

Inspection of New Forest School

Fawley Road, Fawley, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1FJ

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils take immense pride in being part of this extremely harmonious and inclusive school community. They are happy and positive ambassadors of New Forest School. Pupils flourish socially, academically and emotionally due to the excellent standard of education and nurture that they receive.

Leaders and staff have very high expectations. Adults take great care to help pupils form trusting relationships, after previous disrupted experiences of education. Pupils feel very safe. They are cared for by staff who know them well and understand their special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) fully. Pupils rarely fall out with each other, and incidents of bullying, prejudice or discrimination are unheard of. As one pupil said, 'This school is the best thing that happened to me.'

Pupils love taking part in the wide range of exciting trips and experiences available. They enjoy attending the after-school clubs such as cinema, dungeons and dragons, and food technology. Pupils relish working on the school farm, where they look after animals, including chickens, alpacas, donkeys and geese. They also grow vegetables, which they cook into healthy meals. Older pupils make garden furniture, such as planters and picnic benches, which they donate to the local community.

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

New Forest provides pupils with a first-class education. Pupils who join the school have often fallen behind academically and have missed out on many everyday school experiences. Leaders have established a highly effective school that 'fits around the child's interests and learning needs'. For instance, learning is delivered in a variety of spaces, such as the farm, the food technology room, the construction hub, the outdoor learning centre and vibrant classrooms. This means that, for the first time in their education, pupils engage wholeheartedly and benefit fully from all that the school has to offer.

Leaders have created an aspirational curriculum in all subjects. The curriculum is carefully constructed so that pupils build and deepen their knowledge over time. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They ensure that learning is precisely matched to each pupil's individual education, health and care plan (EHCP) targets. Teachers check carefully how well pupils are learning the important knowledge. They give them time and space to practise. This helps pupils to embed their learning effectively. Consequently, pupils exceed expectations and achieve highly from their starting points.

Reading is the backbone of the curriculum. Leaders promote pupils' love of reading effectively. Adults read books that capture pupils' imagination. They introduce pupils to a rich and diverse range of texts. Pupils talk animatedly about the books they read and enjoy. Pupils who find learning to read difficult have additional support to help them catch up quickly. As one Year 10 pupil said, 'Reading is a big part of being

successful in the future. The more we read the more we know. This way we will be more qualified and confident about the careers we want to go into when we leave school.'

The school's curriculum helps pupils learn about the wide range of careers open to them in the future. Leaders make sure that work experience opportunities are of a high quality. Pupils work with professionals from different industries, for instance scientists, engineers and athletes. Several pupils told inspectors that the school has 'simply transformed their lives'.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are kind and infused with humour. Pupils learn about the importance of looking after their emotional health. When pupils find it hard to maintain focus, they know to take 'time out' and talk to an adult. As a result, there is rarely any disruption in lessons.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils learn why it is important to show respect for others and the planet. Pupils' work on projects such as sustainability helps them develop deeper appreciation of the significance of looking after the environment and being self-reliant. They are very knowledgeable about their rights and those of others. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. They talk with maturity about differences and similarities between religious celebrations and worship. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to have a healthy relationship. They know what is and what is not acceptable. The school has appropriate plans in place to comply with Department of Education (DfE) statutory guidance on relationships and sex education and health education.

The proprietor and governors have a robust oversight of the school's work. The proprietor works extremely well with governors to make sure that all independent school standards are consistently met. The proprietor ensures that a suitable accessibility plan is in place which complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Governors challenge leaders to ensure that pupils' educational experience is of the highest quality. Staff morale is sky high. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop professionally. Staff value the team spirit and open culture that exists in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are alert to the slightest signs that indicate that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders maintain strong links with the local authorities that have placed pupils at the school. They pass on information in a timely fashion. Leaders work extremely well with external safeguarding agencies. They are persistent in making sure that the needs of pupils are met promptly. Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are carried out on adults working in the school. Pupils know about the risks of social media, messaging sites and the internet.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137279
DfE registration number	850/6089
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10214661
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Phillip Davies t/a New Forest Care Ltd
Chair	Professor Sarah Parsons
Headteacher	Duncan Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,500 to £95,000
Telephone number	023 8089 3629
Website	www.newforestschool.co.uk
Email address	duncansmith@newforestschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 28 September 2017

Information about this school

- New Forest School is an independent special school with a main site located on the outskirts of Fawley, Southampton. Two other sites, Dibden and Totton, are located around five 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 a range of complex needs. Most pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or have social, emotional and/or mental health needs. All pupils who attend the school have an EHCP.
- 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 currently uses no alternative provision.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 proprietor, the director of education, the headteacher and the senior leaders. The lead inspector met remotely with three governors, including the chair of governors. She also spoke on the telephone with heads of two virtual schools, three care home managers and officers from two of the local authorities who place pupils at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, food technology and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the English deep dive, the lead inspector listened to some pupils read. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- There were very few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The lead inspector spoke to some carers at the start of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the views of staff during meetings with them.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards. The lead inspector reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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