

New Forest School

Fawley Road, Fawley, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1FJ

Inspection date

7 November 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–2A(1), 2A(1)(b) and 2A(1)d–2A(2)

- At New Forest's most recent standard inspection in 2022, the quality of education was judged outstanding and the school was providing pupils with a first-class education.
- The school is highly ambitious for its pupils. It recognises the vulnerabilities of some pupils who may not be emotionally or academically ready to leave school at the end of key stage 4. There is a likelihood that some pupils may struggle to transition to a new further education provider. Therefore, the school is looking to continue its excellent curriculum offer to allow pupils to stay at New Forest for one or two more years. The school makes clear it is not setting up key stage 5 provision. Instead, its aspirational offer will continue to best meet the targets in pupils' individual education, health and care (EHC) plans in order to enable pupils to attain relevant academic and vocational qualifications.
- Pupils will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum for post-16 provision up to the age of 18. English and mathematics will rightly be prioritised, so that pupils can attain the qualifications they need in order to move on to further education or employment. By staying on at New Forest, pupils can retake examinations and assessments or aim for a higher qualification in functional skills or GCSEs.
- Some of the vocational curriculum, such as that for construction and for animal care and management, is of particularly high ambition and scope.
- Pupils will continue to access a range of therapies as part of their bespoke programme, as well as counselling where needed.
- Careers information, education, advice and guidance are at the forefront of the school's approach. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and seek to offer impartial and independent advice, so that pupils can thrive with self-belief and confidence as they edge closer to adulthood.

Paragraphs 3 and 4

- Curriculum planning has been strengthened even further since the previous inspection. There is greater precision in the steps of component knowledge in each subject. The school has worked backwards from each subject's aspirational end-points to map out what the learning journey should look like over time. The curriculum will extend seamlessly for pupils remaining at the school after Year 11.
- Teaching staff are experts in their field. The school has recruited high-calibre staff who really know the subject-specific curriculum and what it takes for pupils to gain the qualifications they need.
- Assessments will continue to identify what pupils are remembering. There will be swift catch-up support for any pupil who needs additional reteaching or extra practice in a concept.
- All of the independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- At the previous inspection, pupils' personal development was found to be exceptional, with pupils flourishing socially, academically and emotionally.
- The school has high-quality planning for relationships and sex education, coupled with a strong culture of keeping children safe. For older pupils remaining at the school, there will be a focus on living independently and managing future social and moral scenarios. Pupils will continue to learn about healthy relationships, sexual health, the impacts of alcohol and drug misuse, and personal well-being.
- There will continue to be a range of interesting trips and visits that captivate pupils' interest. Pupils will have opportunities to interact with people from all walks of life and they will learn how to make a meaningful contribution to society, such as via the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- Safeguarding was judged effective at the previous inspection. Everyone is finely attuned to creating a strong safeguarding culture. All staff are expected to complete and revisit a suite of training that is current and informed by what pupils might be facing.
- Record-keeping is thorough, with the designated safeguarding leads acting swiftly on any concerns that may arise. The school works very well with other agencies to support pupils who are at risk.

- The curriculum prepares pupils well in knowing how to keep safe in different situations. Staff and pupil relationships are trusting and respectful.

Paragraphs 11, 12 and 14

- The school is knowledgeable about health and safety, with policies in place and executed well. The post-16 provision will be on one of the existing sites, which shares premises with a further education college. There is regular communication and liaison with college leaders that ensures the health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Timely checks for fire safety take place and these are well documented. The proprietor body ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Staffing and supervision levels are very high. This means that the school's plans for a gradual increase in pupil numbers are well considered.

