

# Winchelsea Special School

Guernsey Road, Parkstone, Poole, BH12 4LL

**Inspection dates** 17–18 April 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good because teachers do not always use the information they have about pupils' progress to match work precisely to their needs. Teaching is weaker in the secondary department where there is an over-reliance on worksheets, and phonics (the sounds made by letters) is not taught effectively.
- The contribution which support staff make to lessons is variable. Sometimes pupils are allowed to become too reliant on adult support which restricts their opportunities to learn for themselves.
- Pupils in the secondary department do not always make enough progress for achievement to be good because of weaknesses in teaching. In particular, pupils in Key Stage 4 do not make enough progress in reading and writing.
- Some staff with allocated responsibilities do not fulfil their roles well enough. Their monitoring of teaching and learning is sporadic and inconsistent.
- Some strategies to improve teaching and pupils' achievement are recent and not yet evident throughout the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- In the short time that he has been in post, the headteacher has been highly effective in raising staff morale and creating a confident staff team which is now committed to school improvement.
- Senior leaders have rapidly put in place effective systems and structures to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors have good expertise in education and in financial management. They monitor the school's budget well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They try hard in lessons, behave well and are friendly and polite.
- Pupils with communication difficulties have good resources and specialist support to enable them to join in well in lessons.
- Although progress is uneven, virtually all Year 11 leavers make enough progress overall to move on successfully to further education.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons, of which four were joint lesson observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with eight members of the governing body, the local authority’s senior advisor for school improvement, the headteacher and the senior leadership team. Inspectors also met with groups of primary- and secondary-aged pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding practices, improvement planning, pupils’ records, assessment information on pupils’ progress and documents related to the performance management of staff (the setting and reviewing of targets to help them to improve their work).
- The inspectors analysed the 28 questionnaires which were returned by staff.
- The inspectors looked at pupils’ work and heard five pupils read.

## Inspection team

Christine Emerson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Winchelsea is a special school for pupils with a wide range of disabilities and special educational needs. These include moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, and autism spectrum disorders. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils with complex needs and significant difficulties with communication has increased. In 2010, the school gained specialist school status for communication and interaction.
- More than half the pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority, and the children of service families). This is high.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. A large majority of pupils are boys.
- The school takes pupils from the whole of the Borough of Poole as well as from Dorset, Bournemouth and Hampshire and provides an outreach service to schools within the borough.
- The school holds the Healthy Schools Plus award.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of turbulence with major changes in the school leadership team and a review of the governing body by the local authority. The present governing body has been in place for under two years and the current headteacher took up his post in September 2012.

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

- Make all teaching, particularly in the secondary department, as good as the best by:
  - ensuring that information gained from assessment is accurate and used effectively to match work set to the particular needs of individual learners
  - ensuring that support staff are always well deployed, provide the right level of support and promote independent learning
  - improving the teaching of English in Key Stage 4 and ensuring that the teaching of phonics is consistently good throughout the school
  - ensuring that pupils in the secondary department have access to a variety of interesting activities in all lessons
- Accelerate the impact of the leadership initiatives to improve teaching and raise achievement by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use the pupil achievement logs consistently well so that pupils understand how well they are doing
  - improving the impact of the homework policy by ensuring homework is provided more regularly and consistently
  - improving the skills of staff with subject responsibilities to enable them to monitor and support teachers more effectively
  - involving governors more fully in monitoring the impact of teachers' professional development plans.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement in English in the secondary department, particularly in Key Stage 4, requires improvement. Because teachers do not always have good skills in teaching phonics and too many worksheets are used in lessons, pupils do not make as much progress as they should do in reading and writing.
- Effective systems are now in place to check that assessment is accurate and to demonstrate pupils' progress clearly, using detailed 'pupil achievement logs'. However, until recently, pupils' written work has sometimes been assessed too generously and information has not always been analysed accurately. This makes it more difficult to draw accurate conclusions of the progress pupils make over time.
- The very few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter the school with skills and abilities that are low for their age because of their complex needs. However, they make good progress in relation to their starting points because they are given good support and staff are skilled at developing social and communication skills.
- Teachers in the primary department are using the pupil achievement logs well and these, along with the school's tracking information and pupils' workbooks, indicate that most pupils in this part of the school are making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with communication difficulties and/or autism spectrum disorders make good progress in developing their communication skills because of specialist support and good resources which the school has put in place since its designation as a specialist school for communication and interaction.
- Pupil premium funds are used effectively to provide well-targeted additional support. As a result, pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority are making similar progress to other pupils in English and mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 11 attain worthwhile qualifications in a variety of subjects at different levels according to their ability. They are entered for these qualifications in Year 10 if they have met the required standard, although none has been entered in recent years.
- Over the last two years almost all pupils have moved on successfully to local colleges of further education.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching in the secondary department, especially in English and mathematics, requires improvement. Too much of it, particularly in mathematics, has been based on using worksheets which are dull and do not stimulate pupils' interest.
- Work set by teachers in the secondary department is often not well enough adjusted for pupils' individual learning levels. As a result, higher attainers are not challenged enough while some pupils are too dependent on support staff to complete their work.
- While phonics is taught well in the primary department, teachers in the secondary department do not always have a good enough understanding of how to teach phonics effectively.
- Teaching is improving well in the primary department and there is now much good teaching with some examples of outstanding practice.
- In the best lessons, work set is based on accurate assessment and finely tuned to pupils' individual learning levels. Pupils are stimulated to learn by a good variety of lively activities and given just the right level of support. This was evident in an outstanding numeracy lesson for primary-aged pupils. Well-chosen resources enthused the pupils and they were keen to join in with activities which were well matched to their particular needs. The teacher used the pupils' progress achievement logs very effectively to help them to understand their targets and work independently. As a result, all the pupils made excellent progress in improving their counting

