

New Forest School

Fawley Business Centre, Fawley SO45 1FJ

Inspection dates

26–28 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The compassionate trustees, headteacher and deputy headteachers ensure that meeting pupils' varied and complex needs is at the heart of the school's work.
- Leaders are highly effective. They constantly review strengths and weaknesses in order to take precise actions to improve the school.
- Staff are highly skilled and know their pupils extremely well. Because of meticulously planned teaching and thorough assessment, pupils' learning needs are met consistently. Parents all agree that their child is taught well.
- Pupils make rapid progress in English, mathematics and across the curriculum.
- All parents and carers who responded to questionnaire would unreservedly recommend the school to others. Many explained that the school had transformed their child's life.
- Pupils are very appreciative of what the school provides for them. For example, pupils explain, 'We feel lucky to be in such a great school.'
- Leaders ensure that pupils are extremely well prepared for life after New Forest School. All pupils in recent years have continued their education and training.
- Staff care for and support pupils exceptionally well. The school has a family atmosphere and pupils thrive.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at the school and parents agree that their child is safe. Safeguarding is a strong feature of this school.
- Pupils say, 'We love coming to school.' They rarely miss a day. Pupils' attendance has improved considerably and is above the national average for all schools.
- The curriculum is extremely rich and varied. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of courses, including extra-curricular activities such as outdoor education.
- The school farm provides a stimulating learning environment. Pupils learn well about animal care and horticulture. They also successfully develop social skills and become more responsible.
- Trustees are knowledgeable and skilled. They have carefully considered how to expand the school successfully. They sensibly have plans to set up a formal governing body as the school grows.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2104 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement the current plans, in preparation for expansion, to formalise governance by the introduction of a governing body.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and trustees share an ambitious vision to provide outstanding educational experiences to pupils who have complex behavioural and learning needs. Staff at the school are equally committed and work tirelessly to maximise pupils' development. Many pupils join the school with low self-esteem, having had fragmented educational experiences in the past. Staff patiently, with unfailing care, strategically build pupils' confidence so that they can thrive.
- Staff are highly skilled. All staff at the school are determined to understand how best to support pupils with complex needs. Excellent links with Southampton University ensure that the latest academic research about supporting pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder is put into practice. As a result, successful strategies are introduced so that pupils are increasingly well supported. One parent explained, 'The staff think outside the box to find ways to support my son.'
- Parents speak of the transformational effect that staff have on their children's lives. One parent noted: 'A fabulous school with teachers who care about pupils and parents. A safe place where my daughter has thrived.' Another parent added: 'New Forest School is absolutely brilliant. They have an excellent understanding of the complex needs of pupils and implement various strategies to get the best out of the students academically, emotionally and in their behaviour.'
- Leaders ensure that the performance of all staff is monitored closely. Leaders provide a programme of high-quality training for staff. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are continually honing their knowledge and skills. Morale among staff is high.
- Leaders are self-evaluative, always looking for the school to be even better. Due to this rigorous focus on improvement, leaders have expanded and improved provision since the last inspection. There are increased numbers of specialist teaching staff, a wider curriculum, highly effective teaching and improved facilities. Leaders have improved outcomes for pupils since the last inspection.
- The school is proposing a further increase in pupil numbers to accommodate 80 pupils. Leaders have considered well the proposed expansion of another site. The new site will provide transitional learning towards post-16 education. Situated in the grounds of Totton College, pupils will become familiar with a college environment. The high-quality conversion of a former college library provides specialist teaching rooms that afford ample space for larger groups. The independent school standards, including those associated with a new building, will be likely to be met well, should this expansion go ahead.
- Leaders have developed a rich and varied curriculum, including a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Despite the school serving a small number of pupils, the curriculum covers an extensive range of subject areas. For older pupils, collaboration with Totton College provides for additional vocational opportunities such as motor vehicle maintenance and computer programming. Staff have carefully considered how to stimulate pupils' interests and engagement to successfully improve their social and emotional skills.

- The school farm is an additional resource to engage all pupils. Pupils of all ages thrive in this environment, learning to work in a team and take responsibility, in addition to applying academic learning.
- Leaders have developed pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding effectively. Pupils' understanding and respect for others is developed extremely well. They understand others' needs and are tolerant of their differences. Pupils show kindness towards others.
- All the independent school standards have been met.

