

Inspection of Beaucroft Foundation School

Wimborne Road, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2SS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Beacroft Foundation School. The school has high expectations and this enables pupils to be vibrant individuals who enjoy learning. Pupils feel safe and secure in the trusted and nurturing relationships with staff. Pupils enjoy a rich and varied set of opportunities that enrich their learning. There is a clear focus on ensuring that pupils are fully involved in the community. The café and community garden are inspiring examples of the school's dedication to ensure the very best for pupils. Younger pupils talk with enthusiasm about their trips into the local area and beyond. They also participate in the community projects at the college site. This builds their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their place in it.

Pupils learn to increase their resilience when they find things challenging. They use strategies that they learn in school to help them feel calm and be ready to learn. Pupils are respectful and tolerant. They demonstrate these qualities in the thoughtful and kind way that they behave towards others.

Parents and carers describe the positive impact that the school has on their children and family. This gives them confidence in staff to care for and develop their children successfully. Consequently, there is a strong family and school team around each individual pupil to adapt and respond effectively.

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

The school shows a determined ambition to ensure that pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills for a successful life beyond school. This starts with the youngest children and continues through to the students who attend the college. The school has designed a curriculum across four different pathways, including the nurture curriculum, to meet the range of needs of pupils. This is strengthened by advice and guidance from other professionals.

Pupils learn a broad and engaging range of subjects that match the breadth of the national curriculum. The school's curriculum spans across three-year cycles and is broken down into small steps of progress. This helps staff to understand what to check when assessing pupils' learning. Designing the curriculum in this way means pupils typically have the time to learn at a suitable pace. This includes sufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge.

Staff understand the systems for checking pupils' learning of the curriculum. They also know the long-term outcomes listed on pupils' education, health and care plans. Some staff connect this information so that pupils receive extra help rooted in specific and measurable targets. Other staff are getting to grips with how to do this well. This is because expectations of how this should be done have not been communicated effectively. As a result, there is not always well-targeted learning to build pupils knowledge as well as should be.

The school has an ambitious vision for a total communication approach across the school and college. The aim is for pupils to use a range of different strategies so that they can have a voice, access text and communicate successfully. The school has an impressive range of resources to support this. However, in some phases, staff do not make full and effective use of these. At times, staff rely on using adult-led support. This results in pupils not being as independent as possible. Where the approach is more successful, for example in early years, children are encouraged to problem-solve and consider the most effective way to make a request. There is a well-considered design to learning activities to ensure children persevere to extend their communication skills.

The school has promoted the importance of reading to support the total communication approach. It has adopted a systematic approach to reading. However, the curriculum is not fully established to support pupils to learn to read in a systematic way. At times, learning is not well matched to the ability of pupils. Pupils learn some misconceptions modelled by staff. This can limit them becoming increasingly confident and fluent readers.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' wider development. It gives the upmost importance to meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. The school recognises that this is critical to ensure that pupils are well-prepared for life beyond school and are in the right place to be able learn and progress. The college site has a significant role in this. Students achieve well. They receive advice and guidance that prepare them suitably for their next steps in education, employment or training. The positive outcomes achieved in college are underpinned by the development of pupils across early years to key stage 4. Pupils are encouraged to build aspirations and be self-aware. They learn how to identify and express their emotions and how they are feeling.

The school has adopted an innovative approach to supporting pupils to manage their emotions and behaviour. It takes the appropriate action to support pupils to attend well. This is led by the knowledge that the staff have of each individual pupil and how their experiences have an impact on the way they behave. Staff expertise in meeting pupils' emotional needs has resulted in the reduction of more significant incidents of behaviour and incidents that require physical intervention. The school is focused on the importance of this so that pupils learn how to face unpredictability and challenges with greater success and resilience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The systems for assessing, checking and monitoring pupils' progress lack clarity and precision in some areas of the school. Some targets and information about

individual pupils lack the precision needed to ensure that they make the intended impact on how well pupils learn. The school must ensure that whole-school systems and processes are clear, well understood and communicated effectively to enable staff to adhere to them across the school and college sites.

- The school's ambitious intent for early reading and communication is not fully established. Some pupils do not get the precise learning they need to become more fluent and accurate readers. The use of a total communication approach is not fully realised to ensure pupils become as independent as they can in their reading and communication strategies. The school should make sure that staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to ensure that pupils can read and communicate as independently as possible.

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.

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	113956
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10288144
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Noel Harrison
Headteacher	Diane Makariou and Joseph Barnett (Co-headteachers)
Website	www.beaucroft.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including complex needs and autism spectrum disorder. Pupils' needs range vastly.
- All pupils have EHC plans.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- Leaders have prioritised preparing pupils for adulthood so that they have the necessary skills and knowledge as they move on to the next stage of their education.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began.
- Inspectors met with one of the co-headteachers, deputy headteachers, phase leaders and subject leaders. In addition, an inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair, the local authority school improvement adviser and the school's education challenge partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early communication and early reading, mathematics, physical education, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. In addition, inspectors sampled other subject areas and the work of individual pupils to gather evidence about the quality of education.
- When speaking with some groups of pupils, members of staff were present to support pupils' communication.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school sites.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments as well as parents' comments provided by the school from a recent parent survey. Inspectors evaluated the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector

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