

The Quay School

160 Herbert Avenue, Poole, BH12 4HU

Inspection dates

17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership inspires staff and students to produce outcomes of the highest quality in a happy and improving school where learning is transformed.
- This success is supported by governance of the highest standard. Expertise from leaders in education and health is included on the Board, while parents are also represented effectively.
- Although the school is based on four very different sites, highly effective leadership has created a common vision and uniformly high expectations across the whole school.
- From their starting points, a high number of students make progress that is much better than that found nationally. This is because engagement with learning is the focus throughout the school.
- The high quality premises and facilities help students to feel valued. This inspires them to engage strongly with learning, following often very difficult previous experiences of school.
- An outstanding range of information on the progress of every individual and of identified groups of students means that their progress and achievement are clearly identified. Students are challenged to be as successful as they can be and expectations are very high.
- Outstanding progress in learning is reflected in the success gained by disadvantaged students as well as the most able.
- Teaching is outstanding and inspires students to re-engage with learning. In an atmosphere of mutual respect, staff and students get on very well together and students are inspired to do the best they can.
- Training for staff is given a very high priority. It is supported by extremely rigorous systems to check their performance and set targets for improvement. Strong help is provided for individual members of staff to develop their personal expertise and interests.
- Students come to the school with a range of very challenging behaviours, some having effectively dropped out of education completely. They improve rapidly in their behaviour and their attitudes to learning because of a mixture of high expectations and consistently positive behaviour management. As a result, students very quickly re-engage with learning and achieve considerable success.
- In this positive learning community all are valued. Students, many of whom are potentially very vulnerable, thrive. They, and their parents, believe that the school is a very safe place.
- Students are given very effective support as they reach Year 11 and plan for the next phase in their lives. Care is taken to ensure that the gains they have made since joining the school are consolidated to their full advantage.
- The vast majority of students go on to college, happy to remain in education. Courses followed in school lead to access to opportunities that meet individual needs and aspirations. Some students talk of gaining a trade or apprenticeship, others of moving eventually into higher education. All look to the future with confidence.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students learning in a range of lessons across all four of the sites that make up The Quay School. Three lessons were visited jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, members of the governing body (The Board) and a senior nurse. A letter from the local authority's Director of Children's Services was also considered.
- There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey to trigger an analysis of parents' views. The inspector therefore used the school's own recent questionnaire, based on the Ofsted format, to gather the views of 33 parents. Inspectors also received a letter from parents concerning the education of their child.
- The views of staff were gathered from their questionnaire returns and from discussions throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke informally with many of the students during the inspection, and their views were more fully taken into account during a formal meeting with some of them. Work was looked at in lessons and a sample of students' work from across the school was looked at in detail. Inspectors also looked at detailed case studies to consider the progress made by specific students.
- A range of written documentation was looked at, including information on student progress, teachers' planning and marking, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mark Anderson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Quay is an alternative provision academy for students who have been permanently excluded, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion, and those that have been excluded for a fixed term. It provides also for students with medical needs, including hospital in-patients, and supervises the provision of home tuition.
- The school converted to academy status in April 2013. As a result of a request from the Department for Education to sponsor a special school in another authority, the academy trust converted to a multi-academy trust in July 2014, prior to sponsorship in September 2014. It is therefore designated as an academy converter even though it had previously already been an academy. When its predecessor school, also called The Quay School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The headteacher became executive headteacher of both schools, with an existing leader appointed as head of school. Pending finalisation of further leadership changes, an assistant headteacher is acting deputy headteacher and a curriculum leader is acting as an assistant headteacher.
- Since the last inspection, there has also been major expansion in the facilities of the school. A new building houses provision for students with emotional and social difficulties. A new facility has been built by the health authority to house a 10-bedded in-patient unit and a six place day-student adolescent psychiatric unit, where patients are also on the roll of The Quay. A former primary school has been fully redeveloped to provide for a range of vocational education opportunities.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is very high, although the exact percentage varies as students join and leave at points throughout the year. Those who are hospital in-patients receive education from the first day of their admission and their progress is then monitored from the fifth day and reported back to their school if their stay is more prolonged.
