

Inspection of a good school: Christchurch Learning Centre

29 Stour Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 1PJ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

Christchurch Learning Centre continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils settle quickly because of the exceptionally strong induction into academic and pastoral support. They value the effective relationships they build with tutors and class teachers. Pupils feel safe. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic performance. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. Staff are excellent role models. They champion every pupil.

There is a sharp focus on praise and rewarding pupils for following instructions, adhering to behaviour policies and working hard. Pupils like receiving 'behaviour and attainment points' in lessons. This immediate feedback helps them to engage in learning quickly and become successful. Pupils regain confidence in their education.

There is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils about equality and diversity. Pupils learn about managing finances and important life skills, such as how to cook. There are a wealth of extra-curricular activities, including canoeing and health and beauty workshops. Off-site visits deepen pupils' knowledge, for example to Southbourne to study coastal erosion.

The curriculum teaches pupils to have self-control and take pride in their learning. If pupils become dysregulated, skilled staff use highly consistent approaches to de-escalate situations quickly and safely. Staff deal with any derogatory language or bullying swiftly.

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

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil. Inclusion sits at the heart of the school's work. Leaders ensure that staff implement whole-school behaviour policies and teaching strategies consistently. As a result, pupils quickly gain confidence in teachers and other adults and value the school's consistent expectations and positive work ethic.

Governors understand the context of the school. They challenge and support school leaders in equal measure to ensure that the quality of education pupils receive is

continually improving and highly relevant to the pupils who attend. Governors and school leaders consider staff workload when making strategic decisions. Staff morale is high.

Leaders collaborate with pupils, families, schools and others in their community to gain a full picture of pupils' individual circumstances before pupils start. This work is very effective. Staff check what pupils know and understand and assess any gaps in their learning as soon as they arrive.

The curriculum for pupils who attend short term or for longer periods is well sequenced in every subject. There is a suitable reading curriculum. Staff teams work together to ensure that teaching in English and mathematics enables pupils to learn other curriculum content. For example, pupils learn about scatter graphs in mathematics before undertaking science investigations, where they will need to apply this knowledge. Staff usually adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs well. Regular assessments check for pupils' retention of knowledge across the curriculum effectively.

The systems in place to monitor pupils' well-being and confidence to learn are strong. Leaders take a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and planning for pupils needs. This ensures that all staff have the up-to-date information they need to teach well. Leaders seek advice from external agencies when appropriate and provide the therapeutic support pupils need.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is extensive and highly relevant. For example, it teaches pupils about keeping themselves safe and making effective life choices.

Over time, all pupils in key stage 3 and 4 learn a wealth of subject content across the curriculum. This prepares them well to undertake their GCSEs in Year 11 at Christchurch Learning Centre or their home school. Leaders ensure that pupils receive impartial careers education. Pupils are being well prepared for their next stage of education or employment.

Nonetheless, for a brief period, Year 9 and 10 pupils are having a blended approach of remote and in-school learning to allow for suitable exam conditions for Y 11. This has broken some pupils' routines. Leaders acknowledge that this has set a minority of pupils back in their engagement in learning and attendance. Subsequently, a minority of pupils are not mastering the essential subject content they should at the right time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors assure themselves that leaders complete all the relevant checks on staff's suitability to teach. There is a comprehensive programme of safeguarding training for all staff. They have a strong understanding of safeguarding risks, such as county lines and criminal exploitation. Staff apply their training well. They refer any concerns on to leaders quickly. Leaders are vigilant in following up concerns about pupils who may be at risk of harm. They work closely with external agencies, as necessary.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, leaders do not think through curriculum decisions as well as they might. When this happens, a minority of pupils' typically high engagement with learning dips and teaching is not consistently high in quality. Leaders need to ensure that all curriculum decisions enable all pupils to master curriculum content exceptionally well and at the right time, so that pupils' work is of a consistently high quality.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

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.

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	134374
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10226910
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alison Medicott
Headteacher	Philip Gavin
Website	www.clc.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Christchurch Learning Centre provides education for those pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schooling or are unable to sustain a full-time place in a mainstream school due to medical-based needs.
- The school is on two sites. The Stour Road site and Stour cottage site. They are both within the town of Christchurch. The Mustcliffe site is no longer in use. Therefore, physical education takes place off site.
- Pupils who attend the Stour Road site have usually been permanently excluded from their mainstream school. Pupils are offered support to positively re-engage with education and work towards returning to a mainstream setting or special school where appropriate.
- Pupils who attend Stour Cottage have social, emotional, mental health needs. Pupils are usually referred to this site by health professionals for targeted or transitional work. Pupils accessing this site will usually remain on roll with their mainstream setting while on roll at Christchurch learning centre. This is called dual registration.
- When pupils leave Christchurch Learning Centre, they may return to their home school, join another mainstream school, or attend a specialist setting.

- Some pupils who attend have education, health and care (EHC) plans or have special educational needs and or disabilities and are being assessed for an EHC plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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, school leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and other staff. An inspector also met with six representatives of the governing body, which includes leaders from partner schools. She also met with two representatives of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole South local authority education and inclusion team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PSHE education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation and discussed safeguarding with leaders and other staff.
- In making their judgements, inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. They also looked at the responses to the pupil and staff surveys and talked to staff and pupils during the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Favager-Dalton

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023