

Inspection of Winchelsea School

Guernsey Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 4LL

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Outcome

Winchelsea School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy going to school. They learn how to communicate with their teachers and other adults using their language skills, signs and symbols. They know what to do if they are feeling upset or worried. Staff are very skilled at looking after pupils and helping them if they become distressed. The parents I spoke to really valued this. They also told me that the school deals with any concerns promptly and well. Pupils and staff get on well together. Pupils work hard in lessons. They often work in very small groups, learning by taking part in practical activities. Teachers are good at planning lessons that keep pupils engaged and busy.

Pupils learn a wide range of things that help them become more independent. This includes learning how to look after themselves and getting on well with other people. They develop skills and knowledge that help them cope in different social situations. For example, they learn how to use a bus timetable, practise catching a bus, and knowing when to get off, and paying the fare.

Pupils have learned what bullying is. All those we spoke to said that it does not happen in school, and that they feel safe.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that all of the teachers work together. Since the last inspection lots of things have got better. There is still more to be done so that all subjects are taught equally well. In some subjects, teachers know exactly what to teach and in what order. This means that pupils are helped to build up their skills and knowledge gradually. They can regularly practise what they have learned before moving onto the next step. For example, in mathematics pupils learn to identify different coins before counting up the value of several coins together.

The school has identified what pupils should learn in computing, and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. Teachers are not yet putting this into practice. Pupils are not learning the basic knowledge to help them understand some topics. In

English, teachers are given some information to help them plan lessons in a logical order. This is not detailed enough in key stages 1 to 3. At key stage 4, pupils' work is planned well to prepare pupils to complete an accredited course. Not all staff have the skills to teach phonics accurately. This means that pupils do not make the best possible progress in building important reading skills.

Pupils benefit from the broad school curriculum. They produce high-quality music, movement and artwork. They really enjoy taking part in the regular shows the school puts on. Pupils have learned about recycling, and the appropriate use of packaging. Pupils told me about a story they had enjoyed about a plastic bag that has been eaten by a number of sea creatures.

Pupils communicate effectively using signs and symbols. These have been introduced by leaders and speech and language therapists. We saw these being used in all parts of the school. Pupils use them to choose their lunchtime meal. This also enables them to select a playtime activity. Pupils also use them to help identify how they are feeling. They develop strategies to deal with emotions that previously had caused them difficulties. Teachers quickly spot pupils who are beginning to find things hard. They usually understand the cause of these difficulties and provide good support. As a result, the atmosphere in lessons and around the school is calm and relaxed.

The teachers we spoke to told us that they receive regular training that helps them do their jobs. They feel well supported by leaders to cope with the demands placed on them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has strong systems in place to record and report any concerns. Staff are well trained to spot signs that pupils may be at risk. They have good relationships with parents and other agencies. These help make sure that pupils get the support they need.

Pupils are helped to keep themselves safe. They know about some of the risks from going on the internet. Most pupils could identify a member of staff they would go to if they needed help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subjects in the school's curriculum are planned well enough. In several subjects teachers are not given enough information to know what should be taught, and the order in which teaching should take place. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subjects within the school curriculum is carefully selected, so that pupils gain the skills and knowledge they need for life beyond school. Teachers require clear guidance to help them sequence pupils' learning in small steps, from early years up to key stage 4, so that pupils achieve well.

- The teaching of early reading skills is not effective. Pupils are not taught how to accurately sound out unfamiliar words. Leaders need to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at delivering a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Winchelsea School to be good on 23–24 June 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113955
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10111610
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fritz Penn-Barwell
Headteacher	Geoff Cherrill
Website	www.winchelseaschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 June 2015

Information about this school

- Winchelsea educates pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, and speech and language needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has recently opened two new classes, located in local mainstream schools. This has increased the school roll.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Meeting took place with members of the senior leadership team and the governing body, a group of parents and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at how mathematics, PSHE and English are taught. As part of this process we met with subject leaders, visited 14 lessons jointly with leaders, talked with teachers and pupils, and looked at pupils' work. We also asked pupils and teachers about behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also meet with other subject leaders.
- Two meetings took place to look at the school's safeguarding procedures.

- The school's website, various policies and improvement plans were scrutinised.
- Responses were also considered from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text responses. Inspectors also took into account views expressed on the surveys completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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