- A very high proportion of students are from White British backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, no students spoke English as an additional language.
- A very high proportion of students are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after). Many students are dual-registered, and The Quay often does not receive this additional funding for them. Some students move into or leave the school during the year, bringing this funding or taking it away with them.
- The Quay is not in receipt of the primary school sports grant. All the primary-aged pupils registered at the school are dual-registered, and this additional funding goes to the mainstream school. The school does not provide for students to follow the early entry route to GCSE.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Staff should benefit from opportunities to work alongside colleagues in mainstream schools to gain broader experience of assessing work at the highest levels.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Under the inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school, leadership at all levels is totally focused on enabling students to reach the highest levels of achievement. It enables those who had previously experienced failure within education to be transformed, helping to turn their lives around and considerably enhancing their chances for success in the future.
- Leaders at each of the four sites are held to account for the success of their base. Each setting is radically different in its mode of operation, but clear and high expectations from the whole leadership produces consistent, highly successful outcomes from them all.
- Leaders at all levels are highly committed and effective, working extremely hard to bring the vision for the school to fruition. For example, those with subject leadership roles play a major role in checking the quality of teaching and supporting staff to improve their performance.
- The management of staff performance and their training is well organised. Regular and detailed monitoring of teaching, planning and assessment, feeds into highly detailed and effective school development planning. The needs of the school as a whole form the basis of challenging, yet achievable, annual professional objectives for staff. Training to encourage the development of specific personal expertise is also supported.
- The school's leaders play an active role with a group of mainstream schools, exploring effective ways to measure students' progress and achievement following the removal of formal National Curriculum levels.
- Policies are wholly focused on enabling students to be successful, and all staff share the commitment of leaders to this goal. As one member of staff put it: 'Teamwork is consistent across the school; support from leaders is second to none'.
- Reading is strongly encouraged and each day students and staff read together. Currently they are benefiting from their participation in a Library Association challenge to schools for students to read at least six books by June.
- The range of subjects taught and the opportunities for learning ensure that all students, whatever their academic ability or background, are able to engage in effective learning. Opportunities to continue to do well are supported by detailed advice and careers guidance. Students who had been permanently excluded often choose from a range of vocational subjects. These are chosen carefully to ensure they lead firstly to college courses and then beyond to apprenticeships or employment.
- Some students take a more academic route to GCSE, using college courses as stepping stones to higher education. They talk confidently about this being their goal. Whatever route students follow, they receive outstanding support that continues to monitor their progress, how well they attend, and their behaviour. This support continues even after they have left school, to ensure the gains they have made are not subsequently lost.
- The school takes great care to measure the impact of the limited pupil premium funding that it does receive. The very high proportion of disadvantaged students make strong and sustained progress as a direct consequence of joining the school and subsequently benefiting from its outstanding provision.
- All courses contain key elements of English and mathematics. There is also a focus on promoting the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A particularly strong element is social development. Students become confident in sharing, collaborating, showing team-work and appreciating that others might hold different but equally valid opinions and beliefs. This also helps give strong support to the promotion of British values, with citizenship being part of the core curriculum.
- Outstanding links with parents include daily contact to ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's education. Staff, including the very effective parent liaison officer, develop extremely close relationships with parents. A parent wrote to the inspectors to say 'I can only praise the dedication, compassion and support of all staff ... the change [in my child] has been remarkable, both in growing confidence and learning.'
- Equally powerful external relationships support provision in a range of ways. The direct links with medical staff enables excellent joint working relationships between education and health staff to support students who can often be very ill. The Director of Children's Services contacted the inspection team to speak very highly of the work the school does to support the wider needs of children and young people.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is of the highest quality and Board members often bring valuable skills and talents to support and challenge leaders. A high proportion are headteachers or senior health professionals and are fully aware of how the very high standard of teaching supports the students' excellent achievement. The views of parents are also represented effectively. Board members gain information through visiting

