

The Quay School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113657
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	357388
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Bill (William) Stoneham

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	n/a
Headteacher	Jo Perry
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Seven lessons involving seven different teachers were observed, with time also spent in classrooms and elsewhere observing work being undertaken by students. Meetings were held with students, members of the management committee, staff and headteachers from schools that work in partnership with The Quay School. The inspector looked at various policy documents, including those relating to safeguarding, students' work, and three questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and students.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the centre's work, looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the service is boosting attainment overall, including key skills for different groups of students.
- How well the curriculum meets the varied needs of so many different groups of students.
- How effectively the service has built on the emerging strengths identified in the last inspection.

Information about the school

Since the previous inspection, the service has changed its name from The Poole Learning Support Service to The Quay School. There have also been changes in accommodation, with the service moving its headquarters to a new purpose-built facility in January 2011. Further improvements to accommodation are planned. The school also has 'Healthy Schools' status.

The Quay School is a complex organisation offering education mainly to students aged 11 to 16, but some pupils of primary age are educated at the hospital site. The number on roll can significantly fluctuate from day to day. The service supports many different groups, including: permanently excluded students; students with phobias, anxiety and other medical needs including vulnerable non-attenders; school-age mothers; students in Poole Hospital; students at an adolescent mental health unit; students in danger of being excluded; home educated students, and students awaiting a place on a school roll. Students at the hospital school are often there short term but, as the hospital is a regional cancer centre, some are educated for a longer period. At the time of the inspection, the hospital school was providing for three short-term admissions.

The service operates from five different sites, all located within Poole Local Authority, as well as providing home tuition. One site is a secure adolescent psychiatric unit which was not visited during the inspection. All other permanently used sites were visited. Some students come under the auspices of the service for as little as one day, especially in the hospital school. Many students are dual registered and, in the hospital school, students may come from schools outside Poole LA. The aim is to reintegrate students who are in Key Stage 3. The aim with Key Stage 4 students is to help them avoid becoming permanently excluded, and to offer them a clear route into further education, training or employment when they leave school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The Quay School provides a good education. The quality of this education is improving well; for example, the curriculum, care, guidance and support, partnership work and safeguarding arrangements are all outstanding. Morale is high. Staff are determined to change and improve the life chances of young people, many of whom have faced severe difficulties and traumas in their lives.

Student attainment is broadly average. Most students join the service with histories of disturbed education and with below average levels of prior attainment. Allied to this, many face severe barriers to learning, including emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The progress students make in their education is at least good, with some making excellent gains in their learning and in their social and emotional development. Some Key Stage 4 medical needs students, who are often anxious about attending school, make excellent progress and are gaining GCSE results that are at least average for their age. Most of the permanently excluded students following vocational courses, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress; some do even better than this. Outcomes for all groups are in excess of what might have been expected given their starting points.

The quality of the outcomes is enhanced by care, guidance and support, partnership work and a thoughtful and flexible curriculum that are all outstanding. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Some learning, especially in vocational areas such as hair and beauty and construction, is outstanding. All students are set challenging targets. Work is assessed well and progress is recorded and carefully monitored. Staff are fully aware of every student's academic and personal development. Such careful assessment procedures have developed well since the previous inspection and have resulted in improved attainment.

Considerable care has been taken to ensure that the curriculum meets individual needs. For a small service, the variety in the curriculum is impressive. Students are offered a good range of GCSE options, but the extent of the vocational curriculum is particularly impressive and contributes to the good and, occasionally, outstanding progress made by some students. Partnership working is outstanding. There are many successful curriculum partnerships, such as with an outdoor school in the New Forest. In addition, education and care professionals, including many external agencies, work in unison to ensure excellent care, guidance and support. The service ensures high levels of students' safety and considerable emphasis is placed on encouraging healthy lifestyles. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding, including thorough risk assessments for the extensive and varied off-site work. The service has Healthy Schools status and excellent work is done to encourage healthy lifestyles. There is zero tolerance of smoking, students grow some of their own food and they can participate in a wide range of sports and leisure activities.

