

Winchelsea School

Guernsey Road, Poole, BH12 4LL

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils, including early years children, make good progress. They achieve well and are effectively prepared for the next stages of learning or work.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together, conveying high expectations to pupils. Teachers provide well-planned activities that capture pupils' interests.
- Early years provision is good. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning because the provision is well organised and behaviour and learning are well managed.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are outgoing and confident. Well-developed systems for safeguarding lead to pupils feeling safe and secure. Parents, pupils and staff express confidence in pupils' safety.
- The headteacher's strong leadership has galvanised the school and she is well supported by senior staff. Governors know the school very well, supporting it and vigorously challenging it.
- Leaders, managers and governors ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is good and that the school is continuing to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work is not always pitched at the right level to challenge all pupils.
- Transition from whole-class working to groups is occasionally too slow.
- Marking does not consistently show pupils what they should do to improve their work.
- Local authority support has not always been timely because the authority has not always had an accurate picture of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons including five observed jointly with senior staff, and considered the behaviour of pupils as they walked around the school. Break and lunchtime arrangements were also seen.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read to them individually as well as listening to pupils read to their class in lessons.
- The school's work was observed. Inspectors looked at documents relating to keeping pupils safe, assessments of pupils' progress, and information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors analysed 46 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors examined the 16 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, as well as the school's analysis of their own parent questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke informally to several parents as they brought their child to school, and met a parent governor.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Bosley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Winchelsea mainly educates pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, and speech and language needs. A small number of pupils have other general special educational needs including, for example, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or its newer replacement, an education, health and care plan.
- The school admits pupils from the two unitary authorities of Poole and Bournemouth, and the counties of Hampshire and Dorset.
- More than a half of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, a much higher proportion than that found nationally. About 8% of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The great majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. Just over a third of pupils are girls.
- The school receives sport funding for primary-aged pupils.
- It receives catch-up funding for literacy and numeracy for Year 7 pupils.
- The school offers full-time provision for children in the early years. They are taught in a group with a very small number of Year 1 pupils.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- Following the previous inspection, the school received a monitoring visit in July 2013. Since then, the school has experienced a period of turbulence, including changes of headteacher and other staff. The present headteacher has been in post since January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that, in all key stages, work is pitched at the right level to challenge pupils fully.
- Improve the consistency of marking pupils' work through Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4, so that it makes clear to pupils what they should do in order to improve.
- In all key stages make sure that transitions between whole-class and small-group working are kept brief and do not interfere with pupils' access to the curriculum.
- Work with the local authority to ensure that the authority's picture of the school is accurate and up to date and that support and challenge are related to this.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors, keen that the school does well, have a clear focus on making improvements. The roles of the effective and highly motivated senior staff are clear so that they are effectively held to account. Subject leaders and leaders of other aspects such as behaviour are effective in monitoring and improving their areas. The school evaluates itself accurately. It has prepared well-judged plans to improve, which further encourage a culture that values good teaching and behaviour. This demonstrates continuing capacity to improve.
- The headteacher has transformed many aspects of the school. Weaknesses in teaching that have arisen through many changes in leadership and staffing have been determinedly addressed. Management of staff performance is reinforced through action plans to improve teaching and learning. Teachers are given good opportunities to develop their skills through training and through observing excellent practice in other schools, which have helped to further improve the quality of their teaching.
- Broad programmes of study encourage good academic progress and help develop understanding of British values such as equality and fairness. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through visits, assemblies, themed days on different countries, and through art, stories and music. Careers advice and guidance effectively enable older students to gain further education or employment.
- Equal opportunities are effectively promoted through the school's individual approach to provision which helps ensure individual pupils do well. There is no evidence of discrimination.
- The pupil premium is used to provide extra speech and language therapy, anger management sessions, 'circle of friends' and other interventions. These help to enable disadvantaged pupils to progress at least as well as other pupils in the school. Year 7 catch-up funding is effectively used on resources and approaches which accelerate progress in reading and numeracy skills.
- Primary sport funding enables pupils to join in tournaments and receive coaching, so that participation and confidence in sports are improving. The school's records provide examples of strong progress of particularly vulnerable pupils.
- The local authority has not provided the school with the support and guidance over time that it has needed. It was insufficiently aware of the challenges posed by changes in leadership and other staff before the appointment of the current headteacher. Therefore, it was unable to intervene in a timely way. The authority is now keen to maintain a clearer view of the school's provision and to improve support and challenge.
- Parents value the school highly. They say, typically, that 'the school keeps me informed', is 'really supportive' and that it encourages 'great improvements in language'. The school has considerably benefited from links with local schools through seeing strong practice and sharing training.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Systems are well established, resulting in pupils feeling safe and secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well, challenging and supporting it effectively. Their thorough, detailed minutes show consistent probing and questioning. Governors have a clear view of pupils' achievement through being familiar with the school data and receiving regular reports on pupils' progress. They know the quality of teaching because of first-hand experience and knowing the school's observations of teaching. With the assistance of an external adviser, governors manage the performance of the headteacher effectively. They have a broad overview of the management of the performance of other staff, ensuring that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance challenged. Governors have carried out an audit of their skills in order to identify needs for further training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's welcoming atmosphere encourages and promotes good conduct. Pupils quickly gave inspectors many examples of lessons and activities they like, but struggled to find examples of activities they dislike. This high level of enjoyment of learning spurs pupils to do their best. One pupil stated of staff that 'because it is a special school, they know me'.
- Pupils, their parents, and staff are confident that pupils behave well and that they are safe. This was confirmed during the inspection, during lessons, at break times, and at lunch. As pupils move around the

school they show consideration for others. Pupils take increasing care with their work and are proud of the school and of their achievements. They grow in confidence as they assume responsibilities, such as helping to run the tuck shop or serving on the school council. Teachers encourage good social behaviour in pupils, seen in a physical education lesson of Kwik cricket, in which pupils worked in pairs and commented constructively on how well their partner was doing.

