

# Christchurch Learning Centre

29 Stour Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 1PJ

## Inspection dates

24–25 January 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and the governing body has resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Pupils enjoy their time at the centre and recognise how it has helped them improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. They like the staff and feel safe.
- Teaching is very well matched to the individual needs of each pupil. This effectively supports pupils to engage well with their studies and make good progress.
- The behaviour of pupils during lessons and social times is good. Records are kept of poor behaviour when it occurs. However, leaders do not use this information to gain an understanding of trends or patterns of poor behaviour over time.
- Leadership roles are beginning to be shared between more staff. Middle leaders are not yet responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching in their subject areas.
- Attendance has improved because of the determination of staff to get pupils to come in every day, and because pupils are now keen to make progress.
- Parents really value the work of the centre. They feel very supported by the staff, and acknowledge the significant changes they have seen in their children since they moved to the centre.
- The curriculum is regularly adapted and extended to ensure that it prepares pupils well for their next stage of education or work. Further developments are required to make sure all pupils make as much progress as possible.
- Assessments made by teachers accurately identify what pupils can do. Further work is required so that this information can be more easily transferred between the centre and the schools pupils arrive from or transfer to.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective. The centre provides a good range of experiences for pupils so that they are well informed to keep themselves safe.
- Governors have a good range of relevant skills, knowledge and experience. They use these well to hold leaders to account and support the ongoing development of the service.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that key stage 3 assessment systems are in line with systems used in the mainstream schools who send pupils to the centre
  - extending the curriculum to include additional subjects that individual pupils would benefit from.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - extending the responsibility of middle managers so that they monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects
  - analysing the information collected from behaviour records to plan required improvements for individuals or groups of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has been very successful in bringing about significant improvements since the last inspection. The centre is now a place where pupils are used to spending their time focused on individualised learning programmes. A strong culture has been established of achieving the best possible qualifications. As a result, a high proportion of pupils gain a good number of GCSE passes.
- Leaders have recognised the benefits of providing a separate learning environment for pupils who find the demands of learning in groups anxiety provoking. Since September 2016, these pupils have benefited a great deal from being educated in a newly acquired building.
- The centre has begun to devolve leadership and management responsibilities to a broader team of staff, in order that more people contribute to improvements. Middle managers encourage teachers to broaden and share their subject knowledge, both within the centre, and with teachers from local mainstream schools. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching. However, middle leaders do not check the quality of how their subject is being taught across the centre's two sites, and how this impacts on pupils' progress.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. This leads to appropriate actions being planned within the centre's development plan. The training that is provided is very relevant to enable staff to understand and respond well to the particular needs of pupils placed at the centre. Because little formal training has been run on curriculum developments teachers are not always up to date with their subject knowledge.
- Detailed records are kept of each pupil's particular learning needs, and the desired outcome agreed by parents and the referring school at the start of the placement at the centre. Learning and support plans are put in place, tailored to meet these. Staff review progress regularly and make adjustments when required. Consequently the curriculum is very well suited to meet most of the needs of pupils. Occasionally the centre is not able to provide certain aspects of the curriculum identified in the plan so pupils do not make as much progress.
- The centre meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. The overall responsibility for meeting these additional needs of pupils remains with their mainstream schools. Centre staff receive training and support from the local authority educational psychology service to enable them to adapt their approach to meet each pupil's needs. As a result, these pupils make expected or better progress.
- The centre provides a good range of experiences, which effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Time is allocated each week, both in tutor groups and in lessons, where pupils learn about relevant but often challenging topics such as social and personal issues around use of illegal drugs, and the role of the courts and prison in society.
- Pupils are well supported to develop a clear understanding of British values and

expectations of life in modern Britain. They demonstrate this understanding in the way in which they treat each other and staff with courtesy and respect.

