

# Christchurch Learning Centre

29 Stroud Road, Christchurch, BH23 1PJ

**Inspection dates** 4–5 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough students make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers do not always challenge students to produce enough work or work that demonstrates the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Teaching does not consistently help students to make the best progress they can. Not all teachers expect the best from students or make use of the targets set for them to help them make more rapid academic progress.
- The irregular attendance of too many students means that they do not engage sufficiently with the range of opportunities provided in the centre.
- Teachers do not develop students' reading, writing and numeracy enough in lessons.
- Senior leaders, including governors have not yet established clear systems to check upon students' progress or to assess the full impact of the centre's work.
- Not all students or their parents understand the importance of attending regularly and its link to making better academic progress.
- The management committee is not fully aware of how well the centre provides for students. This limits its ability to challenge senior leaders to remedy weaknesses in the centre's work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students typically conduct themselves well. Leaders ensure that students' wellbeing and safety are a high priority.
- The centre offers a range of GCSE courses that helps students maintain links with their mainstream setting.
- The Somerford Centre provides students with a calm and nurturing environment that enables them to engage well in their studies.
- The school's curriculum provides a range of opportunities to support students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social awareness. This helps prepare them for their role in, and contribution to, work and society.
- On leaving, nearly all students go on to further education, employment or training.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at the quality of teaching and students' achievements through observation of ten lessons, looking at students' work, and scrutinising school information on students' progress and monitoring processes.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, staff, students, the Chair of the Management Committee and a local authority representative.
- The responses from ten staff survey questionnaires, views of students and letters from parents and staff from school working with the centre have been considered. There were no responses available from Ofsted's Parent View website.

## Inspection team

Paul Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The centre provides education for pupils who have been excluded, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school. There are a small number of students with specific medical needs that attend provision on a second site called the Somerford Centre. Many students are dual registered with the centre and a mainstream school
- Most students have special educational needs in relation to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- A larger proportion of students than average are eligible for pupil premium funding. This funding is not transferred to the learning centre, but is usually spent by the students' mainstream schools.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision with Paragon, which is a private provider of training.
- The centre has been part of a recent local authority restructuring of its pupil referral units.
- The centre has full-time provision for 11–16-year-old students.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' learning by ensuring that staff:
  - establish clear targets for students that help them to learn more quickly
  - use students' targets to plan individual learning activities
  - have higher expectations of students' participation in lessons
  - enhance opportunities to improve students' reading and writing abilities in different ways.
- Leaders should establish a systematic approach to checking on how well school provides for students' engagement and their academic progress.
- Work with parents and students to ensure that students attend more regularly to improve attendance rates to national averages.
- Ensure that members of the management committee are well informed about all aspects of the school's work and fully support and hold leaders at all levels to account.

*An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.*

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- Leaders have implemented a range of changes, including financial controls and assessment tracking, as it has developed greater independence from the local authority's direct control. Some of these are at an early stage of development and it is too early to judge their impact, particularly on students' achievement.
- There has been some useful work to improve teaching of numeracy and literacy and students' learning. However, leaders do not give staff enough individual support and guidance to secure rapid improvements in key aspects of their teaching.
- Leaders have not analysed fully the impact of the school's work. The management committee is not wholly effective in supporting or challenging senior leaders to improve the centre.
- Leaders monitor attendance closely, but initiatives to improve it have only been partially successful. A minority of students have improved their attendance and are making much better progress because of this. Some students still do not attend regularly enough.
- Leaders diligently check upon the achievements of students using alternative providers. They work well with mainstream schools to build good partnerships to benefit students' continuity of education. Dual registration and managed transfers to other schools are used effectively. Those attending the Paragon Centre are monitored to ensure their wellbeing is effectively catered for.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students are well thought through, understood by staff and implemented appropriately. All statutory requirements are met.
- The curriculum provides well for students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. For those who attend well, it is helping to lay the foundations for their next stages of learning or employment. This includes effective career guidance and support in making informed choices. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively for most, and instils a good understanding of British values. The irregular attendance of some students means they do not take advantage of the range of opportunities for helping them to achieve well.
- The local authority works closely with the centre and demonstrates a clear commitment to the success of students and ensuring the development of provision. The guidance and monitoring by the local authority has not been rigorous enough in supporting school leaders in ensuring students make good progress.
- The morale of staff is high and they share a vision for improving the outcomes for all students. There is a supportive, flexible and stable team in the school. Equal opportunities are ensured when possible and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Leaders have established a second centre that is developing provision well for students who have specific medical needs and have found it difficult to attend mainstream school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee carries out its statutory duties. Many members of the committee are professionals in mainstream schools and have direct experience of the positive impact the centre has had on many students. That said, the management committee are not yet fully informed about all aspects of the impact of the centre and systems are still developing.
  - Governors are aware of the system in place that establishes areas for improvement across the school for all staff and rewards more effective teaching and tackles underperformance.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Too many students do not attend regularly enough and so miss out on the broad range of learning opportunities provided in the centre. The centre works hard to change attitudes to learning with the variety of activities that are on offer. Some parents do not support the centre's aim to promote the importance of regular attendance strongly enough.
- When students engage well in lessons, they make accelerated progress in their personal development and academic success.
- Within the centre, staff and students have very positive relationships with each other. There is generally a calm, friendly and positive atmosphere and students usually engage in learning activities. Teachers and support staff are good role models. Students increasingly appreciate the benefits of working hard, resulting in increased self-esteem and respect for others in the centre.
- Most students follow the centre rules and behaviour is managed well by staff with a consistency of

