

Inspection of Langside School

Langside Avenue, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 5BN

Inspection dates: 26–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive because of the high-quality care and support they receive. They are confident and happy and develop their independence well. Close attention is given to pupils' physical and medical well-being and staff are quick to identify and respond to pupils' needs. Parents have full confidence in staff to look after their children and ensure that they are safe and well cared for. One parent's comment was typical of many when they said that staff 'totally get our children'. Parents greatly value the help and support they and their children receive.

Pupils' attitudes to everything that goes on in school are exceptional. They put every effort into their tasks and concentrate hard to communicate their likes and dislikes or respond to a request. Pupils learn a wide range of things and are encouraged to engage with staff and their peers. As they get older, pupils have opportunities to go out of school and experience a variety of social settings.

Leaders' high expectations ensure that staff are all highly trained to meet the needs of the pupils. Staff teams, including nursing staff and therapists, work effectively with teaching staff, to ensure the pupils develop their skills to become as independent as possible.

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

The leadership team has developed well since the last inspection and leaders have initiated a number of improvements. They have high expectations of staff. For example, education support staff are expected to have competence, not just in education, but also in medicine and handling of pupils. Leaders' knowledge and expertise has been used well to develop staff, who appreciate this. Governors are very supportive of the school and understand the life of the school well. They do not always, though, receive sufficiently detailed information to enable them to challenge leaders robustly.

The curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of each pupil and, as a result, pupils have a broad range of experiences. Class teams review pupils' targets regularly and check on their learning. Leaders are aware though that they do not always monitor aspects of planning closely enough. Whilst there is strong practice across the school, leaders know there are some inconsistencies. For example, occasionally teachers do not ensure that, when a target is achieved, pupils then move on to the next stage of development.

Communication strategies are used consistently well across the school to ensure that pupils become as independent as possible. Staff are very skilled at 'reading' pupils to check how they feel and what they want. It is very clear from pupils' reactions how much they value their interactions with staff. Pupils use switches, eye gaze and movement to indicate their preferences. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to participate in stories. Staff use resources well to promote pupils' understanding and enable them to be involved in these sessions.

Pupils' physical development is a priority. Therapists, working closely with nursing and teaching staff, have developed a programme to support pupils' individual needs. Pupils are encouraged to move where possible and staff provide sensory and tactile support. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities. For example, in hydrotherapy and rebound therapy, pupils show considerable pleasure in moving and improving their physical development.

All pupils benefit from a wide range of activities designed to support their personal, social, emotional and well-being. They participate in yoga, relaxation and massage as well as body awareness sessions. Happiness boxes are valued by the pupils and include items from home and school. These are used well to support their mental health and well-being and increase their awareness of likes and dislikes.

Children in the early years enjoy different activities such as listening to the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' story. Activities are well planned to enable them to develop their communication skills and they are encouraged to explore the space around them. The use of staff and accommodation has been well thought through and planning is ensuring that children are developing their confidence and independence well.

In the sixth form, the curriculum ensures that students are well prepared for when they leave school. The very strong emphasis on communication and independence supports them well. They have a range of experiences in different social settings. Students participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's award to enhance their independence further. Staff work very closely with parents and the new provisions to ensure a smooth and successful transition for the young people when they move on from the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to spot signs that pupils are at risk. There is an effective reporting system in place that enables staff to record any concerns they have about a pupil. Leaders work closely with all the professionals involved with each child and make sure that pupils get the help they need.

Staff know pupils and their families very well and this is greatly valued by parents and carers. As a result, parents are confident to raise any concerns they have about their children with the school and know that they will receive the support they need. Staff show considerable respect for pupils and there is an excellent focus on maintaining pupils' dignity in all situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have worked extremely hard to drive the school forward. However, the assistant headteachers have done so whilst balancing a heavy teaching load. This has, at times, prevented them from checking that there is consistently good practice across the school. Leaders and governors need to ensure that the assistant headteachers are given the time to address any inconsistencies in practice that arise.
- The governing body has developed its own systems for checking on the school. However, at times the information provided to them by leaders does not always have sufficient detail. This prevents governors from challenging and evaluating improvements. Leaders need to ensure that governors have the information they need to provide a higher level of challenge to the school in its drive for improvement.

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 the school and 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	133740
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10088341
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Smith
Headteacher	Jonathan Seaward
Website	www.diverseabilities.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Langside School is a charity-run, non-maintained special school for pupils aged two to 19. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex medical needs.
- The children who are in the early years foundation stage work alongside those in Years 1 and 2. Older students work together as a sixth-form group.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Meetings took place with members of the senior leadership team and the governing body. A meeting was also held with the chief executive officer of Diverse Abilities. We met a group of parents and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- We looked at the how communication and interaction, story time, physical development and personal, social and mental health were taught. As part of the process we met with leaders of these areas, therapists and medical staff and visited lessons jointly with leaders. Discussions were held with teachers and pupils' targets and work were reviewed.
- Two meetings took place to look at the school's safeguarding procedures and attendance records and procedures were checked.
- 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. We also took into account of views expressed in the surveys completed by staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Mascall, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Katherine Powell

Ofsted Inspector

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