two examples. Drama productions provide great excitement for the whole school community. Pupils take responsibility for all aspects of these productions, from performing to designing the advertising campaign. Pupils also enjoy opportunities to represent their school in a range of sports.

The personal development curriculum prepares pupils well for adult life. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally. They learn about sex and relationships in an age-appropriate way. Pupils understand why fundamental British values are important for an inclusive and caring society. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures, religions and viewpoints. The school celebrates difference and bullying is very rare. Pupils feel able to challenge unkind behaviour. They are confident to report concerns to adults, knowing they will be heard and helped.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 develop a strong understanding about careers. This includes information about apprenticeships and further education opportunities. Before they leave the school, all pupils meet local employers, learn about local colleges and visit a local university. The school works with the local secondary school to begin to prepare pupils for choosing courses for Years 10 and 11. This means pupils are able to make informed choices about their futures.

The trust ensures that staff at this school are well supported to fulfil their roles. Staff talk about being 'one staff' who are all working together to provide the best they can for the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not as well implemented as in others. This means that pupils do not gain the same level of knowledge and understanding in these areas. The trust should ensure that the curriculum in all subject areas is implemented as well as it is in the strongest subjects so that all pupils can learn as well as they might.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school, to be good in February 2018.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141829
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10298036
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	590
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Kingston
CEO of the trust	Elizabeth West
Headteacher	Darren Ayling
Website	www.stmichaelsmiddle.org
Dates of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of Initio Learning Trust.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Salisbury. A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was carried out in June 2019. Inspections are normally carried out every five years.
- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met staff, local school committee members, trust executive leaders, a representative of the diocese and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a sample of lessons in other subjects and toured the school during pupils' breaks from lessons.
- Inspectors met with staff responsible for overseeing pupils with SEND and reviewed planning that supports these pupils.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including minutes of governance meetings and the school's self-evaluation documents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Collins

Ofsted Inspector

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