

Langside School

Langside Avenue, Poole, BH12 5BN

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and managers have worked successfully to make sure that the school continues to improve. They have introduced a new range of activities which is very closely matched to the needs of their pupils.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils very well. They help pupils to improve communication skills.
- From their very low starting points, pupils make good progress. They show enjoyment of their favourite activities and cooperate well when trying out new experiences.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They respond well when a member of staff helps them to get into position for a lesson. School leaders have made sure that pupils are able to learn in a very safe environment.
- Governors have a good understanding of how well everyone is doing because they visit regularly and spend time with pupils and their teachers as well as with therapists and nurses.
- The well-led Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start to school for the very youngest children. Parents speak highly of the help the school gives their children to help them settle in quickly.
- Students in the good sixth form have personal timetables which give priority to the particular skills they need to work on and this helps them to make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders and managers do not always check that teachers are providing enough challenge for the more able pupils.
- Teachers do not always ensure that the more able pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teachers and their assistants working in four lessons. On two of these occasions, the principal accompanied the inspector. Further visits were made to class at lunchtime.
- The inspector examined pupils' work in their files and by looking at photographic records of their activities. He heard one older student use his communication book to state a preference at snack time.
- Not enough parents responded to the online Parent View survey for this to be used as evidence on parents' and carers' opinions. The inspector reviewed the responses of parents to a questionnaire which school leaders distributed last year. Twenty nine members of staff provided their views by means of the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and members of the governing body. Three parents met the inspector to provide their views. The inspector met a representative of the local authority when she attended a planned meeting at the school about the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The inspector met teachers, nurses and therapists to hear their views on the curriculum, training and performance management processes.
- Important school documents were reviewed, including policies on safeguarding and the curriculum. The inspector scrutinised the governing body minutes. He also reviewed the school's own arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements, and the school's improvement plan.

Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Langside School provides an education for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. All of the pupils have physical and communication needs, and each one has a statement of special educational needs.
- The few children who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage work alongside those in Years 1 and 2. Older students work together as a sixth-form group in a separate part of the school building. None attends any kind of alternative provision.
- Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils who are entitled to receive the pupil premium is near to the national average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The principal has been in post for approximately two years. Since the previous inspection, new governors have been appointed to fill vacancies.
- The school forms part of a charitable trust which provides a range of services to its pupils and to others in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management, and improve the quality of teaching, by ensuring that:
 - teachers always plan activities that encourage the most able pupils to do as much for themselves as possible while they are in school
 - leaders and managers monitor closely, throughout the school day, how well the more able pupils are being challenged to make more rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal has a clear, ambitious vision for the school. With good support from senior and middle leaders, including members of the governing body, he has worked effectively to ensure that the quality of teaching continues to improve and that pupils are making good progress.
- A good example of this is to be seen in the recent improvements made to the range of activities on offer to pupils. Evidence from the inspection supports school leaders' views that learning activities planned for each pupil as part of this new curriculum are well matched to specific needs. One parent described the new curriculum as 'fantastic' because the chances to visit many different locations outside of school help to prepare her daughter so well for the future.
- Good systems for checking the quality of the school's work mean that strengths are identified and built on, and weaknesses quickly addressed. All school leaders are extremely keen to improve the school further, by comparing their school with others, taking advice and visiting similar settings which are performing particularly well.
- The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to improving pupils' achievements. Overall, teaching and learning are well managed and this has led to ongoing improvements in quality. However, leaders do not always give enough emphasis to making sure that teachers challenge the more able pupils to do as much as possible for themselves, particularly in using all of the available resources, including new technology.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Careful steps are taken by staff to make sure that pupils are in the best position to communicate and enjoy the company of others, including visitors from different schools. They show real pleasure when celebrating special occasions such as their own birthdays.
- School leaders place great emphasis on gathering the views of parents. During the inspection, a planned meeting to consider the future direction of school services was held, involving parents, staff, governors and trustees. Consequently, parents feel involved in the life of the school and believe that their opinions are respected.
- The local authority has provided good support to this school. Their training, which helps governors carry out their duties and the development of the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage, has been particularly welcome.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and have taken action to address any weaknesses. They have improved their performance considerably over time by making good use of training opportunities, including on safeguarding and data analysis. They have completed an analysis of their own skills. As a result, they are able to use the information they gain from regular visits to the school, and from meeting parents and staff, to good effect in holding school leaders to account. Governors have a good understanding of how much progress pupils are making because they take time to analyse the information staff provide and they ask challenging questions. They understand the need to provide rewards and incentives for teachers whose performance is strong. They have ensured that additional funding is used well, for example to improve pupils' communication skills. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet all requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They show real enthusiasm for favourite activities by smiling or eye-pointing to a preferred piece of equipment. They cooperate willingly when they are moving to an area of the classroom or another part of the school. Sometimes, the more able pupils are given too much help when travelling around the building.
- Pupils' attendance at school has improved over time and now matches the national average for special schools.
- Almost all pupils come into school very happily in the morning. Parents report that their children become excited when they see the school bus approaching their homes. Very occasionally, a pupil might be upset or show some distress on arrival. Staff quickly and skilfully comfort them, so that they are ready to join in

with activities from the start.

