

Inspection of Minehead Middle School

Ponsford Road, Minehead, Somerset TA24 5RH

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Laura Mackie. This school is part of Beacon Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Trudy Danby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Giles.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff appreciate the stability and rapid improvements the school has put in place. Changes in staffing have settled. Pupils have nurturing relationships with their teachers. Through the raised expectations, pupils understand the school's ambition for them to achieve well. Despite this, work to improve some parts of the curriculum are developing. This means some older pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

The school has established sharp routines and expectations for pupils' conduct. Most pupils respect these. They enjoy the positive recognition and celebration of their achievements. The school is calm. Suspensions have reduced considerably. Teachers use common language and routines to ensure there are high expectations for learning. Pupils actively engage and interact in class.

Pupils learn about their physical and mental health. The extensive pastoral team help pupils when they need it. Incidents of bullying have decreased considerably. Pupils have confidence that when reported, the school deal with it.

The school design many extended opportunities for pupils through clubs, trips and the much-anticipated enrichment week. For example, at lunchtimes, many pupils enjoy the opportunities in the library, such as chess club.

Pupils take on different leadership roles to contribute to the school community. They enjoy these roles and carry them out with pride. Pupils describe the pupil leaders who help them and support the school as role models.

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

The school has been through a period of rapid change and recruitment. It has acted to prioritise key improvements. The curriculum is broad and most subjects are appropriately designed. Following careful evaluation, the school has acted to change the curriculum content in a few subject areas where it lacked ambition. This means, in parts of the curriculum, some older pupils are at lower starting points in their learning. The school is beginning to address the gaps pupils currently have in their knowledge as a result of the changes.

The school has worked with feeder schools to plan the progression of learning pupils will make during their four years at the school. Teachers revisit learning to check what pupils can recall. However, in parts of the key stage 3 curriculum, the school has not explicitly identified the knowledge and skills they want pupils to remember. When this happens, pupils do not build their learning incrementally. They do not know and remember their learning securely.

The school has established robust practices to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has led to more educational health and care plans (EHCPs) in place. The school has strengthened its work with parents and external agencies to put effective provision in place. Inclusion staff who support pupils

with SEND do this well. In lessons, teachers use some strategies to adapt the learning for pupils. However, at times, this is not done promptly or effectively. The school is developing the expertise of staff to do this with greater proficiency.

The school identifies pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. It knows their precise needs. Daily interventions by staff trained to deliver phonic knowledge well help pupils to become fluent and confident readers. The school promotes an enjoyment for reading in many ways, such as hearing from visiting authors or the annual scrapbook competition about pupils' favourite books.

The trust and school collaborate to identify the next steps for sustained improvement. They work with many external experts to help evaluate this. Senior leaders check the impact of the actions they take. However, the extended leadership team do not have clear oversight of their areas of accountability. As a result, they do not know with clarity what they need to do next to embed improvement.

In lessons, pupils behave well. They focus on their learning. Teachers are consistent in their expectations. The school has high expectations for pupils to attend well. Through clear protocols, it helps pupils and their families to do this. As a result, most pupils come to school regularly.

The school has a well-sequenced personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn about respect, relationships and how to keep themselves safe. External speakers support their learning. Pupils learn about future careers throughout their time at the school. For example, the school hosts a careers fair. Pupils are well prepared to choose their options when they make the transition to their next school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few subjects have recently made significant change to their curriculum content. This means some older pupils are learning content not based on their prior learning, or they have lower starting points. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge as a result. The school needs to ensure where there are significant curriculum changes, it addresses the gaps pupils have in their learning.
- The extended leadership team do not have clear oversight of the areas they have accountability for. This is because the systems and evaluations to quality assure are not in place. As a result, they do not know with clarity what needs to happen to bring

further improvement. The school and the trust need to make sure all leaders have the mechanisms and support to effectively evaluate the impact of their work.

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	136774
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344608
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	566
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Giles
CEO of the trust	Trudy Danby
Headteacher	Laura Mackie
Website	www.mineheadmiddleschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Minehead Middle School is deemed a secondary school, with pupils aged 9 to 13.
- Since the last inspection, the senior leadership has changed. The headteacher took up their post in September 2023. In the last 18 months, the school has recruited senior leaders to several key roles, including a SENCo.
- Previously, the school had several vacant teaching posts. The school is currently fully staffed.
- In spring 2024, the CEO of Beacon Education Trust left and there is an interim CEO currently in post.
- The school uses six unregistered 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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, trust leaders and trustees. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, modern foreign language and drama. 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 met and spoke with many pupils. They talked about their learning and their experience of school. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at breaktimes.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including minutes of governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, and external reports.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Coulson

Ofsted Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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