

# Purbeck View School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	835/6016
Unique Reference Number	113950
Inspection number	317890
Inspection dates	26-27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Thomas Smith AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Purbeck View School is an independent residential and day school located at Swanage in Dorset. The school provides a mix of residential care and education throughout the year for pupils aged 9–19 years who have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). There are 35 boys and 10 girls on roll; two of these are day pupils. 16 pupils are accommodated for the whole year. All pupils have statements of special educational need (SEN) and are funded and referred by 23 different local authorities. The school is also subject to inspection by Ofsted (Care) and was inspected in July 2007 when it received a good report. The school aims to enable its pupils to achieve their full potential by developing their strategies in dealing with the challenges of autism. At the time of this inspection the acting headteacher and her deputy had been in post for 3 weeks. The school was also experiencing major building work which impinged significantly on all its work. Ofsted last inspected the school in 2004.

## Evaluation of the school

Purbeck View School provides a good quality education that successfully achieves its aims. The quality of care and provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. This is achieved through secure procedures that successfully integrate care and education and which meet the complex needs of its pupils. The work undertaken by the school on behalf of its pupils is, justifiably, well regarded by parents and referring authorities. Teaching is at least good and there were examples of lessons that are outstanding. The school has a complete range of policies that underpin its work and which are rigorously implemented. Despite the building work, staff have worked very effectively to maintain a high standard of provision for pupils; this has resulted in a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. The school has responded well to issues raised in the last inspection and the new management team has put in place a clear development plan that is intended to raise standards further. The school meets all the independent school regulations.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. Under the new leadership team the school is developing the curriculum further, to more closely reflect the complex needs of the current pupil population.

The curriculum follows the broad requirements of the National Curriculum but this is suitably adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It is a weakness that planning of the curriculum, as a means of securing progression in learning, is carried out with insufficient reference to what has been previously undertaken. Despite this, teachers have good schemes of work, which they use to plan a series of good lessons. The school management is aware of this as an issue and has plans in hand to respond to it.

The curriculum is enhanced through a rich range of additional opportunities that are offered in conjunction with care staff. Literacy and numeracy, as well as pupils' personal development, are promoted effectively across the curriculum. Staff consistently use the picture exchange communication system as well as the word exchange communication system. These enable pupils to express their preferences and also take a full part in learning. Communication is enhanced further through use of the Signalong system and use of objects of reference. It is a strength of the provision that all of these approaches are used appropriately and are focused on the needs and aptitudes of individual pupils. The school is a communication rich environment that fully includes pupils at its centre.

Teaching is consistently good and a significant proportion of this was outstanding. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and their assistants work as effective teams to maximise every opportunity for learning that they devise for pupils. They plan lessons in detail and include tasks and challenges that are appropriate to the needs of most pupils. In some groups the pupils' levels of attainment are significantly wide. However, most pupils make at least good progress in all lessons as well as in the longer term. The relevant expertise of teachers is a significant factor in promoting the progress made by pupils. In addition to their subject knowledge, their additional expertise in ASD education enables them to plan for and respond appropriately to the needs of pupils.

Pupils make good progress in their learning because of the range of communication opportunities available to them. They take a full part in lessons and also respond well when they receive 1-1 support from classroom assistants. The work undertaken in lessons successfully embraces the school's philosophy to challenge the limitations of each pupil's experiences of autism. Where some lessons are less effective the range of methods used is too narrow and limits the responses pupils are able to make. These do not enable the pupils to develop their learning by using all their available senses. Also, in a few instances, the provision for higher attaining pupils is insufficiently challenging.

The school has responded well to a recommendation within the last report to develop its use of information and communication technology to support learning. Some teachers are now becoming expert in the use of interactive whiteboards in ways that successfully enhance the quality of the challenges they provide for pupils.

The quality of assessment is satisfactory. The school tracks pupils' progress against National Curriculum P levels. An evaluation of these results supports the view that pupils make good progress. Individual education plans do not always include suitable targets, with some of these being vague and the period between reviews too long. Tracking of progress through this means is therefore difficult. In lessons, all pupils have individual challenges and teachers are good at assessing the progress made against these. However, pupils are not always actively included in this process and the opportunity to focus on what they have learned is frequently lost.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school provides a rich range of opportunities that are challenging to pupils but which also nurture their growing confidence to access and communicate with the world around them.