- The local authority school improvement adviser provides good support to the school. Through her regular visits she has got to know the centre well. She uses this knowledge to provide accurate feedback to leaders and governors, and to encourage further development.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have carried out a review of governance, which was required following the last inspection. They have addressed all recommendations effectively and are now functioning well. A recent audit confirmed that between them they have a good range of relevant skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their responsibilities. Several governors are employed by secondary schools that commission places at the centre. This helps to support good communication and cooperation between the schools and the centre.
- The governing body has established secure ways in which they can check the accuracy of reports given to them by leaders. They do this by regularly visiting lessons, and by asking challenging questions during their meetings. They ensure that performance management procedures are in place for all staff. Governors ensure proper financial accountability. The centre does not receive pupil premium funding, as this goes to the pupils' mainstream school. However, this situation is in the process of changing, with the centre beginning to request a portion of this funding depending on what it provides for individual pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Clear systems are in place to record and track any safeguarding concerns. Staff receive good training to make sure that they are alert to any potential risks to pupils. There are good induction procedures in place to support all new staff.
- Great care is taken to ensure that all required checks are made on staff before they start work at the centre. Governors monitor all health and safety aspects of the centre's work. The headteacher checks that proper risk assessments have been undertaken before pupils go on trips.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of topics that are designed to help pupils make safe choices. These include learning about sex and relationships, and staying safe on the internet.
- The centre has a clear system for checking on the safety and progress of pupils when they are attending alternative provision. Providers send a daily written record to the centre, outlining the behaviour and level of engagement in learning of pupils. If pupils do not turn up on time staff at the centre are informed immediately.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Lessons are well planned, building carefully on what pupils already know and can do, and what they need to do next. Pupils explain clearly how well they are progressing, and what targets have been set for them to help them with their learning. Year 10 and 11 pupils know what their predicted GCSE grades are for English, mathematics and sociology, and what recent assessments have told them about how well they are progressing towards these.
- Teaching takes place in very small groups, or with individuals. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, matching the content, pace and resources for each lesson carefully to the needs of each pupil. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very strong. The combination of all these factors leads to very productive lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and ability to learn. Good use of questioning effectively challenges pupils to increase their willingness to think about their learning, and contribute more to the lesson. Pupils respond well to these expectations and make good progress as a result.
- All pupils complete written English and mathematics assessments soon after arriving at the centre. These help teachers pitch the work they set for pupils. Progress is then measured from these starting points. Literacy targets being shared with other subject teachers support pupils' progress in English.
- Pupils' workbooks are generally well presented and show a good range of activities and subjects studied. Predicted grades and termly improvement targets help pupils know how well they are doing. Marking is usually completed in line with the centre's policy.
- In science, pupils are keen to learn. They accurately recall what they have learned about sound waves in previous lessons, and are confident to apply this knowledge to why they think stars change colour the further from Earth they become.
- Homework is set according to the readiness of pupils to engage with this. This approach successfully avoids creating unnecessary levels of stress for pupils and their families.
- Assessment systems are in place for all subjects. However, key stage 3 assessments have not been developed in conjunction with the mainstream schools that refer pupils. Therefore assessment systems are not compatible between the schools, which makes it hard to track pupils' progress over time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils spoke to inspectors about how much they like being at the school, and how it has helped them change both their behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Staff are very aware of the sensitivities and levels of anxiety of pupils, and go to great lengths to create the best possible conditions to put pupils at ease. Pupils clearly value and respond well to this approach. As a result, the centre is a calm, inclusive and harmonious learning environment.

- An outreach worker is employed to provide support to families. This can be to help improve attendance, support parents with setting of rules and expectations, or helping with practical activities such as buying school uniforms. Parents who spoke to an inspector during the inspection were highly complimentary about the quality of support they had received from centre staff. One parent explained how after being in the centre for less than six months her child had changed beyond all recognition 'the defiance and bad language has gone, and their attendance is now 100%. They even insist on going to school when they are feeling unwell.'
- Pupils are very well supported to improve their self-confidence and ability to cope in a range of social situations. Social skills activities form part of the core curriculum for all pupils. Emotional literacy support assistants provide targeted interventions for pupils who required additional help. These staff are trained and supervised by the local authority educational psychology service.
- The college regularly arranges for an external careers adviser to work with pupils. The adviser helps pupils develop a clear understanding of what their options are for when they leave school and runs an annual 'Employability Day' for Year 11s at a local hotel. Pupils dress in suitable smart work attire, and spend the day learning about different parts of the job application process, including going through a mock interview with someone they have not met before. The majority of pupils successfully transfer to college at the end of Year 11.
- The centre works closely with other agencies to get the right level of support for pupils. Safeguarding concerns are communicated clearly, with centre staff checking that other professionals are responding promptly to these.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the inspection, behaviour in all lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes was good. Pupils show good attitudes to their learning, including putting a high level of care and attention into producing work of good quality. Pupils respond well to adult requests and directions. Pupils are motivated by the centre's behaviour reward system, the Golden Ticket.
- Pupils report that there is rarely any bullying or derogatory behaviour. They feel safe, and are confident that staff sort out any difficulties that occur.
- It is rare that any pupils need to be physically managed. When this does take place detailed records explain why this happened, and what occurred during and after the incident.
- There have been no permanent exclusions over the last three years. Short fixed-term exclusions are given to reinforce behaviour expectations. In most cases these are successful, with pupils not needing to be excluded again. When pupils are repeatedly excluded leaders call multi-agency meetings to review the suitability of the placement.
- Records are kept of all behaviour incidents. Leaders do not use this information to analyse trends or patterns of behaviour difficulties over time. As a result, the centre does not have a clear understanding of the frequency of different types of behaviour, or the frequency of individual pupil's behaviour difficulties.

