

West Moors Middle School

Address: Heathfield Way, West Moors, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 0DA

Unique reference number (URN): 113861

Inspection report: 9 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders identify and meet the needs of pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing very effectively. A high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attend the school. Leaders work very well with families and external professionals to assess the needs of these pupils. They use this information to skilfully plan and adjust support strategies and train staff effectively to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND thrive.

Leaders provide very effective support to pupils who are known (or previously known) to social care, collaborating well with the virtual school. Leaders plan and implement approaches which have a highly positive impact on the learning opportunities and wider experiences of children in care.

Leaders carefully consider how to spend pupil premium funding. They ensure that it consistently benefits pupils who are disadvantaged. The impact of this funding is evident on disadvantaged pupils' experiences in the school, such as their participation in broader opportunities.

Leaders are extremely diligent in their monitoring of the progress of pupils who face barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. This enables leaders to adapt adeptly their provision and approaches. This includes commissioning appropriate alternative provision to support pupils when needed.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's personal development programme successfully builds pupils' character and confidence. It is designed and tailored very well to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils, including those who face barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, are very well prepared for the future.

The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils to learn about leadership. Pupils are very proud to hold positions of responsibility, such as a school councillor or a learning ambassador. In these roles, pupils make a meaningful contribution to the life of the school. They organise charity events, competitions and activities. These foster a deep sense of belonging. The school's leadership programme builds pupils' understanding of representation and democracy. For example, pupils nominate others for leadership roles.

Leaders ensure that pupils gain a thorough understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils learn about moral values and behaviours, such as acting with integrity and standing up against discrimination. Pupils learn about different countries and cultures, such as through a link to a school in Cambodia. Leaders provide thoughtful opportunities for pupils to celebrate each others' strengths through 'VIP' assemblies.

Pupils gain detailed knowledge about how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They have a clear understanding of how to take care of their mental and physical wellbeing, such as

through regular exercise. Pupils learn how to keep safe online and about the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

The school's careers education programme is very well planned and implemented by leaders. Through visits to workplaces, visiting speakers and the careers curriculum, pupils gain a secure, age-appropriate understanding of different types of work. Leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' future options locally and further afield. As a result, they tailor the programme to the school's local context and pupils' aspirations.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils generally progress well through the curriculum, building their knowledge and understanding over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils develop their ability to solve problems and in drama they learn to perform confidently. Pupils secure the foundations that they need in reading, number and writing. They gain the phonic knowledge they need to become confident readers and improve their recall of multiplication facts. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Pupils with higher academic starting points, and those who are disadvantaged, make particularly good progress. The performance of these groups of pupils is demonstrated in published outcomes at key stage 2. However, some pupils' achievement is not fully reflected by comparisons with national averages. This is because of the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Although pupils' attendance is below the national average, it is quickly improving. Leaders have secured reductions to overall persistent absence and improved attendance for key groups such as disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work closely with families and communicate high expectations of attendance to all pupils. They track and analyse assiduously patterns in absence, and staff pay close attention to the needs of pupils who are regularly absent. The impact of leaders' work is reflected in greater improvements to attendance than the national average.

Pupils uphold leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. They consistently live out the school's values, such as showing respect and kindness to each other. In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and follow rules and routines well. Leaders make effective adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have particular behaviour needs. Leaders successfully teach pupils how to manage their own conduct and how to collaborate with others. Pupils apply these cooperation skills across school life. Older pupils set a good example for younger children. Pupils, of all ages, understand the importance of challenging discriminatory language. Bullying rarely occurs. On the rare occasions that it does, leaders deal with it quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is ambitious and ordered logically for each subject and year group. It is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make very effective adaptations for pupils with SEND and for pupils who face other barriers to learning.

Leaders keep the curriculum under review and routinely check the quality of teaching. Consequently, they have a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for development. For example, leaders have strengthened the school's reading programme to ensure that all pupils become fluent, confident readers.

Leaders typically develop staff teaching expertise well. This has enhanced the teaching of the curriculum, such as in mathematics. Here, leaders have strengthened the teaching of basic number skills. This ensures that any gaps in pupils' basic mathematical knowledge close quickly.

