



# Christchurch Learning Centre

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 134374  
**LEA** Dorset  
**Inspection number** 282573  
**Inspection dates** 27 February 2006 to 27 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Frank Price AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Old Magistrates Court
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		Christchurch
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Dorset BH23 1QL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 471410
<b>Number on roll</b>	20	<b>Fax number</b>	01202 470107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pam Pyke

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27 February 2006 - 27 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282573
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Christchurch Learning Centre provides education for students who are out of school for a variety of reasons. This may be due to permanent exclusion or students may be non-attenders at mainstream schools. Some have medical problems, and some students are dually registered attending the centre and a mainstream school on a part-time basis. The centre is involved in a pilot project to support students who are at risk of exclusion in a nearby secondary school. All students are White and none have English as an additional language. The centre moved to new accommodation in September 2005 and has not been inspected before. The centre is led and managed by a zone manager.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Christchurch Learning Centre is a good pupil referral unit with some outstanding features. It is successful in enabling many students to return to mainstream education. Those students remaining at the centre make good progress and achieve a range of nationally recognised qualifications.

Teaching is consistently good. It is based upon detailed knowledge of each student and work is well matched to their needs. The centre is well equipped to teach information and communication technology skills, but some teachers lack confidence in using the interactive whiteboard to its full potential. The imaginative curriculum enables students to achieve well in a wide range of activities, although the provision for art and cookery is limited. Students' personal development is promoted well, and they are learning to adopt healthier and safer lifestyles. They show an increasing understanding of how they can contribute to the wider community. Students' spiritual development, although satisfactory, is not sufficiently planned and opportunities for multi-cultural development are limited.

The centre is excellent in working in partnership with other agencies so that the support and guidance offered to students is first rate and well coordinated. There is a clear sense of direction provided by the zone manager and head of service. The leadership and management know accurately its strengths, but also areas needing further development. The excellent accommodation has a positive impact upon the learning environment. The centre provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- improve teachers' confidence and skills in the use of the interactive whiteboard to further enhance teaching and learning
- strengthen the planning for students' spiritual development and increase opportunities to promote understanding of life in a culturally diverse society
- further enhance the curriculum by extending the provision for art and cookery.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All students achieve well during their time at the centre. Students' attainment is generally below average when they join the centre, due to the disrupted nature of their previous schooling. However, those who stay through to Year 11 leave with some form of nationally recognised qualification. This represents good progress for them. Half of last year's students gained between three and four A\*-G grades at GCSE. Assessment information is used effectively to set demanding targets for students and they make good progress in achieving these. Last year, 57% of students achieved their predicted grades and a further 18% of pupils exceeded their predicted levels. Less able students achieve well in a range of alternative accredited courses such as Entry Level Certificate and Youth Award Scheme. Students who are in care achieve as well

as their peers. Those students who have medical needs do exceptionally well. One able student achieved seven A\* grades in GCSE examinations in 2004.

Students make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their behaviour shows marked improvement. Another measure of successful achievement is the number of students who return to mainstream education. Nearly half the students in Years 7 to 9 return to a mainstream school and successfully remain there. Nearly all students who stay through to the end of Year 11 go on to further courses and training at local colleges or gain employment.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The students' personal development is good overall. Their social, moral and cultural development is fostered effectively through breakfast clubs, outdoor pursuits, and aspects of the curriculum such as theatre trips and visits. Their spiritual and multicultural development is promoted satisfactorily. The centre is aware of the restricted opportunities for interaction with people from different cultures. It has promoted some opportunities for students to become more aware of cultural diversity and, as a result, some students have become more tolerant in their attitudes. This is a developing area. Students' spiritual development is not systematically planned but appropriate opportunities are taken as they arise.

Students are learning to adopt healthier and safer lifestyles through healthier eating, reduced smoking, and becoming aware of the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse. The opportunities for physical activity encourage them to develop physical fitness and stamina. Good levels of supervision ensure pupils feel safe. Students learn to make a positive contribution to their community through learning about disability and participating in charitable events.

