

Inspection of 3 Dimensions

Chardleigh House, Chardleigh Green, Wadeford, Chard, Somerset TA20 3AJ

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

3 Dimensions is a friendly and welcoming school where pupils thrive. Pupils feel valued and well supported. As a result, they attend well and say that they love coming to school. Parents and carers can see the positive impact the school has had on their children, and many say that the school has transformed their child's life.

Staff know pupils very well. They support pupils to manage their behaviour and emotions, and to cope with challenges they may face. Pupils are courteous and behave well. Pupils say that bullying does not occur. They feel safe and say that the school is a tolerant place. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the strong relationships they form with staff.

Leaders have carefully considered how the curriculum can help pupils to get the most out of their time at the school. Pupils enjoy the teaching, which is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Leaders are rightly proud of the wider experiences they provide for pupils. Staff expertly guide pupils in forest school, not only to learn about the natural world, but also to acquire an array of skills. These are skills that benefit pupils in school and in their lives beyond school. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. Pupils appreciate the rich experiences provided, such as caving, coastering, animal care and equestrian activities. Pupils talk animatedly about what they have learned from these experiences.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff place pupils at the heart of all they do. Leaders are well supported by governors and proprietors. Governors know the school well and provide useful challenge and support to leaders. Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met in full.

Leaders have thought creatively about how the curriculum can best meet pupils' needs. They know that many pupils have been less successful in education prior to joining the school. Leaders have therefore designed the curriculum with this in mind. They have organised the curriculum into two distinct areas that they intend will 'inspire' pupils and enable them to 'explore and discover'. Pupils respond well. They learn about a wide range of subjects that matches the scope of the national curriculum.

Staff have appropriate subject knowledge that is used well to make links with pupils' prior learning. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and staff make sure that the curriculum helps pupils to achieve their targets. Leaders have sequenced the curriculum well so that pupils build their knowledge by, for example, learning more complex concepts in science. There are many opportunities for pupils to revisit their learning to embed knowledge. As a result, pupils are developing their confidence as learners. However, sometimes it is not clear what essential subject

knowledge must be taught so that pupils can make better sense of the subject. Leaders are developing the curriculum with this in mind.

Leaders have implemented new assessment systems to better track pupils' progression. This helps teachers to identify gaps in learning. In addition, staff frequently check pupils' learning with careful questioning. The information is used to reflect on the impact of the curriculum and to adapt it as needed.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff ensure that daily reading is valued. Storytelling plays an important role in the curriculum and is helping pupils to re-engage with reading. Leaders have developed a systematic approach to the teaching of reading that is supporting pupils to become better readers. The programme matches books to pupils' phonic knowledge. However, not all staff are trained to assess and teach the phonics programme, so there is some inconsistency in delivery.

Staff take highly effective action to support pupils to overcome their difficulties. They work well with pupils to help them to understand emotions and to develop successful strategies to cope when they find situations a challenge.

Leaders have designed a strong personal development programme that ensures that the personal, social and economic education curriculum is skilfully matched to pupils' individual needs and taught at the right time. Pupils recall learning about important things, such as the life cycle, nurturing friendships, keeping safe and different beliefs in society. They are gaining an understanding of the world around them and their own place in the world. This is helping them to become more confident in their interactions with others.

The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. Leaders link pupils' aspirations to their individual curriculum. The school has an impressive careers programme. Staff supplement pupils' learning in school with meaningful opportunities, such as work experience that is matched to pupils' areas of interest. Leaders make sure that pupils attain appropriate accredited qualifications, including vocational qualifications and GCSEs. Leaders forge strong links with other providers so that pupils find a pathway that is right for them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding very seriously. They prioritise pupils' well-being. Leaders check carefully that adults are suitable to work with children. Governors and proprietors ensure that leaders fulfil their duties and implement the school's policies effectively.

Staff are well trained and know how to spot safeguarding concerns. Staff follow school processes carefully. They are confident that any concerns raised are dealt with promptly and that leaders take appropriate action. Leaders have developed strong relationships with external agencies, which helps them to protect pupils.

Pupils feel safe. They have lots of opportunities in the curriculum to learn about keeping safe, including online safety. As a result, they talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe. They say that they can talk to anyone in school and that staff are always around to help them, should they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have developed a new curriculum with very clear aims. While essential knowledge is identified in their planning for most subjects, some lack clarity. As leaders move into the next phase of curriculum implementation, they need to ensure that essential knowledge and concepts are clearly identified, so that all staff know the key content and how it integrates into larger ideas.
- Leaders have developed a systematic approach to the teaching of reading that is supporting pupils to become better readers. However, not all staff are trained to assess and teach the phonics programme, so there is some inconsistency in delivery. Leaders should ensure that all staff can teach reading and deliver the phonics programme with greater precision.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134909
DfE registration number	933/6207
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10212941
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Outcomes First Group
Chair	David Leatherbarrow
Headteacher	Caroline Rolfe
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,990 to £65,538
Telephone number	01460 65611
Website	www.3dimensions.org.uk
Email address	caroline@3dimensions.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 to 21 June 2018

Information about this school

- 3 Dimensions is an independent special school registered to provide education for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school opened in 2004 and is currently registered for 16 pupils aged seven to 25 years of age. All pupils are placed at the school by their respective local authorities.
- There are currently 15 pupils who attend the school full time. This includes one student of sixth-form age. There are no adult learners.
- The school is owned by Outcomes First Group (OFG). 3 Dimensions is part of the OFG Options Autism strand.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives of the governing body. Meetings were also held with teachers and teaching assistants, and a therapist.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined school records.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the proprietorial group.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Tracey Reynolds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nathan Kemp

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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