Teachers generally have the subject knowledge that they need to implement the wider curriculum effectively. For example, they typically use assessment well to check pupils' understanding. As a result, teaching usually builds well on what pupils already know and can do. However, in some subjects, teaching does not focus sharply enough on ensuring that pupils gain the most important knowledge. Consequently, pupils sometimes do not deepen their understanding as well as they could.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They are highly analytical and therefore gain the insights they need to identify improvements. Leaders have prioritised raising attendance and ensuring that all pupils have positive experiences. Pupils' increasing attendance bears out the impact of leaders' actions.

Leaders are held to account robustly by governors for the school's effectiveness. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to ensure that resources are managed well. As a result, the school fulfils its statutory duties and makes continuous improvements.

Leaders use professional development well to strengthen the quality of teaching. They provide effective training on how to meet the needs of the many pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. The professional learning programme draws on evidence and builds teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge. This includes developing the skills of those newest to teaching. Leaders work successfully with other schools to share and develop teaching expertise.

Leaders build constructive relationships with parents. This results in effective parent-school partnerships, which support pupils to belong and achieve. Leaders engage well with the local community. They establish opportunities for pupils to contribute, such as raising money for local charities.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value leaders' support for their wellbeing. Leaders ensure that staff workload is well managed.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for all pupils to achieve and thrive. Staff use their knowledge of pupils very well to meet their individual needs. As a result, pupils experience high levels of care and feel a deep sense of belonging to the school.

Pupils enjoy their learning and generally achieve well. They benefit from a wide range of opportunities to extend their learning within and beyond the curriculum. For example, they develop their artistic knowledge and expression by working with a professional artist. Visits to places of local historical interest extend their knowledge and curiosity about the past. The school consistently reduces barriers to pupils' learning and/or wellbeing, meaning that the many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Pupils develop very well personally, learning a wide range of skills and benefitting from many broader experiences. The school successfully removes barriers for pupils who are disadvantaged so that they gain these experiences too. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their team working skills. Pupils learn how to apply these skills successfully, such as tackling a problem in forest school or planning a budget together.

Pupils feel safe and most attend school regularly. Bullying is very rare and staff deal with any unkind words or actions quickly and effectively. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school, following routines and treating each other with respect.

There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils participate in a wide variety of sports. They learn to play different musical instruments and drama performances build their confidence to speak in public. Leaders listen carefully to pupils and tailor experiences to their individual interests. For example, leaders enable pupils to set up different clubs such as yoga and model making.

Next steps

- Leaders should reduce pupils' absence further so that pupils have high attendance and consistently benefit from the school's curriculum and wider opportunities.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching consistently focuses on the most important knowledge that pupils should gain, so that pupils deepen their understanding and achieve well in all subjects.
 - Leaders should ensure continued improvement to achieve and sustain exceptional standards of inclusion which have a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of pupils who face barriers to learning, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
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About this inspection

The chair of governors of the school is Derek Brooks.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, pupils and parents. The lead inspector met with governors.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for pupils with complex communication needs. 10 pupils attend this specialist provision. As a result, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attending the school is well above average.

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

The school uses three alternative providers, including two which are unregistered.

The data shown in the section, 'facts and figures used on inspection' is the latest published data that was available at the time of the inspection. It is taken from a number of sources at different points in time throughout the academic year. Since the time the facts and figures were published, there have been some changes, as follows: the number on roll at the school during the inspection was 241; the percentage of children with education, health and care plans was 12.9%; and the percentage of pupils receiving SEND support was 34.9%.

Deborah Craddock: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

James Oldham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Benjamin Antell, Ofsted Inspector

Anna Mills, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

236

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

240

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

36.44%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

9.75%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.19%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	49%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	66%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	54%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	24%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	36%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	24%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	40%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	40%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	34%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	32%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	29%	68%	-39 pp
2024/25 (final)	24%	69%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	67%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	24%	66%	-43 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	40%	81%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	41%	78%	-37 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	78%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	40%	78%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	78%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	77%	-24 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	34%	80%	-45 pp
2024/25 (final)	32%	81%	-49 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	79%	-44 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	35%	79%	-44 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	10.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.1%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	27.8%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.5%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	29.9%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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