Their improved attendance is an indicator that students enjoy learning. Their behaviour improves significantly during their time at the centre and they show respect for their new accommodation by keeping it immaculate. Parents confirm these improvements and one noted her child was 'better at home and school'. Students are well prepared for the future through the very effective life skills programme and work-related learning, often leading to accreditation.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Clear learning objectives, good teamwork by all staff and the effective use of online assessment result in good quality teaching and learning. Teaching is consistently good. Staff are flexible and meet individual needs well. They are skilled in building a very good rapport with students. They use their knowledge of students extremely well to encourage positive attitudes and help them to achieve well. All staff have been trained in managing behaviour and they are adept in using effective strategies. Students often

arrive with gaps in their learning and teachers are quick to identify these and match work to the correct level. In one information and communication technology lesson, effective questioning by the teacher encouraged students to extend their research, evaluative and design skills in developing a logo. Some teachers lack knowledge and confidence in using the interactive whiteboard. It is not used frequently enough or used effectively to illustrate learning points and this is a missed opportunity. Assessment procedures are good in monitoring progress, setting goals and highlighting areas of development for the student. This information is used well to inform future planning and teaching.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, enabling all pupils to make good progress. The emphasis on outdoor education is an outstanding feature, giving pupils valuable opportunities to develop social skills and to become more active. An innovative angling course has been introduced, for students who were very difficult to engage in learning. This combined both theory and practical experiences. The impact on those students involved was improved behaviour, and a sense of achievement that resulted in increased self-confidence. The course has also provided them with a purposeful activity for leisure.

There are excellent links with local providers to offer a range of work related courses such as motor vehicle repairs. The life skills programme makes a very good contribution in preparing students for the adult world by becoming more independent. A limited amount of art has been introduced but there is scope to extend this provision. Students reported that they would like the opportunity to develop cookery skills and this would be an added valuable dimension in preparation for later life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Students are well cared for and given outstanding levels of support. The links with other agencies are excellent and ensure that students receive good advice and guidance to help them with challenges that they face. In discussions, students commented that they make good progress and feel the level of support they receive is good. The Connexions service works very closely with the centre and provides invaluable help for students in preparation for their next stage of life. The mentoring programme is very helpful in setting and reviewing academic and personal targets with students.

The arrangements for students who are in care are very good. One Year 11 student, who had attended 10 different schools and had been excluded numerous times, gained creditable examination results. Her self-esteem improved, enabling her to speak confidently at a conference.

Procedures for child protection arrangements and risk assessments are thorough. Incidents of bullying are taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The centre is very well supported and challenged by the head of service. Annual reviews correctly identify strengths and areas for development. Targets are set for the centre to achieve and the zone manager is successful in meeting these. The local authority has provided excellent new accommodation, ensuring an attractive learning environment. The zone manager has effectively established the new centre and the improvement plan sets appropriate priorities and provides a clear sense of direction.

The zone manager has promoted very effective teamwork. She has been successful in developing a supportive, friendly and productive learning environment. She has ensured that the centre is extremely successful in fulfilling its aims of meeting the needs of all students. She has consulted students and acted upon their suggested improvements. For example, some students requested a child development module and this has been put in place.

The reintegration programme for students into mainstream schools is well managed. The students in Years 7 to 9 who return to mainstream education usually remain in school. The pilot project located at a nearby school has been successfully managed and has resulted in markedly reducing the levels of exclusions from a mainstream school. The zone manager has successfully made working in partnership a key strength of the centre, enabling students to return to school, further training or employment. The centre has the potential to offer outstanding provision by addressing the minor issues raised in this report.

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## Inspection judgements

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

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 your contribution to the inspection that I carried out on your learning centre. I enjoyed meeting you. Your behaviour and level of maturity impressed me. I think that all the staff at the centre do a very good job.

These are the things I liked about your centre:

- The way the centre works with other people to make sure your needs are well met.
- The way all staff work hard to look after you and ensure that you achieve well.
- The activities that you are able to participate in, such as outdoor pursuits and the life skills programme.
- The accommodation which provides a very good environment for learning.
- The way the staff are always looking to see how things can be made better.

To make things better I have suggested the centre should:

- Use interactive whiteboards more to make teaching even better.
- Provide more opportunities for you to study art and, as you mentioned in your discussion with me, to have the opportunity to learn cookery skills.
- Give more opportunities for you to learn about different cultures and develop your appreciation of the wider world.