

New Forest School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

New Forest is an independent special school located on the outskirts of Fawley village, Southampton, for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All students are looked after by their local authorities. The school premises include a small farm located some 12 miles away on the same site as the proprietor's main offices.

The school was registered in July 2011 for students aged between 11 and 18. It has 12 students on roll, aged between 12 and 18, one of whom is studying elsewhere on a part-time basis. All students have experienced a fragmented educational history prior to enrolment and all have complex needs. Eight students have a statement of special educational needs and all 12 are looked after. There are more boys than girls.

The school's published aims are to '... support, promote and re-engage students in learning so that they may achieve their full academic and personal potential'. This is the school's first inspection.

Evaluation of the school

New Forest School provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. The students' behaviour is good and this helps them to make good progress. The quality of the curriculum is good as is the quality of teaching and assessment. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good and the provision that the school makes for their welfare, health and safety, including the arrangements for safeguarding, are also good. The vast majority of regulations for independent schools are met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It provides well for the students' special educational needs and includes the full range of National Curriculum subjects and programmes of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). There is a strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills not only in English and

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

mathematics lessons but also through other subjects. Key Stage 3 students access all National Curriculum subjects including a modern foreign language (Spanish) and music. During Key Stage 4 the students may take a range of examinations appropriate to their ability at GCSE, Entry Level or via the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Older students also take part in work experience and careers education and guidance which is provided within the PSHCE programme. For students beyond Key Stage 4, the curriculum becomes increasingly vocational with an emphasis on preparation for further education or employment and life away from school. In seeking to meet students' emotional health needs, therapy sessions of music or drama are timetabled for all students. These sessions are typically offered as individual sessions. Teaching and welfare staff liaise well to provide a range of extra-curricular activities both on and off site.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good which results in the students making good progress. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching, including good specialist subject knowledge, a good grasp of the needs of students with complex special educational needs, strong relationships and high expectations. At times, the quality of individual lessons is outstanding, for example, in the music studio, months of composing and editing a student's own composition came to fruition. The student showed self-confidence and enjoyment in singing out loud and critically appraising her own work. Teachers' use of resources is good and the school farm is an excellent resource that provides a very popular enrichment to the curriculum in the form of environmental science. The excellent staff-student ratio supports students' learning well. This provision works best when all staff are well briefed about each other's activities, for example, as in a science lesson with experiments on the reaction of elements to acids.

The management of students' behaviour is good and any incidents that do occur are managed well with minimal disruption to learning. Staff are regularly trained in behaviour management techniques and teamwork is a strong feature that contributes to the effective learning and generally calm order within school. The emphasis is appropriately on positive engagement and early intervention strategies. Incidents of physical intervention are rare. Staff make consistent use of the reward and sanction systems, including the blue and pink slips issued throughout the day to support achievement.

The marking of students' work is typically motivating and informative. Teachers have received recent guidance about how best to mark students' work so that it promotes improvement and higher achievement. Occasionally, teachers' marking shows that sometimes there are long periods when the students get everything completely correct which indicates that work is not always sufficiently challenging.

Students have made good progress from their starting points in the relatively short time since the school opened. Teachers are aware of current good practice in assessment and some subjects make good use of student self-assessment. The moderation of the school's assessments is underway within the school itself although

managers recognise the benefit of developing links with other schools for moderation, as is the case currently with art and design.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school places a high priority on promoting the students' personal development, particularly in their management of relationships. The school's provision of education, therapy and pastoral care is successful in this regard.

The students make good progress in managing their own behaviour and relationships with peers and adults are good. Behaviour is good overall and students appreciate the approach that staff adopt in creating a very supportive environment. They understand the rewards and sanctions procedures very well and know they have a range of adults they can turn to when troubled. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on the choices they make and most understand the consequences of their actions and recognise the difference between right and wrong. Students have good opportunities to reflect on their actions after incidents have occurred and to discuss better ways of managing their behaviour and what staff could do to help. However, these discussions are typically not recorded which reduces both staff and students' ability to review progress in this aspect of their personal development. Occasionally, students do not respond appropriately to the positive role models provided by the staff. At these times, well-rehearsed staff strategies usually enable students to quickly re-engage with learning. Students are happy to discuss their work and good levels of attendance confirm their enjoyment of school. Comments on the pre-inspection questionnaire included, 'This is the best school I could have gone to... I feel like a valued student here.' A parent agreed saying, '... the only school to meet my child's needs since Reception class'.