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The service is led and managed well overall, but benefits from the assured and confident leadership of the inspirational headteacher. There is a good management committee, which plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of provision. The service is keen to develop cultural opportunities and this has been successfully promoted through work with an art therapist, for example, plus visits to a local gallery. Considerable efforts have been made to improve the students' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). These efforts have successfully raised standards but for some, their skills, especially in literacy, remain lower than they should be. Staff are addressing this, but in lessons it was noticeable that key words and phrases are not always displayed or referred to and students are not consistently offered chances to talk about the work they are doing. The service enjoys considerable success in enabling students to progress and has a good record of improving the life chances of highly vulnerable youngsters. Many younger students are successfully reintegrated into mainstream secondary schools, while it is rare for Year 11 students to leave without a place at college, in training or in employment. This record of sustained improvement amply illustrates the ambition and drive of the committed staff team. Through rigorous self-evaluation, they know the school's strengths and areas for development and plan carefully to address these issues. This represents a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by ensuring that in all lessons, staff consistently seize opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills by:
 - always displaying key words and vocabulary and checking that meanings and relevance are understood by all
 - giving students ample opportunities to comment constructively on their own work and that done by others.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, students regularly make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress because of the quality of the challenges set. Classrooms are settled and behaviour is at least good. Students want to learn and the work is enjoyed.

Students often join the service with low levels of prior attainment, reflecting acute disruption to their education. Many are predicted to gain few or no qualifications. When they leave at the end of Year 11, all have a range of qualifications to present to colleges or prospective employers. These include GCSE examinations and a variety of vocational and other forms of certification. Some students are gaining GCSEs at grade C or above and levels of attainment in many vocational areas are above average. Almost all permanently excluded students are making good progress in their work, with some doing exceptionally well on their vocational courses. Students with medical anxieties and phobias are also making good progress, especially in their English and mathematics GCSEs. Students at the hospital base also make good progress, with evidence of some very strong work in primary mathematics. Results for boys and girls alike are now showing a strong trend of improvement.

Responsibility and enjoyment are actively encouraged. From the outset, it is made clear to the students that the centre is not a soft option. They are there to work and they are

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encouraged to plan and take responsibility for their own learning. Students say they feel very safe and cared for and there are excellent opportunities to pursue healthy lifestyles. The students have their own council, and suitable information is provided about eating healthily and the dangers of alcohol, substance and drug abuse. Many physical activities are offered ranging from sailing to 'free-running'. Students can even work off their surplus energy by working in the school's garden areas.

Attendance has improved well. Most have vastly improved attendance records, with a significant number attending almost all of the time. Much attention is paid to improving the students' economic well-being. Sterling efforts are made for students on vocational courses to ensure that they are offered good quality work placements. Some openings are offered 'in house'. At one site, the school operates a commercial standard kitchen and students prepare food for their peers and staff. They also cater for visitors and provided a buffet for local dignitaries when the new part of the school was recently opened. Successful efforts are made to improve skills in literacy and numeracy, though attainment in these skills for some remains below average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Students learn well because they are invariably taught well and sensitively by knowledgeable staff. The working relationships between staff and students are good. The work set is challenging and the students are encouraged to work independently. Much

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work is individualised. Excellent learning was seen in a Key Stage 4 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson. The boys in the class had to use a range of resources to research about leisure facilities in the Poole area and then produce their own leaflet to advertise what is available. All worked with interest and enthusiasm. They concentrated well and needed minimum staff guidance. Learning on vocational courses is at least good because the students are taught by professionals. The catering students, for example, benefit from being taught by a chef who ensures high professional standards are maintained in his kitchen. Learning is enhanced through trust. For example, catering students are trusted to use knives and they are taught how to respect their equipment and how to cut properly and safely. In the hospital unit, learning is at least good because work is personalised and individual needs are met. Some excellent primary mathematics was seen. Staff flexibly particularly assisted the needs of a Year 6 student and she made excellent progress as a result.