Staff consistently foster pupils' growing confidence through their consistently applied approaches to management of quite challenging behaviours. They treat pupils with dignity and respect at all times using non-confrontational methods, which encourage pupils to develop their sense of right and wrong. Pupils' behaviour is good. Where pupils are able to communicate more effectively they learn to understand what is acceptable. All pupils understand there are limits to their behaviour which they should not exceed because staff consistently apply agreed methods in respect of each pupil. Pupils are encouraged to take a full part in their learning and development. In lessons, as well as around the school, they clearly enjoy these experiences.

The school places a good emphasis on development of each pupil's sense of independence and also encourages them to contribute to the wider life of the school. This is achieved commensurate to the maturity and understanding of the pupil. Pupils frequently visit the local community either for shopping experience, undertaking work experiences or contributing to the annual Swanage Carnival. In the latter, Class 1 won a trophy for assisting in the decoration of a float sponsored by the local cancer care support group. Parents speak warmly about the improvements they have noticed in their children; some say that the school has developed the social and academic strengths of their child in ways they would not have thought possible.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare health and safety of its pupils. The school operates according to a range of policies common throughout the company. These set high demands for the standards within the school. Staff in the residences and education settings apply the policies rigorously and the outcomes to these are monitored regularly. The procedures designed to safeguard pupils from a range of risks, although rigorously applied, do not stifle the ability of pupils to

experience a wide range of opportunities within the school as well as the local community.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the curriculum, which teaches them about risks they might face, by encouraging them to take part in regular exercise and through provision of nutritious meals, which always include a choice of dishes. Pupils are invited each day to comment on the quality of the food that is provided.

Since the last inspection the school has enhanced its wider provision for the personal care and welfare of its pupils. Professionals, such as a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, music therapist and a clinical psychologist provide on-site advice to staff and support to pupils. The school employed a nutritionist to provide advice about pupils' diets.

Health and safety checks are carried out at appropriate intervals and any deficiencies are rectified without any undue delay. Risk assessments are undertaken for all pupils as well as all areas of the school to which they have access. All staff are assiduous in their supervision of pupils.

The school management has put in place an accessibility plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has rigorous checks in place to ensure that all its employees are deemed fit and proper to work with children. The school has also implemented the single central register which summarises these required checks.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies a large site overlooking the town of Swanage. Currently the building is undergoing substantial renovation but the effort and levels of supervision by staff have minimised this disruption for pupils. The building is maintained well and occasional damage caused by pupils' outbursts is quickly reinstated. The school is a pleasant environment in which pupils can work and flourish. There is a very good range of specialist facilities, some of which are being upgraded and added to. The grounds are used very effectively to support the work of the academic and social curriculum.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school makes good efforts to provide parents with a full range of information and also to ensure that each pupil remains in regular contact with his or her family. The school provides a wide range of relevant information through its prospectus, as well as through an informative website. Parents and carers are able to contribute

fully to annual reviews for their children and prior to these they receive a range of reports from both the education and care provision within the school. A clear majority of parents expressed positive views about the school. Placing authorities also expressed similar views.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has clear and easily understood procedures for the handling of any complaints. No formal complaints have been received within the last year.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- make sure that higher attaining pupils receive a higher level of challenge in their learning that is commensurate to their needs
- ensure better progression in learning for pupils by planning the curriculum more cohesively, to avoid repetition of previously learned skills
- encourage teachers to include a wider range of sensory experiences for pupils so that they might maximise their opportunities for learning
- further include pupils in their learning through use of interactive assessment within lessons.

## School details

Name of school	Purbeck View School		
DCSF number	835/6016		
Unique reference number	113950		
Type of school	Residential special; for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1994		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys:35	Girls:10	Total:45
Number of boarders	Boys:33	Girls:10	Total:43
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys:35	Girls:10	Total:45
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys:24	Girls:6	Total:30
Annual fees (day pupils)	£62,748		
Annual fees (boarders)	£125,497-£171,732		
Address of school	Northbrook Road Swanage Dorset BH19 1PR		
Telephone number	01929 422760		
Fax number	01929 427627		
Email address	susan.harvey@cambianguroup.com		
Headteacher	Susan Harvey		
Proprietor	Cambian Education Services Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Thomas Smith AI		
Dates of inspection	26-27 September 2007		