- There are no permanent exclusions. Fixed-term exclusions are rare and used only in exceptional circumstances. Recognising the importance of learning, pupils attend school regularly. They respect each other, the staff and the environment.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and can give examples of how to look after themselves properly in different situations and settings, both in school and elsewhere.
- Pupils can explain how to avoid danger when engaged in activities involving water, and older students explained about warning flags on the beach. They know the importance of learning to swim. According to their different levels of understanding and age, they can speak about road safety and keeping safe using the internet. E-safety has a high priority for staff, parents and pupils, as reflected in work on this topic including the organisation of an internet safety day.
- Pupils know about bullying and different types of bullying, such as that characterised by name calling, and said that there were no issues concerning bullying at the school. They said that very occasionally there may be some name calling, but that staff deal with it effectively.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The atmosphere for learning is positive and welcoming. Teaching is predominantly good, leading to the good progress that pupils make.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils, and they respond well to them. There is much laughter in the school, as teachers make sure lessons are enjoyable as well as productive. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and with other professionals, including the school's speech and language therapists, to engage pupils in their learning.
- Teachers use a good range of effective strategies. Support for pupils' learning is well focused and questions are often used well to check what pupils do and do not understand. Staff knowledge of pupils is used to good effect to aid learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson for younger pupils, teaching assistants skilfully brought pupils' attention back to the task by knowing what pupils like and providing what interested them.
- The good teaching contributes strongly to pupils' good achievement in all aspects of the curriculum. In a mathematics lesson for older pupils, they achieved well because the activities were designed to challenge pupils working at different levels so that they all had to concentrate hard. Teaching enthuses the children about learning, including in literacy, and reading in particular. One pupil told an inspector towards the end of morning break time, 'I'm doing literacy next. I love literacy – and we're having a snack first.' In a lesson on attention skills for younger pupils, they achieved well among much enjoyment because the activities were demanding and the enthusiasm of the teacher was infectious.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Behaviour is well managed because staff know their pupils very well and can communicate with them effectively. Where there is occasional inappropriate behaviour, staff manage this well so that learning quickly continues.
- Sometimes work is not pitched at the right level to be challenging to all pupils. Occasionally, when moving from whole-class work to group work, or vice versa, the transition takes too long and time is wasted. Although the best marking of pupils' work shows pupils how to improve, this is inconsistent. These aspects slow pupils' progress where they occur.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From different starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well, including in reading, writing, numeracy and communication. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Good achievement is shown in the school's most recent assessments, in pupils' work, through records of lesson observations, and in the views expressed by pupils, parents and staff.
- Individual pupils and groups of pupils, for example boys and girls, and pupils in different key stages, all make good progress. Pupils with different special educational needs, such as severe learning difficulties, also achieve well. Where, occasionally, an aspect of learning is lower than expected, the school takes

suitable action to accelerate progress. Pupils achieve especially well in art.

- Different professionals work closely together to the benefit of pupils. For example, teachers, teaching assistants, and speech and language therapists work as a coherent team to encourage communication and participation in lessons. Enjoyment and good behaviour often combine to ensure that pupils achieve well. In a lesson on Canada, younger pupils achieved well in learning some key information, for example in some parts it is very cold, because they enjoyed the activities, behaved well and concentrated hard.
- Owing to their special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school attain at levels that are much lower than those reached by all pupils nationally. However, because of programmes that are shaped to their individual needs, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and achieve at least as well as other pupils in the school.
- The comparatively most able pupils in the school make good progress overall because teachers ensure that they are provided with activities which interest and challenge them.
- Pupils who are able to read, sometimes relying on the aid of symbols, do so regularly and with enjoyment. The pupils who read to an inspector showed enormous determination because they knew they were making progress and were proud of their achievements.
- Older pupils take a suitable range of examinations matched to what they know and can do. No student is entered early for any GCSEs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of learning or employment. The school has taken particular care that older students are prepared for the next stages. In recent years, no student has left without a place in education, training or employment.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and understanding significantly lower than those typical of children of the same age. They make good progress in all areas of learning owing to high staff expectations and the stimulation of a wide range of well-chosen activities.
- On entering school, the children are carefully assessed, with parents also involved in the process. Programmes are developed in line with children's individual needs. Progress is regularly monitored and approaches changed as necessary in order to maintain momentum. In an outdoor learning lesson, children made good progress in making choices and decisions because their exploration was encouraged and ongoing accurate assessments were made of how well they were doing. The children respond positively to interesting activities and encouragement and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Because activities are engaging and enjoyable, children participate well and try hard. Staff convey their high expectations for both behaviour and learning, so that children know what is required and respond accordingly. In a lesson promoting personal and social skills and encouraging children to take turns, behaviour was good because the school's systems were used effectively and consistently. The children understood and acted on the high expectations their teachers had of them.
- Staff provide a good balance of outdoor and indoor activities with child-led and adult-led activities. The classroom spaces are attractive and welcoming, and good quality well-chosen resources are effectively used to encourage learning. Different areas for learning are clearly identifiable and accessible to the children. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed, and teachers and assistants work very closely together.
- Children are kept safe and secure. Staff ensure that the setting is clean and tidy.
- Leadership and management are good because staff know children's needs very well and respond consistently. Parents are actively involved, for example through home-school learning books. The self-evaluation of the provision is clear and accurate, and liaison with other schools is well developed.

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	113955
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	462471

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Apps
Headteacher	Rachel Weldon
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 April 2013
Telephone number	01202746240
Fax number	01202733024
Email address	r.weldon@winchelsea.poole.sch.uk

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