



Langside School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133740
LEA Poole
Inspection number 282358
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 14 March 2006
Reporting inspector Sarah Mascall AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Langside Avenue
School category	Non-maintained		Poole
Age range of pupils	2 to 19		Dorset BH12 5BN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 518635
Number on roll	29	Fax number	01202 531513
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Ann Hughes
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr John Ashby

Age group 2 to 19	Inspection dates 13 March 2006 - 14 March 2006	Inspection number 282358
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Langside is a small special school catering for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Their attainment levels are well below the national average. Most pupils have complex medical needs. Pupils are aged 2 to 19 and the vast majority are non-verbal. All have statements of special educational need and presently they are all from White British backgrounds.

The school has recently become non-maintained and this is its first inspection under this new status. The school is in discussions with another special school to move to the same site whilst maintaining its non-maintained status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Langside is a good school and the school, through its own self-evaluation, recognises this. It has a number of strengths, particularly in the care and support offered to pupils and the encouragement pupils are given to develop their communication skills. As a result pupils, including those in the Early Years and post-16, make excellent progress in learning to communicate as well as good progress in developing their literacy skills. Their progress in numeracy is satisfactory.

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development, which is very well supported by the personal, social and health education programme. Post-16 students benefit from a range of experiences which prepare them well for leaving school. The school has good systems for checking pupils' progress. Pupils' targets to improve are challenging and measurable.

Pupils benefit from the very caring ethos and the very good understanding staff have of their needs. Leadership and management are good and have been particularly effective in ensuring that there is excellent teamwork between staff and all the other professionals who support pupils. Good systems exist for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, but the information gained from this is not always used well as part of the school's improvement planning. However, the school's own self-evaluation process does reflect a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are extremely supportive of the school but do not always offer sufficient challenge to senior staff. Part of the reason for this is that many of the school policies are out of date and do not reflect the good practice in school. Despite these weaknesses the school has the capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching and curriculum to enable pupils to make better progress in developing their numeracy skills
- Improve planning for development by making better use of all the information gathered on teaching and pupils' achievements
- Ensure that the school's policies are up to date and reflect the good practice that exists in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all ages achieve well. The youngest get off to a good start in the early years class and this good progress is maintained throughout the school. Students in the Community Group (post-16) learn to look after themselves as much as possible. All pupils benefit from a wide range of activities that ensures that all their senses are

developed as much as possible. They respond well to teachers' voices, often showing pleasure when listening to songs. Pupils improve their skills in communication extremely well because staff value and praise any response they make and encourage them to be fully involved. Pupils learn to use eye movements and smile to show their understanding. A few use switches and hand movements to express a preference. They show an understanding of symbols and their ability to recognise the written word is appropriate for their ability. In personal, social and health education, pupils make very good progress as the school makes this a high priority. Although the school has set itself appropriate targets, it recognises that these could be more challenging because of recent improvements in setting pupils' targets. Pupils now have challenging targets in literacy and personal, social and health education which support their learning well. There are, however, no clearly identified numeracy targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. This is largely because the school places a high priority on pupils' personal development and offers a very good personal, social and health education programme. Pupils clearly like being in school and show pleasure as they enter their classes. Parents comment on how much their children love school and hate the holidays. Photographic evidence around the school reflects the pleasure pupils get from the range of experiences they are given in lessons. This enjoyment is reflected in pupils' good attendance.

Pupils work hard, often listening for quite long periods of time. Throughout the day they are encouraged to interact with others and they enjoy the very positive experiences of break and lunch times. Activities both in lessons and at play and lunch times are organised very well so that pupils gain as much as possible from their time with each other and staff.

