

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



30 April 2018

Mr Jonathan Seaward  
Headteacher  
Langside School  
Langside Avenue  
Parkstone  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH12 5BN

Dear Mr Seaward

### **Short inspection of Langside School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 April 2018 with Andrew Penman, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2014.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Together with your leadership team, you work with complete focus and a determination that all will be done to secure the very best outcomes for pupils. You are ambitious for the school and for pupils and have very high expectations.

Staff respond with enthusiasm by looking for creative solutions to help pupils move forward. Pupils are listened to, despite their communication difficulties. Your mantra, 'adults should speak less, give time and expect more', permeates the school. As a result, the school is calm and attentive to pupils' needs and interests.

The previous inspection recommended that pupils, particularly the most able, are encouraged to be as independent as possible. This has been embraced. Staff are united in their belief that all pupils who attend the school deserve a voice and to have some control over their lives. Whenever possible throughout the day, staff give pupils choices, showing them that they are valued and listened to. As a result, pupils are happy and secure in school and they make good progress.

Health, therapeutic and education staff work closely together and they patiently look for and encourage the smallest improvements. As a result, the school is a very positive place to be, full of celebration of what pupils can do and their achievements.

Parents and carers are delighted with the care and support given not only to pupils but also to families. Staff are particularly sensitive in their communications with parents, ensuring that there is a constant dialogue between school and home.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Detailed risk assessments, which are constantly updated with any new information, help to keep pupils safe. Recruitment procedures are thorough and staff receive full safeguarding training. The governor who leads on safeguarding visits regularly and provides spot checks. This helps to keep safeguarding high on the agenda and ensures that staff remain vigilant. Close teamwork between medical, therapeutic and education staff helps to provide a secure environment in which to learn.

### **Inspection findings**

- We explored some particular areas during my visit. The first was to check how closely leaders check on the progress that the most able pupils make. The tracking of pupils' progress has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now a real strength of the school. Leaders are able to show that pupils, including the most able, make good progress across a range of relevant areas, including communication, physical development, environmental control technology, cognition and personal development. There is no complacency however, and any weaknesses are quickly identified and adjustments made to pupils' individual plans.
- Part of the success is that staff work together so efficiently to observe the small steps that pupils make and to ensure that they help pupils to build on their successes. You have researched good practice in other schools and have used this to develop a solid assessment system. The five skill areas are described in minute detail, which means that the smallest gains that pupils make can be observed and celebrated.
- Your newly established leadership team has embraced the assessment system and ensures that staff are supported to use the assessments to guide how they organise learning activities. As a result, staff use assessment information constantly, thereby ensuring that there is a continual drive to move pupils forward to new learning that is relevant to their particular needs.
- These new leaders, while not being new to the school, recognise that they are developing their leadership skills and appreciate the guidance and encouragement you provide.
- The second area that we explored was to look at how you work with families to improve attendance. This is because attendance rates are low compared with

national averages. In fact, it is clear that pupils attend school whenever it is possible for them to do so. Owing to the complex medical needs of pupils who attend the school, many need to have lengthy stays in hospital. Staff work closely with families during these times and provide all the support possible to ensure that pupils keep in contact with school and are well prepared to return when they are able to do so. Parents say that their children love school and cannot wait to go each day.

- We also looked at how well you ensure that pupils are ready for their next steps when they leave the school. This is another particular strength of Langside School. During the sixth form, students are helped to become as independent as they can be, finding their own ways of communicating their needs and wishes. Students are encouraged to contribute to the community and to extend their experiences by taking part in exciting physical activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Staff are active in ensuring that moves are made very early on to support parents with their choices of the next provider and parents appreciate this guidance through what can be a very stressful time. Once decisions have been made, staff lose no time in communicating with the provider and arranging visits to the school so that there can be a smooth and successful transition as pupils move on.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new leaders are given the support and guidance they need to develop their leadership roles successfully, so that they can contribute effectively to the further development of the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Poole. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors held several meetings with senior leaders and looked at lessons alongside leaders. Information about pupils' progress was scrutinised, along with a range of school documents, including the school development plan and documents about attendance. Safeguarding training and recruitment procedures were looked at. Inspectors spoke to several parents to gather their views. A telephone call took

place with a representative from the local authority. There was also a meeting with governors, including the chief executive officer of the charity to which the school belongs.