

Yewstock School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113965
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357455
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Long
Headteacher	Norma Baker
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2008
School address	Honeymead Lane Sturminster Newton DT10 1EW
Telephone number	01258472796
Fax number	01258473577
Email address	head@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk

Age group	3–19
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Inspection number	357455

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection, 16 lessons were observed and 16 different teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including planning documents, pupils' work, assessment and tracking data, and safeguarding policies. A total of 57 parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the use of assessment has improved since the last inspection.
- The amount of progress made by pupils with autism spectrum disorders.
- Whether provision in the sixth form fully meets the needs of all students.

Information about the school

Yewstock is an average-sized school for pupils with learning difficulties, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. Most pupils have severe or profound learning difficulties. About a third of pupils have moderate learning difficulties. A small minority have additional autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. Pupils come from a wide area of Dorset. An acting headteacher has been in post for six months. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It provides a sound education for its pupils. Parents and carers rightly believe that their children are safe and secure. They are pleased with the school and say that their children enjoy their time there. 'Yewstock is a school where each child is treated as an individual with the utmost care taken of them' commented one. This is evident in the way that the school provides good quality care, support and guidance for pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and their behaviour is good. They get on well with their peers and are polite to staff and to visitors. Their good contribution to the school and community is supported through effective partnerships. Links with other schools and local facilities, such as the local garden centre, help to engage them in learning and provide opportunities for work experience for older pupils.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in all aspects of learning. Pupils in the rest of the school, including students in the sixth form, make satisfactory progress. Most pupils make the best progress in communication and language skills. In a few classes, limited use of modern technology has an impact on the ability of some pupils to engage in conversation and choices, particularly older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The achievement of those pupils with autism, as well as those who are looked after, is similar to that of other pupils. Pupils across the school benefit from a rich curriculum providing a very wide range of activities that they fully enjoy. For example, effective vocational experiences provide those aged 14 to 19 years with realistic opportunities to learn about life after school. Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress on their Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses, but not all are sufficiently involved in planning and checking their own learning. Some good teaching was seen across the school during the inspection but, in too many lessons, expectations are not high enough and consequently the pace of pupils' learning dips. Too little attention is sometimes paid to planning the next small steps of progress for individual needs and abilities.

Leadership and management have been through a difficult period over the past few years with several changes of personnel. The acting headteacher, since her appointment six months ago, has worked on leading the school beyond this period. There has been much to do and, as a result, monitoring of teaching and learning has not been as rigorous as it could be. A trend of improvement in key areas has now begun, particularly in the rigorous attention paid to improving attendance, which is now above average, and the close links with local schools which are having a strong impact on enrichment. Although the use of assessment across the school remains inconsistent and not all pupils are fully involved in setting and measuring their own targets, new assessment and tracking systems have been introduced. These are in the early stages, but are now becoming more established. The recent accurate self-evaluation shows that leaders and managers are now aware of what