Students develop a good understanding of the wider world and receive appropriate support to develop essential life skills. For example, they visit the local community to select and pay for items when they go shopping and can see first hand the workings of the emergency services and the magistrate's courts. On the farm, students take up opportunities to contribute to animals' welfare, some of whom are rescued or are rare breeds. They also develop an understanding that animal husbandry is an activity and can lead to various careers after school.

Fund raising for others less fortunate than themselves is well established, for example, for oppressed children in Africa by supporting Stepping Stones Nigeria and for British soldiers who have been severely wounded fighting in Afghanistan. Nearer home, students support a local primary school, the parish church and hospice. In assemblies the students discuss matter related to different cultures and religions and can identify some religious artefacts. The impending Olympic Games have been the stimulus for work on different foods from around the world and a study of native dress. The school is a tolerant and harmonious community. Some opportunities to develop better social skills are missed, as the students do not regularly eat together at mealtimes.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. A strong team ethos is evident with education, therapy and welfare staff working very closely together for the benefit of the students. Much of the school's practice stems from well-established policies and procedures. All required policies, including those for child protection and safer recruitment checks, take account of recent guidance and are implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.

Training for all staff is given a high priority, for example, with regular training in child protection for all staff and higher-level training for the designated person. Other policies, including those for behaviour, anti-bullying, fire safety and first aid are effectively implemented. Regular fire drills are carried out and arrangements for first aid are effective. Health and safety arrangements both on and off site are rigorously risk assessed and the good adult to student ratio ensures that there is a good level of supervision at all times. Staff undertake regular training in safe physical intervention techniques. Inappropriate behaviour, especially any that results in the need for physical intervention, is rigorously monitored to ensure the welfare of students is properly safeguarded. Data show that behaviour improves as a result of the systems in place.

Relationships with external agencies are well established. Rigorous recording and careful reporting to parents, carers and local authorities ensure that all parties are well informed regarding any incidents and sanctions imposed. Health and safety checks are made on portable electronic equipment and all matters relating to fire safety. Attendance and admissions registers are maintained as required. The school has not prepared an accessibility plan, which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the checks to confirm the suitability of the proprietors, staff and others are rigorously carried out and recorded appropriately on a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is located in a former primary school and shares some of the site with two local businesses, which are suitably separated from the school. The classrooms are sufficient in size for the number of students on roll. Some rooms have been designated as specialist accommodation for science, food technology, art and music. The limited outdoor space, although satisfactory, is only occasionally used for recreation. The school makes good use of local grassed and hard-surfaced areas. Regular use is made of other local facilities for sport, including swimming and horse riding. The school's farm is an excellent resource for learning in science,

environmental studies and horticulture. There are some inadequate security arrangements.

Provision of information

The school's prospectus provides all the required information for parents, carers and others and makes it clear that further information is available on request. Questionnaires returned indicate that all these groups hold positive views of the school's work. Good quality reports are provided including those related to the annual review of some students' statements of special educational needs.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy and procedures meet requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure adequate security arrangements are in place for the grounds and buildings (paragraph 23(d)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that the work set for students always provides sufficient challenge.
- Improve the use of the on-site outside recreational space.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

- Provide opportunities for students to socialise at mealtimes by eating together.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and challenging behaviour		
Date school opened	5 September 2011		
Age range of pupils	11–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 7	Girls: 4	Total: 11
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 7	Girls: 1	Total: 8
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 8	Girls: 4	Total: 12
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,000		
Address of school	Fawley Business Centre Southampton SO45 1FJ		
Telephone number	02380 893629		
Email address	reception@newforestcare.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Mark Fry		
Proprietor	New Forest Care Ltd		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



July 9 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of New Forest School, Fawley, Southampton SO45 1FJ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school. The school provides you with a good education and these are some of the things I liked most.

- Lessons are well taught by staff who really get to know you well. They help you not only with your literacy and numeracy skills but also help you to develop the skills needed for success in examinations so preparing you well for the future.
- Your teachers, welfare staff and therapists work very closely as a team and use their skills to help you become more confident as well as happier with yourself and in your relationships with others.
- You told me that you feel safe and that you enjoy your lessons. I agree with this view, which became very clear to me when I saw you in lessons and also having fun, especially on the farm and in the music studio.
- I was impressed with your behaviour and I know you have made genuine progress in this important aspect of your lives.

As well as the need to meet some regulations, in order to help the school to be even better I have asked the headteacher to:

- work with the teachers to be sure that all your lessons are right for your ability
- consider setting some space aside on the school site for recreational use
- offer you all the chance to socialise together at mealtimes.

You can all help by maintaining your positive attitudes to learning and school life. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell
Lead inspector