- In all areas of the school, highly respectful relationships are seen between staff and pupils. Staff routinely ask pupils for permission before they move them or intervene to make them more comfortable. They take care to tell pupils what will happen next. As a result, pupils are attentive and keen to make a contribution when it is their turn in a class activity.
- There are no reported incidents of bullying at this school. Parents and staff believe that their children are safe and very well cared for. Evidence gained during the inspection supports their views.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All staff receive rigorous training for safeguarding. All statutory procedures are in place.
- Risk assessment is excellent. For example, a nurse always accompanies a class on visits to the local community or places of interest. This is to ensure that pupils' medical needs can always be effectively met, and to enable other staff to concentrate on teaching.
- All of the school's equipment and resources are frequently checked. Great attention is paid to pupils' safety and well-being throughout the day.
- Exemplary practice is to be seen in the administration of medication and the organisation of daily therapy routines. These are so well planned that they form a very natural part of pupils' daily learning with no disruption to others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good over time. Teachers know their pupils very well and use a range of different approaches to help everyone make good progress. For example, signing is used well to promote communication. On almost all occasions, teachers and their assistants provide plenty of time and support to encourage a pupil to express what they mean or want.
- Teachers, therapists and nurses work extremely well as a team in helping pupils to learn new skills. For example, the physiotherapist explained how they work on pupils' posture, because 'good posture leads to good learning'. The nurse pointed to the careful planning which ensures that medication can almost always be administered in class, with no interruption to learning.
- All staff skilfully respond to the slightest movement a pupil makes, checking that they have fully understood what the pupil is requesting or saying. During a music and communication activity, one pupil became very animated when her teacher mentioned her forthcoming birthday. A good dialogue followed with the pupil showing real pleasure and nodding excitedly at the prospect of the celebration ahead.
- Precise records are maintained of pupils' successes and the areas of work that need to be revisited. Teachers frequently analyse the notes which they and their assistants have made, to plan the next steps.
- However, there are some occasions when too much is done for more able pupils and they are not always challenged to do as much as they possibly can for themselves. This slows the rate of progress for a few.
- Very often, there is good advice in pupils' individual files about how a skill can be consolidated. Sometimes, there is insufficient emphasis on how that skill might be developed even further to help more-able pupils gain in independence.
- Parents welcome the advice they receive on how they can help their children at home. In particular, they appreciate the school's use of texting and email because questions can be answered quickly and information passed efficiently.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Because of their complex needs, pupils have very low levels of attainment when they enter the school. Over time, they make good progress. While the steps they make are small, each move forward represents a huge achievement for every individual.
- The progress each pupil makes towards targets is very thoroughly analysed. Teachers identify gains which have been made, and take care to ensure that parents and all staff are aware of these, so that pupils can be encouraged to make the best use of new skills. When they notice that a pupil has not made progress, or has apparently lost a skill, they plan further learning to help them understand and achieve.
- From their individual starting points, pupils make rates of progress which are comparable to those seen in schools for pupils with similar needs. There are no variations amongst groups. Boys achieve as well as

girls and those who are entitled to receive additional funding achieve as well as others.

- Pupils enjoy meeting their peers from other settings. A good example of the typical progress they make on these occasions was seen in one pupil's records. This showed how, over time, she moved from being aware of the presence of others to actively participating in a learning activity with pupils from another school.
- A pupil's individual 'learning journey' was illustrated well in one work file where the level of challenge was gradually increased. Photographs showed how the pupil progressed over a year from listening to a musical sound to making music and experimenting with rhythm.
- Effective use of funding made available for primary sports and physical education means that pupils have more opportunities to achieve well in the hydrotherapy pool. As a result, they build physical strength and stamina, or at least, maintain what they have. At the same time, many pupils improve communication skills by indicating a preference for a particular movement or repetition of an activity.

The early years provision

is good

- The very few children who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage work alongside the small number of pupils who are in Key Stage 1. All have attainment levels on entry which are well below the national average.
- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The teacher participates in relevant training and planning sessions which helps her to maintain a good knowledge of work in other settings. The good achievements of the youngest children at this school are regularly compared with those in similar schools, which provides useful information about how well everyone is doing.
- Children make good progress from the start because teaching is so well organised, and closely matched to each child's needs. The teacher and her assistants are very responsive to children's attempts to show preferences. They respond quickly when a child indicates through gesture or eye movement that he or she is particularly enjoying an activity, by asking them to indicate 'more'. This helps children to become even more motivated and to show a keenness to communicate.
- Good planning is in place to ensure that children are prepared well for movement into other areas of the school. The teacher provides ample time for the youngest children to become accustomed to the presence of others, and the noises and sensations which are to be found in different classrooms or the hall. As a result, children settle quickly when they visit other environments.
- Parents express huge satisfaction with the arrangements for admitting their children to school. They welcome the home visits made by staff; the opportunities which they and their families have to visit the school to become familiar with the environment; and the strong teamwork which ensures that their children's needs are well met from the very start. They are right to be confident that their children are well cared for and kept very safe.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Teaching is typically good in the sixth form. As a result, students are well prepared for the move to the next phase of their lives and learning.
- Parents are full of praise for the support which school leaders and other staff provide when they are making choices about the future. They greatly appreciate the time taken by staff to accompany them on visits to find out about different settings.
- Students in the sixth form follow programmes which are closely matched to their individual needs and interests. Teachers and their assistants keep precise records of what each one has achieved and they use this information to plan the next steps.
- Good leadership in the sixth form results in a very positive learning atmosphere. Teaching is almost always purposeful, though there are a very few occasions when students have to wait too long to do their own work while the teacher is occupied with another student.
- The curriculum helps students to build on skills they have developed earlier. For example, one student was reminded to take himself to another room for a music lesson, rather than relying on adult help. Students make the most of opportunities provided when their peers from another school in the area visit. They practise their communication and social skills, and enjoy the contact with others.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133740
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	447991

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Dagnall
Headteacher	Jonathan Seaward
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 March 2012
Telephone number	01202 518635
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