the school and observing for themselves. They meet with key leaders and have a clear view of what goes on throughout the school. They have a detailed understanding of how and why the school is so successful, making good use of the detailed information they receive.

- All legal responsibilities are carried out very effectively, including the monitoring of finance. A high proportion of Board members are trained in safeguarding at a high level and they ensure that detailed arrangements, which more than meet the legal requirements, are implemented throughout the school. They actively promote equality of opportunity, ensuring that there is no discrimination. They strongly promote tolerance and respect for people of different backgrounds, faiths and ethnicities, supporting the school to prepare students for life in a modern, democratic Britain.
- Board members set challenging professional targets each year for the executive headteacher, while also maintaining a detailed overview of appraisal for the staff as a whole. This includes an appreciation of the links between performance and pay and the systems that might be used to address any underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. When they first join the school, they display a range of challenging and often complex behaviours. A clear and effective policy supports students to develop far more positive patterns of behaviour and it is implemented with total consistency. Students are helped to come to terms with their specific difficulties and so start to overcome them. The success of this policy is demonstrated in the complete lack of any permanent exclusions.
- Behaviour traits are tracked in detail, looking specifically at three different areas: emotion, conduct and learning. These aspects are all measured and tracked carefully to produce clear evidence of dramatic improvement over time. Such detailed monitoring also supports the measuring of the effectiveness of specific individual plans to improve behaviour.
- There is compelling evidence that over time, negative behaviours are transformed. In cases where there are underlying medical reasons for specific behaviours, education and health staff work together extremely effectively to provide appropriate support.
- Whatever the type of course being followed, students come to show high levels of commitment and want to do well. The school works hard to ensure that courses meet their individual needs, but beyond that, staff have the highest expectations and act as role models, always expecting students to respond in a positive way.
- As a result, students throughout the school become enthusiastic and committed learners, so that even minor disruption in lessons is extremely rare. Students enjoy their learning and come to experience success, sometimes for the first time. It enables them to go on to do well at college or in employment, which were the routes for every leaver last year. Ongoing support from the school ensures that the gains they have made are not lost when they leave and move to new settings, so progress is sustained.
- Wider difficulties sometimes mean that there will be occasions when behaviour is not of the very highest standard but students are given positive encouragement to learn from these incidents. There is no recrimination and staff encourage a strong rapport, supporting students and helping them learn from any such slips so that over time, behaviour is transformed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Parents, staff and pupils are all totally clear that this is a safe environment in which to provide for very effective learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding, including highly effective risk assessments, are exemplary and fully meet requirements. Very detailed child protection training is provided for all staff, their excellent practice being reinforced by the close working relationships developed with other professionals in this field.
- Bullying is not an issue because students get on so well together. As one of them put it: 'I can tell you 100% that no one gets bullied here.' At the same time, bullying, including cyber-bullying, is a key focus in the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting School' award scheme which the school is currently pursuing.
- The scheme requires students to show good understanding of the rights enshrined in the United Charter on the Rights of the Child. Discussions with students showed a strong commitment to this principle, and to the school's powerful promotion of understanding of different cultures and creeds.
- The school's high expectations are reflected not only in the way in which visitors are checked and monitored to ensure that positive messages are always promoted, but also in the way that derogatory or discriminatory language is never tolerated. This process impacts very strongly on students' spiritual,

moral, social and cultural attitudes.