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

needs doing to bring about improvements. The governing body is supportive and is beginning to challenge leaders about their decisions. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection. Given the trend of improvement in areas like attendance, assessment and the quality of care for pupils, the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - accelerating the pace of learning by raising expectations of what each pupil can achieve
 - improving planning so that lessons fully meet the different needs and abilities of all groups of pupils
 - increasing the use of modern technology to enable pupils to contribute more fully in lessons by making choices and decisions.
- Improve the use of assessment by:
 - embedding the new assessment and tracking system fully into practice so that pupils' achievements are regularly checked and dated
 - using assessment data to plan the next small steps of learning
 - helping pupils to learn their targets so that they can help to check how well they are doing.
- Improve provision in the sixth form by:
 - making better use of the space available to meet the wide-ranging needs of pupils
 - ensuring that communication aids are available at all times so that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties can be fully involved in making choices
 - enabling students to be fully involved in planning activities and checking their own learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils' attainment on entry to the school is extremely low as a result of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and sometimes progress is good, particularly in communication and language. This was exemplified by the way that some younger pupils, with a range of abilities, achieved well in geography as they used symbols and puppets to determine the requirements for sunny weather. The good use of symbols increased the participation of even the most challenged pupil. Similarly, pupils with severe learning difficulties in Years 7, 8 and 9 achieved well as they wrote simple stories using symbols, pretending to be someone else. Because they were given an appropriate structure for writing they made good progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Older pupils regularly acquire accredited qualifications which help them to prepare for their futures. More able pupils, particularly those with moderate learning difficulties, make sound progress towards their entry level examinations. A group of older students with autistic spectrum disorders made particularly good progress in a food technology lesson as they benefited from skilled teaching that challenged them to gain new experiences. They responded well to encouragement as they happily made a quiche as part of their 'summer picnic' topic. They achieved well because of the very appropriate experiential approach which allowed them to investigate ingredients through touch and smell. As a result, they were happy to grate the cheese, roll out the pastry, mix ingredients and also clear up, showing good levels of understanding and some independence. Learning dips in lessons where specific individual targets are not used to help pupils to achieve the next small step in their learning. Pupils regularly keep fit and healthy by attending lunchtime sports clubs and joining in with sports activities with other local schools. They know the importance of healthy eating. Pupils say that they enjoy school and most come to school every day. The productive school council eagerly talks about its contribution to improving the school. It has had a positive impact on improving the grounds and on providing play equipment. Pupils work well with the local community. Older pupils are regularly involved in local business enterprises, for example by baking cakes to raise money for resources as well as for charities. A few pupils work in local shops and nurseries on a regular basis and the school has developed its own healthy tuck shop promoting good awareness of healthy living. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They get on well together, and have a sound awareness of other cultures and lifestyles. They are appropriately prepared for their futures.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

The school has developed an effective curriculum that provides some rich and exciting activities for all groups of pupils. A key strength is the increased opportunity for communication that has evolved from a recent audit and which is having a positive impact on most pupils' ability to make choices. Enrichment contributes significantly to pupils' good personal development. Breakfast club, for example, is well attended and provides good opportunities for social interaction as well as a healthy start to the day. Sports partnerships play a significant role in pupils' fitness and enjoyment. The wide range of trips to places of interest in the local community helps to broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although several good lessons were seen during the inspection. In the best lessons relationships are strong, clear learning objectives and effective assessment of skills help pupils to move forward in their learning and planned activities match individual needs. Exciting tasks engage pupils' interest and, as a result, they are keen to succeed. For example, in Year 9, where a group of more able pupils were using computers to create moving pictures, particularly skilled teaching fully engaged their interest. This was because a wide range of examples of cartoons, including some made by previous pupils, excited them. They worked extremely hard and made rapid progress. By

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

the end of the lesson many had successfully created their own moving figures. However, in weaker lessons there is a lack of specific guidance to help pupils know what is expected of them or what they need to do next and resources are not used as well as they could be to engage interest. As a result, learning dips and progress slows. The new assessment system is beginning to be used well in some classes to check progress but it is not regularly used well enough in all lessons.

Adults, including therapists, work together well to support pupils' needs, drawing on expertise from a wide range of other professionals. Parent and carer support groups regularly involve and engage families. Transition is well planned so that older pupils and students transfer smoothly to other colleges when applicable. Strategies to support pupils with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as those with autistic spectrum disorders and those with sensory impairments, are good, resulting in inclusion and enjoyment by these groups.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has been successful in the short time she has been at the school in improving provision and outcomes for all groups of pupils. Current senior leaders are supportive and are working diligently to support new initiatives. They are embedding ambition and have started to drive improvement by introducing rigorous procedures with some success, for example in improving attendance. The new assessment and tracking system is becoming established, although it is not yet able to show how well pupils achieve over time. Governors support improvements and are proactive in the drive to secure improvement. They have secure systems for safeguarding. New external fencing and access gates and very high levels of training for staff and governors ensure that pupils are very safe at school. Statutory responsibilities are met but many governors are new to their roles and they are not yet consistently effective in challenging leaders about decisions. A satisfactory strategy for community cohesion has been developed. There are many productive educational and sporting links with local schools. International links are developing through partnership with a school in Africa and are helping to extend pupils' awareness of the wider world. Relationships with a school in another area of the United Kingdom are emerging. Links with parents and carers are good. Coffee mornings help them to learn about their child's education enabling them to talk about common issues and seek advice. The school is committed to promoting equality and is tackling discrimination by seeking to ensure that pupils have appropriate access to resources and activities that promote their academic and personal skills. Leaders are aware that there is