Governance of the school

- Trustees of New Forest Care provide excellent governance. Many pupils live in New Forest care homes, which trustees also oversee. Trustees are highly knowledgeable and skilled. They have expert understanding of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Trustees provide full support to the headteacher. The headteacher writes comprehensive progress reports so that trustees are well informed. Trustees also visit the school regularly to gain first-hand knowledge of the success of school policies. They provide rigorous challenge to school leaders to ensure that pupils receive excellent standards of care and education.
- Trustees have ensured that their no-exclusion policy is effective. Trustees want pupils to feel secure, and trust that the school will not give up on them.
- Much of the trustee's work is on a day-to-day basis. Formal meetings are less frequent. They have plans to formalise governance and extend it to form a larger governing body. Trustees see that it is important to ensure sustainability of governance as the school grows.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school publishes the safeguarding policy on the website, which follows all current government requirements. Checks made when recruiting staff are thorough and rigorous. Records are kept up to date.
- Leaders have developed a strong safeguarding ethos. The school prides itself on being a safe and secure place so that pupils can thrive. Regular training ensures that staff are kept up to date with latest advice and guidance. For example, staff had recent training on preventing pupils from exposure to the risk of radicalisation.
- Leaders communicate well with parents, carers and other agencies should there be concerns about a pupil. The focus on communication and keeping comprehensive records makes sure that pupils are supported and safe.
- Pupils explained they feel very safe in the school. Parents and staff also agree that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers know their pupils extremely well. Teachers make bespoke, detailed plans so that pupils' individual needs are met well. Teachers continually check pupils' progress and

adapt learning plans if necessary. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching is highly effective so that pupils make strong progress.

- Pupils are welcomed to lessons and made to feel at ease. Teachers gently encourage pupils to reflect on previous learning. Usually teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking. Teachers provide appropriate challenge to pupils. Pupils are not afraid to have a go at difficult work. The balance between supporting pupils and giving challenging work is understood well by staff. Teachers help pupils with high levels of anxiety to learn extremely well.
- Teaching across all key stages is highly effective. Teachers make sure that pupils enjoy their learning by planning engaging activities. Teachers reward pupils consistently and effectively, using the school's reward system. As a result, pupils are encouraged and highly motivated to learn.
- Pupils explain how well they learn at the school farm. Teachers provide rich learning experiences at the farm. For example, pupils learn about plants' life cycles while tending crops. Pupils enjoy working with animals and reflect on how this helps them understand responsibility. A number of pupils explained, 'We are so lucky to have a farm at our school.'
- Teaching develops pupils' writing skills very well. Pupils receive encouraging feedback and can explain the progress they have made. For example, one Year 5 pupil explained how he develops rhetorical questions in his writing to make it more interesting to a reader. Many older pupils write for pleasure, using emotive language with an advanced grasp of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teaching in English skilfully engages pupils using stimulus material that sparks pupils' interests.
- Teaching in mathematics, across the year groups, is also highly effective. Pupils practise their numeracy skills well. Pupils apply their knowledge to solve problems. Teaching encourages pupils to explain the use of different methods to solve problems. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics.
- Teaching very successfully meets the needs of most-able pupils. There are a number of them in the school. Many also have complex needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder. Because teachers know their pupils well, teaching is adapted so that pupils excel. For example, some of the most able pupils are competent mathematicians so they are challenged with more advanced work. Talented artists and musicians have support so that they can develop their skills further.
- Parents are provided with clear, comprehensive and timely information about how well their child is progressing. Parents are universally positive about the quality of teaching their child receives.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders promote care and compassion for pupils exceptionally well. All staff care deeply for the well-being of pupils. Older pupils support younger pupils well. The school has a family atmosphere and pupils thrive.