- The attendance of individuals is frequently transformed, although wider medical conditions might create difficulties. Within the general hospital provision, a staff nurse sought out an inspector to say how much the young people enjoyed their lessons, some being seen hurrying down the corridor to get to the education room as quickly as possible! On the rare occasions when students display reluctance to come into school, phone calls home are quickly made. If necessary, staff will even go to a student's home to encourage them to come into school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Across all four sites, the outstanding teaching is reflected clearly in the progress shown in students' books and the pride they take in their work. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very closely to plan extremely effective lessons that fully engage students and help them to become enthusiastic learners. This is why students make such rapid progress from their starting points. For those who continue to find difficulties with learning, focused and individualised support is put into place to help them make the best possible progress.
- Teachers, and the instructors who are responsible for vocational provision, get to know their students exceptionally well. This enables them to plan carefully so that their teaching addresses individual needs and is always challenging. It helps students to enjoy their learning and to become increasingly engaged over time, so that they progress extremely well across all areas.
- All staff have consistently high expectations. They want their students to do well and, because they develop such a strong rapport, they get to know the best ways to support each of them to maximise their progress. There is a genuine mutual respect between adults and students throughout the school and students are listened to carefully so that their views and opinions about their education can be taken fully into account.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is consistently of a very high quality and these skills are promoted across all subjects. In vocational courses, there are still large elements of support to develop more effective skills in these core areas.
- Because lessons are effective in engaging students and helping them to gain positive enjoyment from their studies, students show a high level of engagement in all areas of learning. This can be seen across all the sites, even though each has its own distinct character and purpose.
- High quality marking is consistent in implementing the school's recently enhanced policy. It is expected that teachers will support students through advice on how a piece of work might have been made even better. The development has come because there is now an expectation that students will enter a dialogue with teachers to show how they have taken this advice and used it to improve their work.
- The information on students' progress shows clear evidence of rising standards, with more students able to reach higher levels. In small schools such as The Quay, this can create potential difficulties since teachers have limited experience of assessing work at these levels. At present, opportunities for teachers to gain experience in comparing and contrasting the work of more students at these higher levels is limited.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- With no national information available, the school compiles its own extremely effective progress information for students across all four sites. This shows that the attainment of the majority when they first enter the school is much lower than what is typical for their age. Many students had experienced difficulties at school, and histories of their broken education showed that many had limited effective learning.
- The school makes clear to students from the start that it sets high expectations of them and that they are expected to work hard to bring about rapid improvement. From their individual starting points, a high proportion of students make progress that is considerably above that expected nationally, with dramatically enhanced achievement in English and mathematics, supported by the clear focus on reading. The clear expectation is that every student will gain external accreditation if they remain to the end of Year 11, and a range of qualifications is available to match the full range of courses offered. At the same time, there is a focus on supporting as many students as possible to return successfully to mainstream education, which is usually successful when implemented.
- Students are frequently enthused by the success they experience. Some talk confidently of gaining apprenticeships, others have aspirations to go on to university. Across the board, students' attitudes to

learning are turned around through gaining many new skills and learning to apply them to great effect. The skills of reading, writing and mathematics are applied in all areas, supporting wider learning and progress. In all parts of the school, students are therefore sustaining rapid progress and learning exceptionally well.

- Information is gathered from the initial measure of their abilities when they first enter the school, and from then on formally measured every half-term. Challenging targets are set and students' progress towards them monitored in detail. These learning targets sit closely alongside the behaviour targets, which are also monitored with care. When students do not make the progress they could, a range of additional support is provided which enables students to catch up quickly.
- Good liaison between the general hospital provision and students' schools ensures that learning can be sustained. For example, the progress of students in hospital for more than five days is recorded and sent back to their schools when they are discharged, to ensure continuity of learning. Similar care is taken to ensure that the progress of students receiving home tuition is the best it can be. Home-tutors use progress information on which to base their planning to make sure that students are challenged to best effect.
- Detailed information is collected to show the outcomes for every student, for every subject and for the performance of key groups. It is used to very good effect to ensure that there is no disparity between the performance of any identified groups and others. The progress of such groups, as well as the progress of individual students, is far in excess of the progress made by students nationally, albeit from starting points that are often low.
- Disadvantaged students are identified and tracked carefully, and the school's information makes it clear that their needs are met very effectively. Compared to the progress of students nationally, the proportion making expected or better than expected progress is considerably higher. Within school their progress is in line, because virtually all students are making strong progress.
- Similarly, care is taken to monitor and track the progress of the most able who, as a group, are growing in number. Once they become re-engaged with education, the progress they make is sometimes very rapid. This is because they are challenged, their progress is monitored on a regular basis and they are well supported to reach their potential. As a group, they become enthusiastic and very committed learners. However, because their teachers have not generally been used to assessing work at the higher levels, they are not always fully accurate in pitching this challenge at the right level.

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	139498
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	449927

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Baker
Executive Headteacher	Jo Perry
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2011
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