An outstanding curriculum is provided. For Key Stage 4 students, two distinct pathways are offered. Some will follow a reasonably traditional GCSE programme that equips them well for the next stage in their education. Other students follow vocational options. Choices are wide and innovative and are enhanced by some excellent learning partnerships that have been forged with other providers. For example, students can follow courses as diverse as hair and beauty, sport and active leisure, and land-based studies. In the sports course, students follow a module in fishing, including fish management. Especially innovative work is undertaken in the land-based studies course. Students work with wild boars and have to use past technologies, which involves the use of ancient tools. As well as being fun and different, these courses all offer nationally recognised qualifications and provide suitable education and employment pathways for when the students leave school. Curriculum partnerships in all years have enriched the students' lives. The activities followed are having a significant impact on academic attainment and personal development as well as making a good contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are provided. The school provides a highly, caring and supportive environment in which the students feel safe, comfortable and respected and make particularly good progress in terms of their personal development as a result. The individual needs of students have high priority. Families and carers, including those from difficult to reach groups, are fully involved in their child's education and care. Effective induction methods and excellent partnerships with many different agencies enable students to settle quickly into the daily routines and to understand the high expectations that the school has of them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, plus the committed and dedicated support of all staff, has resulted in a clear focus on successfully improving learning and driving improvement. Self-evaluation is good and improving. Excellent partnerships with many agencies, and with parents and carers, help to secure outstanding and individualised programmes for education and social care and successfully promote both good learning and personal well-being. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Risk assessments are detailed and thorough and all appropriate policies are in place and monitored. The good management committee monitors the school's work effectively. At all levels there is a commitment to ensure that all students enjoy an appropriate education in a safe setting.

Students make good, and occasionally outstanding, progress because the management of teaching and learning is appropriately focused on raising attainment. There have also been significant improvements in target setting and monitoring students' work. Though many of these developments are recent, they are already having a positive impact on attainment and progress.

An emphasis on respect, rights, boosting self-esteem and encouraging responsibility underpins much of its work. This makes a good contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination and has resulted in rising attainment and far better employment opportunities for students previously seen as disaffected and hard to engage. Good efforts have been made to promote community cohesion. The students are encouraged to take pride in their own environment. The garden areas and the wall displays at one centre based on the work of Edvard Munch are testimony to the contribution they make to their own community. Charity fundraising and work in the New Forest with organisations such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, also makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

Only three responses were received to the parents and carers questionnaire. All responses were positive. As one respondent commented: 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds. She really loves going there and enjoys the practical work she has to do.' Though this sample is small, it reflects the outcomes of surveys undertaken by the school. Their own recent survey indicated high levels of satisfaction. Parents and carers know that The Quay School is serving its students well, a view endorsed by this inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Quay School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received three completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 42 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 June 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Quay School, Poole BH12 4HU

I thoroughly enjoyed my recent visit; thank you for making me so welcome. You told me that the school is good. I agree; you receive a good education. Many of you are making significant strides in your education and personal development. The staff help you but you also help by behaving sensibly and working hard.

Your school has many strengths. You particularly benefit from an outstanding curriculum, consistently good and sometimes excellent teaching, and outstanding care, guidance and support. The excellent work done with your parents and carers and with many education and other partners makes a key contribution to your learning and progress. You are fortunate to have such good, dedicated and committed staff who all want you to do well.

I enjoyed seeing your work and I loved the dinner you cooked for me. The food was excellent. I especially enjoyed the home-made ice cream. I was disappointed that I could not join you on all your activities. I would like to have accompanied some of you who do fishing as part of their vocational studies. I was most disappointed that I could not join the students working with the wild boars. That sounds especially exciting. I enjoyed the lessons I attended. Though I have concluded your learning is good and occasionally outstanding, I have asked your staff to ensure that even more effort is made to improve your standards of work, especially your literacy skills. I have suggested they do this by ensuring key words and phrases are displayed in all lessons and are referred to as the lessons progress. I have also asked your teachers to give you more time to discuss and critically evaluate the work you do.

Thank you again for making me so welcome. I enjoyed meeting you. I hope you will continue to support your dedicated staff by attending regularly and working hard. I would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector

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