

Victoria Education Centre

12 Lindsay Road, Poole, BH13 6AS

Inspection dates 25 – 26 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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
Early years provision		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school has improved well since its last inspection, so that its overall effectiveness is outstanding.
- Pupils from the youngest to the oldest make outstanding progress. Children in the early years get off to an excellent start and this rate of progress continues into the sixth form provision, where students are prepared well for life after school.
- Outstanding teaching, based on an excellent understanding of how to address obstacles to pupils' learning through technology and lively lessons, fully engages pupils in learning.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners who willingly participate in creative and imaginative activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged superbly well through the varied activities on offer.
- Staff are highly committed and enjoy their work. They have confidence in the very effective leadership and management of the school.
- Parents are equally fulsome in their praise of the school and hold it in high esteem.
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have made the improvement of teaching and learning a high priority. Pupils thrive, enjoy school, and achieve well academically, vocationally and in their personal and social development.
- Marking and target-setting in pupils' workbooks to provide greater challenge for more able pupils are not always consistent.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in parts of 12 lessons, most of which were jointly observed with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, therapists, pupils and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors held a discussion with members of the governing body and the education adviser of the charity which owns the school.
- The inspection team took account of 11 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views.
- Responses from 89 staff to the Ofsted questionnaire were also taken into account.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on pupils' progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- The inspection of the children's home took place at the same time as the education inspection and a separate report on this provision is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barney Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Victoria Education Centre is operated by 'Livability', a national disability charity.
- The school admits pupils from a number of neighbouring local authorities and some from further afield.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs associated with physical disability or complex medical conditions. Approximately half have severe learning difficulties and the majority of the remainder have moderate, profound or complex learning difficulties.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The school does not enter pupils early for GCSE examinations.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for disadvantaged children who are looked after and for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning even further through:
 - ensuring the consistent application of the school's marking policy and target-setting in workbooks, so higher attaining pupils know how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership and management of the school, and the headteacher in particular, have developed a strong sense of teamwork, where energies are sharply focused to ensure pupils make the best possible progress in all areas of their life. The positive and supportive culture, allied to high expectations of pupils, ensures they prosper through the varied opportunities provided.
- The priority of improving teaching and learning by leadership and management at all levels has paid dividends. Senior and middle leaders, governors and external scrutiny have all provided excellent support and challenge to secure improvements in teaching.
- Middle leaders contribute to outstanding leadership and management very effectively. They use pupils' assessment information intelligently, so that they have a clear view of strengths and areas for development for their subjects and responsibilities.
- The school self-evaluation process is thorough, accurate and well judged. This information feeds into school improvement planning, which is equally comprehensive.
- Although a high proportion of pupils qualify for pupil premium funding, the school receives a small fraction of this potential funding. The available funding is used for disadvantaged pupils to provide additional therapies and purchase sensory equipment. Analysis of pupils' progress information shows that these pupils achieve equally well as others across the school in making improvements in their communication, mobility and independence skills. Equality of opportunity is strongly practised throughout the school, and there is an absence of any sort of discrimination.
- Primary sport funding increases pupils' participation in physical and different sporting events. This funding also encourages the development of pupils' personal and social skills, through sports leadership awards, very effectively.
- Pupils' awareness of British values is actively promoted. Pupils' understanding of democracy is developed by voting and participating in the school council. Pupils spoken to say there is no bullying in the school and that it is a safe, tolerant and accepting place, where individuality is respected and celebrated. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain, through participation in community sporting and creative arts activities.
- The welfare needs of pupils are well met. Staff are skilled in preparing pupils for learning. Their personal health and care needs, as identified in their provision plans, are understood and adhered to at all times.
- The school provides impartial careers guidance and support so that pupils can make informed choices for their next stage of life.
- The work of teachers is closely checked and the link between salary progression and the quality of teaching is sensible. The rigorous monitoring and development of teaching have contributed to outstanding teaching across the school.
- The range of subjects and experiences offered to pupils is excellent. The curriculum meets the wide range of learning needs well and equips pupils with the skills they need. For example, the wide range of clubs and activities on offer to pupils after school and at lunchtime is first class.
- The charity supports the school well. It provides challenge and support through an education adviser who has a good overview of the school.
- The school makes very effective use of an experienced external consultant and this has brought about increased rigour, challenge and improvement for the school.
Safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Pupils feel safe and protected and parents agree. All statutory requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have improved their effectiveness since the last inspection. They know the school in closer detail through regular visits and learning walks to test out the quality of teaching and learning for pupils. They have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and areas for development.
 - Governors receive comprehensive information from senior leaders. They ask challenging questions to verify that outcomes for pupils are as stated. They understand assessment information and know how the progress of their pupils compares to similar pupils nationally.
 - Governors are well trained and knowledgeable. They ensure the school is a safe and happy place to be. They have been appropriately involved in decisions about salary progression for teachers. They know how additional funding is spent and the impact this has on specific pupils. Safeguarding has a high priority and all governors are trained in this area, in addition to the designated governor for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, in lessons, around the school and over time.
- The exceptionally positive climate for learning, with excellent relationships between pupils and adults promotes pupils' positive behaviour very well. The school radio station enables pupils to develop their confidence in broadcasting and digital editing skills and is a source of fun and enjoyment.
- Pupils demonstrate an extremely positive attitude to learning. They enjoy lessons and contribute willingly to discussions. They try hard and this endeavour contributes to their overall outstanding progress. For example, less able pupils explore sensory experiences and more able pupils achieve well in examinations.
- Pupils reported their enjoyment of school and how 'staff have a different approach for each of us'. The high level of engagement by pupils in learning is excellent.
- Pupils spoken to stated that there was no bullying in school, but knew the procedures if this was an issue. They have trust in the staff to confide in them where necessary.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged exceptionally well through sport, music and creative arts. Pupils enjoy sporting occasions such as wheelchair basketball and racing. Pupils develop an understanding of being British, celebrating notable people and their achievements.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online through regular e-safety lessons and tutor time. They know how to avoid sites with dangerous or unsuitable content, including those that present radical and extremist views.
- Attendance at the school is below average, but this is due to ill-health and medical appointments. Factoring this into account, pupils' attendance is above average reflecting their evident enjoyment of school.
- A regular pupil questionnaire consistently shows how much pupils feel safe and secure in school and this is supported by parents' positive views.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding and has numerous strengths. Staff are very skilled in ensuring all pupils are highly engaged in learning. No time is wasted, teachers set high expectations and ensure that all the range of learning needs are met well.
- Teaching is dynamic and enthusiastic and pupils respond well to this infectious approach.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptional. Learning takes place in a positive, warm and enjoyable environment and this helps pupils to achieve well, because they are confident and secure.
- Links with other schools are utilised so that specific subjects can be taught at a higher level, such as a modern foreign language or music, to more able pupils. However, the marking and target setting in books for more able pupils is variable. In the best practice, pupils' work is annotated and next steps to work on are clear.
- The use of technology to support pupils' learning is excellent. Many pupils use voice output devices to enable them to communicate effectively. Some pupils with the most complex and severe learning needs use eye-gaze technology to help them to learn and respond.
- There is an impressive array of subject expertise within the school, which teachers readily share with each other to disseminate best practice. Teachers and therapists work closely together to set and review pupils targets to maximise their progress.
- Staff use their detailed knowledge of pupils exceptionally well. Tasks are often shaped around pupils' interests to provide greater motivation and engagement.
- Questioning coaxes answers out of pupils, to get them to extend and develop their thinking. In a debate on gun control laws, sensitive questioning by the teacher enabled all pupils to be fully involved to express their views. The discussion was carried out in a thoughtful and mature manner, respecting different points of view.
- Mathematics is taught very effectively. Plenty of practical opportunities are given for pupils to practise their skills, such as arranging objects in order according to price, telling the time and buying ingredients for meals in the local shops.
- In English, pupils write for a range of purposes, according to their level of ability. More able pupils develop their spelling, and know how to construct a letter of complaint. Others write simple book reviews using

