

Inspection of Harbour School Dorset

School Road, Bovington BH20 6NU

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Daniel Butt. This school is part of Delta Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, John White, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Baker.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupil and staff numbers have continued to grow steadily since the school opened. The school has created a curriculum that meets pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. The school tries to help each pupil learn in the way that is best for them. It continues to change the curriculum to achieve this. For some pupils, learning is planned through practical activities. Other pupils learn national curriculum subjects. Post-16 students enjoy the new vocational training in car mechanics, salon skills, catering and horticulture.

Staff build strong relationships with pupils. These relationships enable pupils to feel safe and help them to enjoy school. Pupils sometimes worry when other pupils are upset or angry. Teachers and learning mentors are well trained to help pupils to become calmer at these times. Pupils are helped to understand the reasons for others' difficulties. There is a calm atmosphere around the school that supports learning. Pupils work hard most of the time. Learning mentors encourage pupils to complete their work independently. Teachers encourage pupils to gain qualifications. This helps to prepare pupils for their next stage of education, employment or training.

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

The curriculum has several pathways, each designed for pupils with different needs and abilities. It is clear what pupils will learn in each pathway. Learning is planned in small, sequential steps. Teachers who know pupils well often use this knowledge to plan learning effectively. For example, in an English lesson, all six pupils keenly joined in with a discussion in which they accurately identified some grammatical aspects in a sentence. However, on occasions, teachers do not follow these steps. When this happens, pupils' learning does not build on what they have studied before. Sometimes, teachers do not provide pupils with enough support to help them gain success in their learning. This is because teachers and learning mentors sometimes do not have enough depth of subject knowledge.

Teachers regularly check how well pupils have learned something. However, not all teachers know effective ways to do this. As a result, the information obtained from these checks is not always reliable. However, assessments of post-16 course work are carried out accurately. Students complete practical tasks to demonstrate their level of knowledge and skills.

Pupils have a daily session to encourage their enjoyment of reading. Those who needed extra help with their reading have become more confident and fluent readers over the last year. The school recognises that it is likely that pupils new to the school may be at an early stage of reading. The school has decided to introduce a phonics scheme in readiness. Staff are well trained in how to support pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff understand the underlying reasons for pupils behaving in withdrawn, anti-social or aggressive ways. Staff training has contributed well to the positive learning environment at the school. The

school makes good use of training opportunities in both English and mathematics from local organisations.

Staff feel well supported. They appreciate school leaders' regular checks on their well-being. Staff acknowledge that some pupil behaviour can be very challenging for them to manage. The school has ensured that there are different sections of the school building for each group of pupils. This has helped reduce the number of behaviour incidents. The frequency of pupils being suspended from school has significantly reduced over the last year. Pupils sometimes feel bullied. Staff deal with this effectively.

The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. A minority of parents feel that the school's communication with them is not good. Even so, several parents explained how their child had not attended school at all previously. Others praised the school for the way in which their child had improved their own behaviour. They valued the carefully planned transition process as their child started at Harbour School.

The personal development curriculum is taught across several subjects. These include personal, social and health education, life skills and preparation for adulthood. Vocational courses and careers education help prepare pupils for the world of work. Students value working with the experienced tradespeople who lead the vocational courses. Students were able to identify parts of a car engine that they were servicing. The school has good links with local employers and colleges, giving pupils useful experiences in the local community. Pupils are well prepared for their next placement after school. Students who left post-16 education last year all went to employment, college or another specialist placement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always follow the planned sequence of learning. When this happens, pupils' learning does not build on what they have studied previously. The school should ensure that teachers are supported to follow curriculum planning closely.
- At times, assessment design does not ensure that teachers have an accurate view of what pupils know and can do. As a result, gaps in pupils' understanding are sometimes not identified. The school should ensure that teachers have the skills and knowledge to carry out accurate assessments.
- Occasionally, staff are not confident in subject-specific knowledge. This sometimes hinders their ability to match the specific subject curriculum to the SEND of pupils. Consequently, the curriculum is not always implemented in a way

that enables pupils to learn. The school should ensure that staff's subject knowledge is deepened.

How can I feedback 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147087
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10298077
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Baker
CEO of the trust	John White
Headteacher	Daniel Butt
Website	www.harbourschooldorset.com
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Delta Education Trust.
- This is a special school for pupils between the ages of 10 and 19 years. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and those with a diagnosis of autism.
- The school opened in 2019. It moved into newly built premises in March 2022.
- The school makes use of nine unregistered alternative providers. Some pupils attend these on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff. They also considered views expressed in the staff survey.
- The lead inspector held a virtual meeting with the chair of the governing body and the chair of Delta Education Trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through a range of sources, including Ofsted Parent View and a meeting with a group of parents.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Faye Bertham

Ofsted Inspector

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