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

more to do to monitor teaching and learning and to ensure that pupils with profound and multiple difficulties in particular always have access to communication aids.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There are only five children in the Reception group. All of these enjoy school and benefit from good quality planning which meets their different needs and abilities. They make good progress in all areas of learning and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the careful support and good attention placed on safety. Welfare arrangements are of a high quality. Children make mostly healthy choices of food and play happily together with their peers. Some have limited ability to communicate. Signs and symbols are used well by staff to encourage understanding and give children choices. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy. For example, while playing with a box of toy cars children were able to identify different colours and happily chatted to each other as they did so. Evidence of past work shows that children benefit from a broad range of sensory activities. Photographic evidence shows children happily making food for their royal wedding party, for example. Good leadership is evident in the way that the classroom is presented with a broad range of activities and toys. The outdoor area, however, lacks creativity and is not used successfully or regularly enough to foster increased independence or to give children choices about where they want to play. Children are well looked after and their achievements are regularly noted. Their learning journals are of good quality and provide a positive record of past work. These are used well to plan the next stage of learning.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form. 'My child has thoroughly enjoyed her time at this school,' wrote the parent of a student who is about to leave. The appropriate range of ASDAN accreditation ensures that students develop a good awareness of work. They complete a range of different modules and more-able students benefit from a range of options as part of their 'Towards Independence' module. There are good links with the local college, enabling students to make choices about their futures. Students are positive and say that they enjoy their courses. This is evident in the harmonious way in which they work and socialise, and the way in which they carry out their daily responsibilities diligently. One student for example was busy tidying up the classroom and putting resources away. Students benefit from effective support and guidance, which helps them to find the right path for their futures and make satisfactory progress on their courses. They eat healthily and the vast majority choose to participate in sporting activities. They learn how to stay safe through their curriculum and about the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol. They are provided with guidance on sex and relationships.

Sound leadership and management ensure that students' achievements are informally assessed on a regular basis and that students are safe and secure. A wide range of outdoor activities and visits significantly enhance students' understanding of the world of work preparing them for life after school. Students themselves are not as fully involved in planning and checking their own work as they could be. Planning for individual needs is satisfactory although a few pupils with profound and multiple difficulties in particular do not always have access to communication aids. Leaders do not always make the best use of the accommodation and, as a result, classrooms are often crowded while other rooms are empty.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

A minority of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most of these say that their child enjoys school and almost all believe that the school keeps their child safe and secure. 'I am very happy with my daughter's school. Any issues we have are responded to and my daughter is not just educated, but cherished and loved,' commented one parent. Another wrote: 'I have been very happy with Yewstock. My son has enjoyed his time there.' A few of those who responded to the questionnaire said that they do not feel that the school helps them to support their child's progress at home. Inspection evidence found that there are frequent reports to parents and carers and coffee mornings when parents and carers can visit classrooms to see their child's work and talk to teachers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Yewstock School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 133 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	63	18	32	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	38	67	18	32	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	53	25	44	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	46	26	46	3	5	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	37	65	16	28	2	4	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	58	20	35	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	60	19	33	1	2	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	51	22	39	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	56	21	37	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	56	22	39	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	47	25	44	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	53	23	40	3	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	67	15	26	3	5	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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.



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.

17 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yewstock School, Sturminster Newton, DT10 1EW

Thank you for your help on our recent visit to your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during our visit.

- Your school gives you a satisfactory education, which means you make the progress expected of you.
- You told us that you enjoy coming to school and most of you come as often as you can.
- You make sound progress in your lessons and in your courses.
- You told us all about your healthy lifestyles and we know you do lots of exercise.
- Most of you try hard to be polite and you work well together.
- Your leaders keep you safe and secure.
- We are impressed by the way that you work well with your local community and raise money for the school and charities. Well done for this.

We are asking your school to do three things to help you to do even better.

- To make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best, so that you all have the right activities to meet your needs.
- To make sure your work is always checked regularly.
- To improve the provision in the sixth form.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.