

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Linwood School

Alma Road, Winton, Bournemouth, Dorset BH9 1AJ

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Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

This school makes a positive difference to pupils' lives. Committed staff form strong, trusted relationships with pupils. They know pupils very well and provide personalised support for pupils and families. Pupils enjoy attending. They find Linwood School a happy place to be. Staff celebrate pupils' achievements and value everyone's contributions. As a result, everyone has a strong sense of belonging at the school. Staff champion pupils' well-being and mental health.

A range of curriculum pathways support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. There are bespoke learning environments to suit each learning pathway. Pupils grow personally and academically, with many thriving as a result.

Shared events ensure that pupils can learn together. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. For example, the school councillors have an active voice in school-wide decision-making.

Extra-curricular activities focus on developing the pupils' independence and social skills in preparation for adulthood. Residential visits, horse riding, music performances and enterprise opportunities broaden pupils' horizons exceptionally well. Performing in the recent pantomime has been a highlight for many. There are theme weeks to learn about a range of cultures and cooking.

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

The school is well led. Pupils sit at the centre of its decision-making. For example, restructuring the leadership arrangements across the five school sites is bringing about better consistency to the implementation of the curriculum across the school. The school

has strong relationships with local authorities who place pupils at it. This ensures that pupils make a swift and successful transition into the school, including the sixth form.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They follow an ambitious curriculum from the early years foundation stage through to the sixth form. A range of therapies support pupils' individual needs well. Developing pupils' communication and reading sits at the school's core. The teaching of phonics continues until pupils can read fluently.

The curriculum covers a broad range of subjects and enrichment through one of the flexible curriculum pathways. Pupils with the most profound and complex needs learn well because their curriculum is highly tailored to meet their needs. The school sets clear expectations of how to assess and check what pupils know and can do. However, there are occasions when teaching in a few other curriculum pathways is not based on a precise understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. When this happens, a minority of pupils are not moved on in their learning when they are ready. This slows their learning down.

The school's work to re-engage pupils who find it difficult to attend classes with their peers or are at risk of exclusion is already making a demonstrable difference. Staff skilfully use de-escalation techniques, which helps these pupils to manage their emotions. As a result, some pupils quickly reintegrate back into lessons with their peers. The school is working to develop the content and sequencing of academic work for pupils who require this educational pathway for longer periods, but this is at an early stage.

Leaders' stringent systems to monitor and challenge poor attendance are paying off. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is decreasing markedly. There is an extensive careers education programme from Year 7 to post-16. Pupils have access to impartial advice. The educational programmes support pupils to become resilient and ready to cope with life outside school. The curriculum develops pupils' character and teaches them about positive and healthy relationships.

Pupils study for and are successful in a range of academic and vocational qualifications. They are well prepared for their next stage of education or employment. Many pupils go on to college at the end of Year 11. Students across all sixth-form campuses achieve well. Where appropriate, pupils learn how to travel independently and complete practical qualifications, for example first aid. The 'Classroom in the Heart of Industry' (CHI) for sixth-formers is highly bespoke and effective. Staff choose students' placements carefully. Pupils make strong progress in academic learning and work-related practical skills. The vast majority of these pupils go on to paid employment.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school's work to refine a few curriculum pathways is ongoing. At times, sequences of work do not meet pupils' needs consistently well because teaching is not based on precise knowledge of what pupils need to learn next. The school needs to ensure that, across all curriculum pathways, sequences of work enable pupils to master curriculum content well and at the right time so that more pupils achieve highly.

## Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2013.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113961
<b>Local authority</b>	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268769
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 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>	391
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	74
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Chris Purdy
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Gemma Talbot
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.linwood.bournemouth.sch.uk">www.linwood.bournemouth.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school welcomes pupils from a wide geographical area and supports a comprehensive range of SEND.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. Five local authorities fund these places.
- The school has five sites: Linwood Campus in Winton, Springwood Campus in West Howe, Summerwood Campus in Charminster, Woodford Campus (which is a satellite provision based at Twynham Primary School), and an industry-based programme 'Classroom in the Heart of the industry' (CHI).
- The Link+ provision for young people aged 19-25 was not in scope for this inspection.
- The school has a training, support & advice service which provides outreach work and SEND-focused training locally.

- Pupils benefit from a range of learning pathways aimed to meet pupils' bespoke needs. These are Early Years, Alma, Vita, Lumos, Nexus and a variety of pathways in post-16.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection, including leadership.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## **Information about this inspection**

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited each of the school's sites, including three classrooms where the post-16 CHI education is delivered.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of campuses, one of the deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and other school staff. An inspector also met with representatives of the local governing body, representatives from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority, and a representative of the local authority SEND team for Dorset.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education, mathematics, physical education and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils from key stage 2 and 3, who are at the early stages of reading, read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school sites. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- An inspector spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- An inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. An inspector also considered responses to the online staff survey.

## **Inspection team**

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

David Simons

Kathy Maddocks

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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