Paragraph 16–16(b)

- The proprietor body has excellent skills in health and safety and risk management. The school does not shy away from offering pupils memorable experiences outdoors and through adventurous activities that pose a higher risk. All angles are covered in risk assessments, and the school uses specialist staff to teach pupils climbing, archery and water sports.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b) and 21(5)–21(6)

- Excellent processes are in place to recruit high-quality staff who match with the school's vision and values. Leaders are rigorous in their safer recruitment procedures for recruiting and inducting new staff.
- The school is clear about when it might use supply staff. This would typically be for employing agency staff on a long-term contract with a view to a permanent position. This would be to provide stability in pupils' education. The school is fully aware of the checks that need to be carried out.
- The single central record in place contains all the required checks. The proprietor body regularly assures itself that the single central record is accurate and compliant.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(2) and 25–29(1)(b)

- No additional building work is required for the material changes requested. The school will be using its existing premises for post-16 provision and to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers.
- The learning facilities are hugely impressive, helping to provide pupils with a high-quality experience. Innovative refurbishments as well as specialist classrooms are enhancing pupils' education even further. Pupils will continue to benefit from the company's two farms and outdoor learning centre, where provision is planned to deliver aspects of the quality of education and to broaden pupils' personal development and character.
- There is plentiful space outside for pupils' recreation and for sporting activities.
- Single-sex toilets and washing facilities are appropriate for the increase in pupil numbers.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school has published its safeguarding policy on its website. The proprietor body has ensured that this policy is updated at least annually to reflect the most recent statutory guidance.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The leadership and management of the school were judged outstanding at the previous inspection. There is a strong moral purpose to do what is right for all pupils. The school's five 'TREES' values underpin this work. There is a compelling vision for post-16 provision to be in students' best interests. The school has a clear strategy to expand the age range and pupil numbers. It is committed to ongoing staff professional development so that the teaching of the curriculum remains consistently strong.
- Governors are knowledgeable and driven. They challenge the school very well to assure themselves that it continues to provide an excellent education for all pupils.
- There are robust systems and mechanisms in place to check that the school would continue to meet the standards if the proposed increases in age range and pupil numbers were to be approved.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	137279
DfE registration number	850/6089
Inspection number	10307326

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	New Forest Care Ltd
Chair	Philip Davies
Headteacher	Duncan Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,500 to £95,000
Telephone number	02330 893 629
Website	www.newforestschool.co.uk
Email address	education@newforestschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	21 to 23 September 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 16	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	75	100	100

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	75	100
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	75	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	75	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	75	100

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	41	50
Number of part-time teaching staff	4	4
Number of staff in the welfare provision	5	5

Information about this school

- New Forest School is part of New Forest Care, a group that runs a number of children's homes. The group provides residential, educational and therapeutic provision across its providers.
- The school is a split-site school comprising three main sites: Fawley, its home site, which caters for key stage 2 pupils; Dibden in Southampton (SO45 4QN), which is for secondary-aged pupils who need a more vocational curriculum offer; and Totton in Southampton (SO40 3ZX), which is housed in Totton College, a further education institution. This is also for secondary-aged pupils, but is subject to the material change request to expand into post-16 provision.
- The proprietor body has two further sites that pupils can access: a school farm in Bartley, Hampshire, and an outdoor learning centre in Romsey, Hampshire. There is also Ridge Farm, which is situated on the same site as the outdoor learning centre.

- All pupils who attend have an EHC plan and a diagnosis of autism or social, emotional and/or mental health needs. Many pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material changes of increasing the age range to 18 and increasing the number of pupils to 100 are implemented.
- This was the school's first material change inspection since its most recent standard inspection in September 2022, when the school was judged outstanding. This inspection focused on the Totton site, which will cater for post-16 provision. The inspector also looked at two other existing sites that the proprietor body oversees. These are a school farm and an outdoor learning centre, including an additional farm, which pupils will be able to access for their educational pathways.
- The inspection focused on all the quality of education standards in part 1; all the standards for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in part 2; some of the welfare, health and safety standards in part 3, including the supervision of pupils and appropriate deployment of staff; all of the standards in part 4 about the suitability of staff; all of the standards in part 5 for premises and accommodation; and the standards in part 8 on the quality of leadership and management of schools.
- The school's safeguarding procedures were explored by the inspector. He considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first. He also reviewed checks and procedures for the safer recruitment of adults.
- The inspector held discussions with senior leaders, staff and pupils. He had a telephone conversation with a governor.
- The inspector toured all the school premises relevant to the material changes. He also looked at a wide range of documents and policies provided by the school or available via its website.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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