- Most pupils start at the school after negative experiences in previous learning. Many are very despondent, displaying extreme anxiety or other behaviours. Leaders take great care to ensure that pupils transition successfully into the school. Staff carry out home visits and build strong relationships with parents and carers. As a consequence, pupils feel safe and quickly gain confidence.
- The school has developed a therapy team that meets all pupils' needs well. Mental health experts and occupational therapists work with teaching staff to provide effective support to pupils. Because of excellent communication and shared knowledge between professionals, pupils make rapid progress. Pupils' anxieties are alleviated substantially and quickly once they join the school.
- Pupils feel secure in the school. Because of a no-exclusion policy, pupils understand that even if they push boundaries, they will not be excluded. A pupil explained, 'I have to sort out any problem and talk to staff, because exclusion is not an option.'
- Pupils explain that bullying is extremely rare. They say that the school will not tolerate any form of bullying. Furthermore, pupils are certain that any bullying or friendship concerns would be resolved quickly and effectively by staff.
- Typically, pupils are very keen to learn. Pupils are keen to show their work to others and are proud of their achievements.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Despite a number of pupils occasionally displaying extreme behaviour, the school is a haven of calm. There is no disruption in classrooms because teachers have effective strategies to deal with unsettled behaviour. Teachers are excellent role models, gently providing firm and consistent boundaries. Staff reassure pupils constantly. Pupils are eager to gain rewards for good work and behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are highly effective in modifying behaviour.
- Pupils say that staff listen to them. Pupils are involved in developing individual behaviour plans. Because communication is so successful, pupils understand why sanctions need to be used. Pupils explain that the occasional need for strategies to help them calm down work extremely well. A parent explained, 'I have seen first-hand the level of support and understanding offered to the children if they experience a meltdown, making the environment safe and without judgement.'
- Leaders have successfully improved attendance. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Staff find out reasons for every absence. Any problems or barriers to good attendance are resolved quickly and effectively. Consequently, persistent absence is extremely rare.
- Pupils attending off-site learning on vocational courses attend regularly and behave very well. New Forest School staff accompany the pupils to their courses. Communication between the school and local providers is effective. As a result, pupils are looked after extremely well on these courses.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils enter the school at different ages and some travel considerable distances to attend

the school. When pupils join, thorough assessment procedures take place so that the exact needs of the pupils are thoroughly understood. This meticulous attention to pupils' needs means that they settle in quickly and benefit from uniquely tailored learning programmes.

- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make rapid and sustained progress during their time at the school. Teachers monitor pupils' progress closely, including in social and communication skills, so that any dip is immediately rectified. Leaders have developed a helpful computerised database to collect progress information about all pupils, so that they also constantly monitor their rates of improvement. Groups, such as those who are disadvantaged, and most-able pupils, are monitored effectively.
- Leaders have concentrated on improving pupils' literacy skills. Pupils explained that they have made great strides in reading and writing. A strategic reading programme has helped to improve pupils' reading and comprehension skills. The school's information shows that pupils make accelerated progress in reading. Pupils' writing across the year groups also shows strong progress due to highly effective teaching.
- Pupils typically make strongest progress when they first join the school. Leaders have identified that greatest gains are made in social skills and behaviour because pupils' needs are initially met. Pupils' progress in academic subjects then accelerates as their behaviour settles down. School information shows that many pupils make rapid progress. The transformation in pupils' learning behaviours and academic performance is outstanding.
- The school had relatively few pupils leaving the school in recent years in Year 11. Comparisons with national figures cannot be meaningfully made. Nevertheless, leaders carefully monitor pupils' attainment. Pupils have achieved GCSE and vocational qualifications in a range of subjects.
- Over the last three years, all pupils have successfully moved to post-16 courses. Some pupils have taken A levels and then studied at university. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for their next stage of education.

School details

Unique reference number	137279
DfE registration number	850/6089
Inspection number	10008605

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Sam Davies
Headteacher	Mark Fry
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	02380 893 629
Website	www.newforestschoo.co.uk
Email address	education@newforestcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 July 2012

Information about this school

- New Forest School is an independent special school with a main site located on the outskirts of Fawley, Southampton. A second site, Lunedale Road, is around two miles away. The school premises also include a small farm about 12 miles away from the Fawley site.
- The school provides education for pupils with severe or complex needs. Many pupils have emotional and social difficulties, such as autistic spectrum disorder.
- Many pupils are looked after by their local authorities. The school is part of the New Forest Care group which consists of 10 children's homes. Many of the children at the school who are looked after attend these homes.

- The school has more boys than girls.
- The school is currently registered for 40 pupils aged eight to 16. The school is proposing to increase the school roll to 80 pupils. It has obtained a fourth large site, which was formerly the library block at the local Totton College.
- A small number of pupils attend courses for part of their week at Totton College.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection included consideration of the material change application to increase the school roll to 80 from 40.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. The inspector also considered 21 responses from staff to the questionnaire.
- The inspector met with two trustees from New Forest Care Ltd.
- Telephone calls were made with a representative from Southampton University. The inspector met with two representatives from Totton College.
- A telephone call was made to the school improvement partner.
- The inspector considered 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and a further 12 written responses from parents. The inspector met a parent and held a telephone call with another.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons or one-to-one sessions. The deputy headteacher or the headteacher accompanied the inspector during all observations.
- The inspector carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work across the year groups and subjects. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, and the inspector spoke with a number of pupils during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, analysis of the school's performance information, information relating to the behaviour and attendance of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and minutes from trustees' meetings.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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