

Yewstock School

Honeymead Lane, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1EW

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The staff carefully plan all lessons and learning is individually tailored for each pupil. As a result, teaching is outstanding and all pupils make rapid progress, often from very low starting points.
- The headteacher and senior staff set high expectations for pupils' development and have monitored the quality of teaching effectively to ensure these are achieved.
- Children make an excellent start in the outstanding Early Years class. Lessons are carefully planned and include a wide range of activities which engage the children so that they relax and become keen to learn.
- The sixth form is outstanding and has become very well established since the last inspection. Older pupils make excellent progress and are given increasingly good opportunities to prepare for life after school.
- All staff work very effectively together throughout the school, and support staff make a very strong contribution to lessons.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for. They are made to feel secure, appreciated as individuals and very safe.
- The school has introduced rigorous checks on learning that provide a clear picture of all pupils' progress.
- The outstanding curriculum ensures that pupils have an extensive range of relevant activities. These help pupils to enjoy learning and make excellent progress.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is extremely effective in developing the skills of the staff and making them all a part of the school improvement planning.
- Middle leaders are beginning to take the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching in all subjects and to share the different, but highly effective, skills of their colleagues to the best possible effect.
- Members of the governing body know the school very well and provide consistent support and challenge to drive improvement.
- The school has received very effective support from the local authority.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate the excellent progress their children make.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, and a number of these were jointly seen with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as different therapies.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, teaching staff and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, as well as 43 responses to a survey for school staff, in informing the inspection findings. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents and carers to gather their views about the school.
- The inspection team looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on pupils' performance, their individual education plans, the school development plan, safeguarding and behaviour policies as well as policies on teaching and learning, and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andy Lole

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Yewstock is an average-sized school for pupils with learning difficulties. There are more boys on roll than girls.
- All pupils enter school with a statement of special educational needs and many have associated disabilities, including autism, epilepsy and challenging behaviour.
- There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from the age of three. There is a sixth form for pupils aged 16 to 19.
- Pupils come from a wide area of Dorset. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language.
- Around a third of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or who have a parent or carer in the armed forces). This is above the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable all staff with responsibilities to monitor and share the best practice in the school to accelerate the pace of planned improvements even further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most pupils enter the school with standards that are very low for their age. From the beginning they gain an improved level of self-esteem due to the committed relationships they have with adults and the sensitive way in which their needs are met through one-to-one support.
- All pupils receive an excellent start to the school in the Early Years class as assessments of what they know and can do are rigorous and integration plans, with supportive care, are very well thought out. This means they settle very quickly and make immediate progress.
- Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of pupils always make good, and often outstanding, progress towards the clear and challenging targets in their individual education plans because they are taught outstandingly well. An outstanding lesson for Key Stage 2 pupils was typical in the pace and variety of activities that kept pupils' attention throughout and enabled outstanding progress.
- Pupils' overall skills progress extremely well as their confidence grows. The school's careful focus on reading, writing and speaking in other subjects is very effective in raising pupils' levels of understanding and achievement.
- The school's excellent assessment and recording systems show that the aim for every pupil to achieve their potential, based on ambitious targets each year, is being successfully accomplished.
- The pupil premium funding is targeted very effectively to raise achievement, for example through providing additional therapy, focused individual support, and intervention programmes for identified pupils. In 2012 those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved well above expectations in both English and mathematics when compared with all pupils in similar schools nationally.
- Parents and carers strongly agree that their children are achieving well and now enjoy their learning.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding over time because staff are constantly looking to improve their own practice. Staff work well together to plan and deliver lessons that are highly effective in meeting pupils' needs and maintaining their interest.
- Through the very effective assessment systems, teachers repeatedly produce lessons where pupils' previous learning is constantly built upon so that over time all groups of pupils make exceptional progress.
- Very effective use is made of question and answer sessions in lessons with teachers and teaching assistants rigorously checking pupils' understanding of what they are learning. This is a constant feature in lessons and is one of the reasons why pupils make quick and consistent progress.
- Teachers also have good subject knowledge and have the understanding and skill to change a lesson if they feel that it is not pitched at the right level or tasks are not enabling pupils to move on in their learning. The way that several older, Key Stage 2, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were engrossed in using shaving foam and spaghetti to explore texture, shape and sound was inspiring.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very good at advising pupils how to improve and pupils are given the time to respond and put into practice the advice given. In an outstanding lesson for a group of pupils with autism their focus on meeting and greeting people outside school was both informative and enjoyable. Consequently pupils made rapid progress in their use of language for simple conversations.
- No opportunities for learning are missed. This was very well demonstrated in the playtime activities for the primary pupils where the exciting range of outdoor equipment was used by all staff to excite and challenge pupils, and show them just what they were capable of achieving.

- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey on the Ofsted website thought that their child was taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- Exceptionally skilful behaviour management systems are in place which are well known and appreciated by all pupils. During the inspection, most pupils consistently demonstrated high standards of behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and developing social skills.
- When one or two pupils were distressed and demonstrated upsetting behaviour, their outbursts were handled with exemplary care and calm. The other pupils were enabled to carry on with their tasks undisturbed.
- There is a very strong emphasis by all staff on keeping the pupils safe and happy. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they feel safe because the adults are always willing to listen.
- Given the number of medical conditions some pupils have, their attendance overall is above average.
- Highly effective out-of-class support is available for those whose needs give greatest cause for concern; pupils continue to learn when they are unable to make it into class. This is because staff are so well aware of their pupils' needs and fully prepare them for their lessons.
- The range of therapy support currently in place is very well deployed, especially the use of hydrotherapy and speech and drama therapy, which make a significant difference to the progress and all-round development of those pupils involved.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- The drive and ambition of the management under the rigorous and outstanding leadership of the headteacher have moved the school forward exceptionally well since the last inspection. A real sense of urgency to continue to improve is established.
- Staff work very well together and all, including the administrative team and site management staff, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. One member of staff summed up the views of many by saying, 'Yewstock is a lovely place to learn, not only for the pupils but for staff also.'
- The school knows itself very well and sets the right and very demanding targets to become even better. Documentation is thorough and the evaluation of the school's work is honest and accurate.
- The senior leadership team ensures that thorough assessments of pupils' progress have enabled changes in the curriculum to be implemented. These systems to track pupils' progress are detailed and individual. The information is used thoroughly to plan for pupils' next steps.
- The headteacher and governors have a very clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning. There is a high level of professional support for all staff, which is linked closely to setting targets for teachers in order to improve their practice continually. This holds teachers accountable for pupils' progress at all times. Weaker aspects of teaching have been tackled vigorously, and better teaching rewarded accordingly.
- The leaders have acknowledged that the outstanding skills of the middle leaders could be further employed to monitor and share the best practice in the school.
- The leadership team has inspired the staff to skilfully bring together a curriculum where academic, personal and therapeutic aspects meet the individual needs, aspirations and interests of each pupil. The school strives to ensure genuine equality of opportunity and avoid any discrimination. The outstanding work of the Learning Mentor and the Learning Resource Centre team ensures this happens.
- The curriculum supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development exceptionally well through activities such as drama, music, riding and swimming. The school's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* last term is well remembered by all involved.
- After very effective interventions and help over the last two years, the local authority now offers 'light touch' support to the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is fully involved in all school processes, checking decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner by asking probing questions when presented with documents and reports, including those related to the quality of teaching. Governors know the school extremely well, because members visit regularly to scrutinise the school's work and regularly analyse the performance of pupils, especially those with additional support through the pupil premium. They ensure that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately on additional one-to-one support or additional therapy sessions. Their involvement in and understanding of the requirements for improvement for each member of staff through their performance management targets underpins the school's strong capacity for further improvement. This includes ensuring that there is a clear link between how well pupils achieve and how well staff are paid. The governing body also has a firm grasp of the school's finances and ensures that all safeguarding requirements are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113965
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	405492

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
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vic Christopher
Headteacher	Seán Kretz
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2011
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