

# Inspection of Winchelsea School

Guernsey Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 4LL

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Strong, nurturing relationships between staff and pupils and exceptional attitudes to learning are central to life at Winchelsea School. Staff have high expectations of pupils in their learning and wider development. Pupils are highly motivated to meet these. Staff are skilled in using what they know about pupils to support them when they find aspects of school life challenging. Pupils trust that adults will help them. They are confident that staff have their best interests in mind. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn, where pupils do not have any concerns about bullying or the behaviour of others.

Pupils talk with pride about their school and the impact it has had on them. They feel safe and attend well. Pupils are encouraged to have a voice and express their views. Parents fully support these pupil views and are overwhelmingly positive about the support it offers them and their child.

There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience and character. These include links with local businesses, enterprise opportunities and residential visits, as well as regular time spent in the local community. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life beyond Winchelsea School.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum which is responsive and bespoke to the individual needs of the pupils. It starts in early years and continues through to the newly established sixth form. Leaders have made effective use of the expertise of other professionals in the school community. This includes contributions from different therapists. This has been successful in making sure that learning is well targeted to meet the diverse range of needs of pupils.

Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate what is in place to ensure it is appropriate and ambitious for pupils. The curriculum is tailored to each of the learning pathways. It includes learning in the satellite classes. Leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. Staff feel fully supported to deliver the curriculum for pupils. However, there are some groups of pupils for whom learning is not adapted as successfully as it could be. For some, reading books are not matched accurately to their ability. Some older pupils are aware that, when they are well regulated, their learning could stretch them further in mathematics and with their preparation for moving on from Winchelsea. As a result, some pupils are not learning as well as they could.

Leaders have developed a consistent approach to assessment. They make sure that education, health and care (EHC) plans provide the foundations for each pupil. This ensures that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

Staff use a range of communication aids successfully. In early years, staff begin the process of supporting pupils with a range of communication aids, including signing, Picture Exchange Communication System and the early stages of phonics. Leaders have ensured that staff have the training and skills to support pupils' ongoing development of the different communication systems. This has had a positive impact on early reading. Reading and engaging with books are prioritised across the school. This begins in early years, where staff encourage children to join in with songs, rhymes and books. Interactions between adults and children develop curiosity and strengthen communication. Older pupils talk confidently about books and authors they enjoy reading and have read to them.

Staff expertly model high expectations of behaviour and conduct from early years through to sixth form. Pupils strive to meet these expectations because they have secure and trusting relationships with staff. Older pupils are able to reflect on their emotions and identify their own difficulties. Pupils are exceptionally tolerant of each other. They are respectful of the differences and difficulties faced by their peers.

The personal development of pupils is woven through everything that the school offers. The current curriculum theme is strengthening pupils' awareness of how to regulate themselves, using strategies including 'tool kits' developed when they start school. Pupils of all ages are challenged to transfer what they learn in the classroom to their regular visits out and about in the local community and through links with local businesses and sports clubs. The 'life skills flat' prepares pupils for adulthood and managing a home environment. This range of opportunities enhances the well-coordinated provision for learning beyond the academic.

Students in sixth form have appropriate careers guidance. They take part in enterprise and work experience both in school, through the school café, and outside of school. Pupils' careers learning begins in Year 7. Leaders regularly review the careers-based learning against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. As a result, it remains ambitious and relevant. The school is meeting the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Leaders provide governors with detailed information about school priorities. Governors share in the vision and ambition for pupils. However, governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently about the impact of the actions taken to overcome barriers for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they do not have a precise overview of how effective the funding is in supporting pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe is a high priority. Leaders, including governors, monitor safeguarding closely. They know the challenges that pupils and their families may face and are proactive in responding to these. Staff are kept up to date with relevant training. They know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff know the

procedures to follow when reporting concerns. Leaders ensure they involve other agencies where this is necessary. They are rigorous in making sure external support is timely and effective.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. They talk with confidence about their learning around healthy living and maintaining positive relationships.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- For some pupils, learning is not adapted successfully in some subjects. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that they have an accurate view of how successfully all pupils learn in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have an informed overview of the impact of the school's actions towards overcoming barriers for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the impact of actions is not always clear. Governors need to ensure that they challenge leaders effectively so that they have an accurate overview of the impact of funding on disadvantaged pupils.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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|---|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 113955   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10212246   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Community special  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 4 to 19  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 202  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 11   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | Fritz Penn-Barwell   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Geoff Cherrill   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.winchelseaschool.co.uk">www.winchelseaschool.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>               | 1 and 2 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005            |

## Information about this school

- Winchelsea is a special school which caters for pupils from the ages of 4 to 19 years. It provides for pupils with moderate to complex learning needs.
- All pupils have EHC plans.
- The school is developing the post-16 provision. Students are currently in the first year of sixth form.
- The school has six satellite classes. These classes have pupils in key stages 1 to 3 at three mainstream school sites.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant headteachers and members of the governing body, including the chair. In addition, an inspector talked to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, art and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, and paperwork relating to the work of the governing body. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum and EHC plans.
- An inspector listened to the views of parents on day 2. The 31 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 20 free-text responses, were also considered, along with the responses to the pupil survey and 56 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gill Hickling

Ofsted Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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