skills.

- The newly introduced pupil achievement logs are helping to improve marking and ensure that pupils have more individualised learning opportunities, but their use is inconsistent. Where teachers are using the logs, pupils are given good guidance to help move them forward to the next stage of learning.
- Teachers are given strong support by the school's speech therapy team to enable them to successfully promote pupils' communication skills.
- Homework is not used effectively to support pupils' learning. A small number of parents who registered their views on Parent View indicated that their child is not given appropriate homework.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The school's policy and systems to promote good behaviour have been recently reviewed and improved. As a result, procedures are now very good. This is already having a noticeable impact, fostering good relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils, and leading to fewer incidents of poor behaviour.
- Pupils say they like school and feel that their behaviour has improved. For example, one pupil commented that 'it's been really good at sorting out my anger'.
- Pupils' attendance is above average.
- Records and observations showed that behaviour is well managed and is typically good. A small minority of staff feel that behaviour is not well managed but inspectors found no evidence to support this view, which is not shared by most staff or by parents.
- Most pupils behave well in class, are keen to learn and join in enthusiastically. Teachers and support staff work as effective teams to ensure that any incidents of problematic behaviour are dealt with quickly so that lessons are not disrupted.
- Behaviour at lunchtimes and in the playground is good. Pupils are generally polite and friendly to each other and to visitors.
- Pupils behave sensibly when handling equipment in practical lessons and understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Older pupils particularly value the 'travel training' which teaches them how to move around safely in their local community.
- Pupils have some understanding of different types of bullying such as cyber bullying, commensurate with their age and ability to understand. Pupils of all ages say that they feel safe and that there is little bullying.

## **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leaders and managers have not had a consistently good impact on pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Staff responsible for subjects and departments do not always fulfil their roles well enough. However, the management team has been restructured, new appointments made and there are good plans in place to involve these managers more effectively in monitoring teaching and learning.
- The new headteacher, with good support from the senior leadership team, has effectively established a clear strategic direction for the school. As a result of his strong leadership, the staff team is now pulling together with a shared vision for school improvement. The vast majority of staff fully support the implementation of the raft of new initiatives he has rapidly introduced. These include checks and balances to ensure that each pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- School evaluation is now much more reliable because it is based on accurate data. Good systems have been established to monitor all aspects of the school's work and pupils' progress. The information is being used well to inform strong school improvement planning and the school's

capacity to improve further is now good. However, because many of the systems are newly established it is still too soon to see their impact in raising achievement.

- The senior leadership team has undergone support and training from an outside consultant to ensure that monitoring of teaching is accurate. The professional development plans which have been recently introduced for each teacher are an effective vehicle for checking how well teachers are doing in meeting their targets. Performance management of teachers is rigorous and salary progression is clearly linked to performance.
  - Pupils in the primary department enjoy a good curriculum which meets their individual needs well. There is good planning in place to reorganise the secondary department to improve the curriculum and to offer the pupils more practical experiences.
  - Although the opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall, and lead to pupils' good behaviour, pupils have fewer opportunities to learn about the different cultures which contribute to modern British society.
  - Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet all current statutory requirements. There are strong partnerships with a variety of agencies, such as those for social care, to promote pupils' welfare and help to keep them safe. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
  - The school has received extensive and extremely well-focused support from the local authority to enable it to recover from the period of turbulence and begin to move forward successfully.
  - Most parents are happy with the education that their children are receiving and would recommend the school to others.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The reconstituted governing body brings a wealth of financial and educational expertise to the school and governors have attended suitable training and visited other special schools to develop their skills.
    - Governors know how well the school is doing and understand the school's information about pupils' progress. They are now beginning to challenge the senior leadership team where necessary, particularly about the use of the school budget. Governors monitor the school's finances well to ensure that it achieves best value.
    - Governors monitor the performance management of teachers effectively and ensure that pay awards are linked closely to performance. However, they have not yet made arrangements to monitor the teachers' personal development plans.
    - Good systems are in place to ensure that governors know how the pupil premium funds are being spent and that these are helping to raise achievement.
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## 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>	113955
<b>Local authority</b>	Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	401397

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Muir
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sean Pavitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0120 746240
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