- Centre buildings are well cared for and maintained. All rooms and corridors have tidy displays that either share ideas for learning or pupil's work. These help create a physical environment where learning is valued.
- Leaders have ensured that the centre has maintained a strong focus on improving attendance since the last inspection. School information shows that in comparison with attendance levels at their previous schools the vast majority of pupils have made significant improvements in this area.
- For the small minority of pupils who are frequently absent staff work very hard to try to improve this situation. Attendance surgeries are run for these pupils. These meetings include staff from their mainstream school, and the local authority attendance officer. The centre will support pupils to learn at home if necessary. This approach does support some pupils to attend more frequently.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress. Last year, all pupils who left the school achieved at least one GCSE qualification. Over 60% of pupils obtained five or more GCSE qualifications. At key stage 3, the majority of pupils make good or better progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' workbooks show good progress being achieved in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. In sociology, old GCSE papers are completed and marked, indicating good progress towards expected grades.
- In a Year 11 English lesson, the most able pupils are able to identify similes, and to interpret the use of fire as symbolism in a poem. They demonstrate age-appropriate vocabulary for a range of adjectives that could be used to describe a struggle.
- A most able pupil had recently learned how to calculate percentages in mathematics. Another pupil explained to an inspector how he has just learned how to add and subtract fractions that had different denominators.
- Across different subjects, pupils read well. In a Year 10 geography lesson, pupils read age-appropriate texts confidently and fluently. Year 11 pupils are able to accurately read aloud a short passage outlining the adjustments employers are required to make for members of their work force who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers ensure that tasks set for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are adapted to make learning successful. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- There are no significant differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other groups of pupils. The centre does not currently benefit from additional funding for this group of pupils.
- Centre staff track the progress of pupils carefully. Because pupils are taught individually or in very small groups, teachers immediately adapt their planning when pupils do not make the expected rate of progress. This enables pupils to catch up quickly.
- The centre prepares pupils well for when they leave school. Last year, nearly all pupils

secured a place in further education.



## School details

Unique reference number	134374
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10024922

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

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	Christine Emery
Headteacher	Phil Gavin
Telephone number	01202 471410
Website	<a href="http://christchurchlc.org.uk">christchurchlc.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:p.c.gavin@dorsetcc.gov.uk">p.c.gavin@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The centre is a pupil referral unit. It provides education for pupils who are unable to sustain a full-time place in a mainstream school. Most pupils are dual registered with the centre and a mainstream school. Most Year 10 and 11 pupils remain at the centre until the end of key stage 4.
- A small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A few have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The centre runs a second site called the Lighthouse Centre. This is for pupils with high levels of anxiety.
- Some pupils access alternative provision for motor mechanics at Paragon, or a variety of vocational courses at Bournemouth and Poole College.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both centre sites in 11 lessons or part lessons. All observations were undertaken jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Reading was observed as part of lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' books with senior leaders. They also reviewed and discussed work with pupils during lessons.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants, the careers adviser, the attendance officer, and a group of governors.
- An inspector had phone conversations with two parents, and with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website. They also looked closely at range of documents. These included: leaders' evaluations of the school's performance; minutes from governors' meetings; centre policies; pupil progress information; safeguarding records; staff recruitment files; improvement plans; and records of attendance and behaviour.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or from staff and pupil questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Andy Lole, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Penman

Ofsted Inspector

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