Pupils have good opportunities to experience different cultures, such as a cultural week based on China. They show pleasure in listening to the different types of music played in each classroom. Assemblies and activities within the classroom give pupils good opportunities for periods of reflection. There is a strong Christian focus in assemblies and religious education lessons, but other faiths such as the Hindu festival of Divali are also celebrated. The quality of food is very good and pupils' health needs are very well catered for. There is a very good focus on preparing pupils for life after school and this is particularly evident for the post-16 students who are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Pupils as much as possible contribute to the community and there are fundraising activities for a number of charities.

The very strong focus on improving their ways of communicating and the satisfactory development of numeracy skills prepare pupils as appropriately as possible for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers are extremely experienced and well trained in working with the complex needs of their pupils. The excellent teamwork between all teaching staff and other professionals, such as physiotherapists and speech and language therapists, results in a positive learning environment in the classrooms.

Teachers have good systems to assess and record the small steps of progress pupils make and plan their lessons well to build on these. Staff are constantly looking out for pupils' responses to encourage them to communicate and make choices. They adjust their approach to ensure that the experiences are relevant. Constant praise is used well to give pupils confidence to participate. All staff ensure that pupils are aware of what is happening and what activities they are going to do next through constant interaction with the pupils. Occasionally, when teachers work on their own with a class, their planning of what pupils will learn is not as effective and as a result not all pupils learn as well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Pupils are given a good range of experiences which enable them to learn effectively. The school has managed to maintain a good balance between the health and medical needs of pupils and their education. This ensures that their needs are well met. Health specialists, such as physiotherapists, carry out much of their work in the classroom and, as a result, pupils do not miss out on learning experiences.

Very good attention is given to developing pupils' personal and social skills and in particular developing pupils' ways of communicating.

Pupils in the lower part of the school are offered only limited opportunities to experience activities outside of the classroom and the school is looking at ways of improving this. There is an annual residential trip open to all pupils and -post 16 students experience mainstream education at a local secondary school on a weekly basis.

Links with the community are good overall and links with other special schools and mainstream schools give pupils experiences of different settings.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are excellent. Parents greatly value the support they and their children receive. Pupils' health and safety is given the highest possible priority and the school has ensured that there are a good number of

specialist staff always available within the building to support pupils. For example, two nurses are employed full time. The excellent working relationship between these professionals and teaching staff ensures that all are well informed about pupils' needs. There are equally very good links with other professionals outside school.

Comprehensive procedures for child protection and risk assessment are in place, although the very good practice in the school is not always reflected in the school's policies.

Procedures to support pupils' learning are good. The school has developed good processes for monitoring pupils' progress and uses this information well to establish termly targets for each pupil.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The excellent specialist knowledge and experience of the senior management team in understanding the needs of pupils ensures that staff are very well supported. The head and deputy work well together and between them they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The work of the school, for example, teaching and the curriculum, is monitored closely but information gained from this is not always formally linked to school improvement planning. For example, through self-evaluation the school has recognised that pupils' progress in numeracy needs to be improved but this is not included in the school improvement plan. However, school improvement planning has brought about important developments in the school's provision. Assessment is now particularly positive and the high priority placed on pupils' health and well-being through the appointment of well-qualified staff has been very effective.

Parents are well informed about what happens in school and the possible move to a new site. Governors are extremely supportive of the school and visit regularly. Those such as parent governors have a good understanding of pupils' special needs and use their knowledge to help develop the school. However, there is insufficient challenge from governors to ensure they have a clear understanding of the direction the school wishes to take. The lack of a process to ensure that policies are up to date and relevant also prevents governors from having a clear picture of what is going on in school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for letting me watch your lessons. I enjoyed talking to the staff and your mums.

You go to a good school and I liked these things most of all:

- You are looked after extremely well by all the staff.
- You learn to communicate with those around you exceptionally well.
- You like school and your parents say you do not like being away from school.
- Your teachers give you a lot of different activities that help you learn.
- The school is well led.

The school needs to do a small number of things to make it even better:

- Teachers need to try to help you do better in your numeracy work.
- Governors need to make sure that all the policies are up to date and checked regularly.
- The school needs to plan more effectively how it will improve further.