approach and a persistence to support students when they are finding it difficult to do the right thing.

- Students are generally punctual to lessons and typically arrive with the right equipment. They help keep the centre litter free and well maintained.

### Safety

- The centre's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- There are clear systems for safeguarding and good processes are established to promote clear, prompt and effective communications between agencies and partners.
- As a result of close partnerships with parents, there is a high level of trust built between parents, students and school staff. When students give the centre a chance, they are able to confidently attend and feel safe and secure to learn more effectively.
- Staff at all levels are highly vigilant about the wellbeing of students and work very effectively as a team to support students and their families. Some students manage to change some of their previously negative attitudes to school.
- Students reported that they feel safe in the school. They say they work more successfully because they get caring support in small groups from adults that have time for them and understand them well.
- A number of parents' letters received by the inspector highlighted the difference that the centre has made to the lives of their children and the support that they have received.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because the work set for students is not always in line with what they already know and what they need to learn next. Their short-term targets designed to help their learning are not always followed up by staff. As a result students are not always challenged by the work and the participation of some students is not as great as it might be.
- The focus on students' personal development is more effective, but their achievements are not identified clearly. The range of progress students make over time is not assessed with sufficient rigour to help plan activities to move them on.
- The key steps for individual students are not established in sufficient detail to ensure all students are challenged appropriately in the work they complete and in their learning.
- Reading, writing and mathematics skills are usually taught systematically, but students' skills are not always used sufficiently in all subjects to develop sufficient depth of understanding.
- Strengths in teaching include effective methods used to get to know students quickly and establish their starting points, particularly their social and emotional development. The strengths that students have are understood well by staff informally, but are not recorded with sufficient detail. The patience of teachers and a consistent approach to support means that trust is established quickly with students.
- The centre has a rewards system that motivates students and encourages those who are less enthusiastic about their learning. Students value collecting 'golden tickets' and this gives them an opportunity to demonstrate to others how well they can do in their learning.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement, as they do not make good progress from their individual starting points. The irregular attendance of some students limits the achievement they make over time.
- Students' reading, writing and mathematical skills develop while at the centre, but not in enough ways to raise their skills, confidence or understanding to good levels. Students' achievement is not clearly enough identified from their individual starting points. What good and outstanding progress looks like for students is not always clear to staff, so the individual challenges are not always set high enough and this does not always promote good or better progress.
- The progress of the most able students' requires improvement as they are not always given work that extends their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Some students return to their mainstream school or engage with college courses, successfully developing positive learning attitudes. This is because the curriculum, behaviour management and supportive environment in the centre change their attitudes for the better.
- Nearly all students leaving the centre in Year 11 go on to further education, training or employment opportunities.

- Students who attend the Somerford centre achieve well in their social and emotional development as their medical needs are catered for well. However, despite increased engagement and progress, their achievement requires improvement as their academic progress lags behind their social development.
- A small number of students who engage with the opportunities in the centre do make good progress in some learning activities.
- There are no significant differences between the performance of disadvantaged students and that of other groups during their time in the centre. The centre does not benefit from any additional funding for this group of students.
- Students attending Paragon training say they benefit from the work they do and it helps their preparation for work.
- Where early entry to GCSE examination occurs, it does not limit the achievement of students, but helps to build confidence and prepare them for the next stage of their education or training.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134374
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	447983

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	39
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Gavin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22–23 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 471410
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