symbols.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment is low on entry to the school due to the nature of their severe and complex learning difficulties. However, they make outstanding progress when measured from their starting points.
- The early strides pupils make when they join the school are sustained. By the time they move into the sixth form, students are able to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and communication to real-life situations.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in developing their communication, mobility, physical education, sport and independence skills. This is because these aspects are taught systematically. Pupils also achieve extremely well in the creative arts and digital media.
- By the end of Year 11, many pupils gain a wide range of externally recognised qualifications in numeracy and literacy. More able pupils achieve lower passes at GCSE level, for example in design and technology and music.
- Pupils' achievements are carefully tracked to check that all are achieving as expected. If this is not the case, the school is quick to address this issue and provide additional support. For example, where pupils are initially identified as on course to achieve entry level qualifications, intensive support has ensured they have been able to successfully follow a GCSE course.
- Pupils of different backgrounds, such as through gender or ethnicity, or those who are looked after, achieve equally well. The school receives a small amount of pupil premium funding but makes every effort to provide whatever a pupil needs.
- Pupils with profound and complex learning needs make small but significant steps of progress. They learn to anticipate, track objects or interact with others, and staff celebrate these achievements enthusiastically.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Children join the school with skills that are well below what is typical for their age, but make outstanding progress in all the areas of learning. Children settle quickly into routines and they enjoy the bright, vibrant and stimulating environment. Children's physical, health and educational needs are met well through the close cooperation of teachers, nurses and therapists.
- Children's behaviour and safety is outstanding. They have positive attitudes to learning and are inquisitive. They enjoy outdoor learning where they explore objects in the sand tray and track brightly coloured lights created by an umbrella in the sunlight.
- Teaching is highly effective in engaging and motivating children. Children respond well to sensory activities, which encourages them to explore their environment. There is a good mix of child-initiated and teacher-led activities. In a literacy lesson, pupils listened to the sound of their name spoken through a balloon, so that they could feel the vibration of sound on their cheek.
- The early years' provision is led and managed outstandingly well. Children's progress is carefully measured and extra help is quickly given where children are not making expected progress. Children are well prepared for their move to the next class so that they can continue to make the best possible progress. There is close co-operation between school and home.

The sixth form provision is outstanding

- Sixth form students achieve outstandingly well. They gain further qualifications to build upon the progress they have made in functional skills in numeracy and literacy. They gain vocational qualifications in relation to their personal independence, such as achieving sports leadership awards, and this contributes strongly to their outstanding personal development.
- The sixth form provision is mature and distinctive, preparing them well for adult life. Nearly all students attend some form of continuing education and training when they leave school. The emphasis on sport allows some students to compete in national competitions such as table cricket.
- Teaching is outstanding. It is highly individualised to ensure that each student's needs are fully met. Expectations are high. Digital technology is used very effectively. For example, some students create music through sampling and editing rhythms, and others record programmes for the school radio station.

- Students' excellent attitudes to learning contribute to the ethos of the sixth form provision and the outstanding progress they make. They receive a wide range of work experience placements and are very well supported to help with their transition to college.
- The sixth form is outstandingly led and managed with improvements evident in accurate tracking of students' achievements and a wider range of accredited courses to suit the different range of learning needs.

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	113954
Social care unique reference number	371073
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	449455

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

Type of school	All-through
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	92
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Jennings
Headteacher	Simon Brown
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2012
Telephone number	01202763697
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