

Inspection of New Horizons Learning Centre

Mulberry Drive, Kingswood, Bristol, South Gloucestershire BS15 4EA

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The priority at New Horizons Learning Centre is to support pupils to learn how to manage their social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have struggled to cope in mainstream settings due to the complexity of these needs. Parents and carers speak highly of the transformation they see in their children once they settle and understand the school's expectations. Parents describe how well staff understand their child and how enthusiastic staff are to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

The school works hard to do everything possible to ensure that pupils develop a sense of self and are optimistic for their futures. Pupils enjoy school, particularly practical activities such as science experiments and art projects.

At times, incidents of challenging behaviour occur. Staff manage these in a calm and consistent way. At the heart of the school's long-term aim is to support pupils to learn how to cope with their anxieties and how to communicate positively. Pupils recognise that, over time, staff do all they can to help them to learn how to become independent, confident young people.

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

Staff work together as a cohesive team, determined to provide a consistently positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Fundamental to the school's ethos is to provide relentlessly predictable routines and expectations. Over time, this helps pupils to feel secure and to trust those around them.

There is a consistent, sequenced curriculum. At the heart of this is reading. Many pupils arrive with substantial gaps in their reading skills. Therefore, the school has introduced a systematic phonics curriculum so that all pupils, whatever their age, can develop early reading skills. Staff encourage pupils to read widely and to develop good reading habits. Appropriate training ensures that all staff can support pupils to learn to read. However, there is more work to do to ensure that this curriculum develops beyond phonics. In some areas, the curriculum does not clearly set out exactly what the most important learning is. As a result, the school cannot be sure that pupils' learning in all subjects builds over time towards the agreed desired outcomes.

The school offers individual, bespoke timetables so that pupils develop their talents. A few pupils attend alternative provision. This is organised well so that pupils, even those with significant anxiety, experience useful education opportunities.

Personal development is a priority. The wide curriculum offer includes lunchtime clubs, featuring a range of sports. These encourage pupils to develop their interests and to engage in inter-school and wider sporting competitions. Pupils take part in outdoor adventures such as working towards The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The

curriculum includes careers education. As a result, most pupils are well prepared for adulthood and successfully move on to further education or work placements.

Many pupils have developed patterns of weak attendance before attending the school, and overall attendance at the school is low. However, the school has a thorough understanding of every pupil and the challenges they face. Staff track each pupil's attendance. The school works well with individual pupils and their families to reduce absence. Over time, many pupils learn to engage in school activities. They become motivated and confident to attend more frequently.

Staff expertly grasp all opportunities to develop pupils' social skills whenever the possibility arises. Pupils quickly learn to contribute to the success of the school. Staff listen and respond to school council members, who bring ideas to meetings with enthusiasm. The highly effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme underpins learning about respect for one another exceptionally well. During class and tutor times, staff repeat important messages so that they embed. The values of honesty, perseverance, kindness, and respect underpin relationships and expectations across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not clearly set out what the vital components of learning are in order to meet the ambitious learning goals set. This makes it hard for staff to ensure that pupils learn and remember the most important parts of the curriculum. The school needs to identify the key learning in each subject and for each year group.
- The school has prioritised the development of a phonics curriculum. However, the reading curriculum beyond phonics is not as well developed. It is not clear how pupils will improve their understanding of what they read. The school needs to ensure that the reading curriculum goes beyond phonics and develops pupils' comprehension skills.

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	135827
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10315613
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Mclean
Headteacher	Tania Craig
Website	www.newhorizonslc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils join the school at various times across the year.
- The school operates from two sites in Kingswood, Bristol. There is a primary base at Courtney Road and a secondary base at Mulberry Drive.
- 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.
- There are currently no children at the school who are Reception age.
- The school uses nine unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PSHE and art. 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 also met with subject leaders and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors had several meetings with the executive headteacher and other senior leaders.
- An inspector spoke with a representative from South Gloucestershire local authority and an education adviser who supports school improvement at the school.
- 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.
- The views provided by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the views from parents, staff and pupils at the school.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils without an adult present, but most required the support of staff when these conversations took place. This did not impact the quality of evidence gathered, or the outcome of the inspection.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Hester Millsop

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