

Inspection of a good school: Mayfield School

Moor Lane, Watcombe, Torquay, Devon TQ2 8NH

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

Outcome

Mayfield School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Mayfield School. With support and encouragement, pupils build their independence, resilience and confidence. The school listens to pupils and their parents and carers to help meet pupils' needs. Opportunities for pupils to develop their communication, personal, social and emotional skills, and knowledge, are carefully considered throughout the curriculum.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy attending school at one of the three sites that best meets their additional needs. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are rooted in respect. Clear expectations and support for pupils' behaviour help them to feel safe and happy.

The school's curriculum ensures pupils learn about healthy lifestyle choices. Sixth-form students learn to select ingredients and cook healthy meals. Pupils enjoy social activities, such as snack time and lunchtime discos. They learn important skills and knowledge for life, for example through work experience or in the school's football team. Pupils are well prepared for adulthood.

Pupils and their parents enjoy school events together. For example, families watch their children perform at a local theatre or experience sensory activities. Education, health and welfare staff work together to support families. Pupils and their parents say they 'belong' to the Mayfield family.

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

Governors and staff have a shared passion, dedication and expertise to continue the school's mission to develop as a 'centre for excellence' for SEND. Governors challenge and support the school to ensure every child has the provision to 'be the best they can be'. The school's work extends beyond its pupils. The school provides support and advice for pupils with SEND in mainstream schools in the local area.

Regular meetings to discuss pupils' learning consider their behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and medical information. Education, health and care (EHC) plans, home visits and frequent communication with parents inform pupils' individual 'access to learning' plans. Leaders and external professionals ensure staff accurately understand the barriers to learning pupils face and how to help pupils to overcome them. A new online assessment tool is helping the school to consider all this information in one place. This tool has started to support the school's efficient and precise use and monitoring of assessment information.

The ambitious curriculum design and appropriate adaptations help pupils to make connections between important content in most subjects. For example, pupils use their mathematical knowledge to measure woodwork and organise the school shop. In most subjects, the curriculum has a clear route for pupil progression. Pupils frequently revisit prior learning to ensure they know and remember important concepts. In some subjects, pupils do not have secure knowledge, so they cannot make connections. The essential knowledge has not been identified in these subjects.

Pupils learn new and useful vocabulary through carefully crafted activities and experiences. The school is ambitious for its pupils to be able to communicate their needs. The school uses various communication resources and real-life experiences to support pupils' communication and interaction development. This work begins in the early years.

When appropriate, the phonics scheme is purposefully adapted to meet the needs of individual learners. For example, some pupils may be taught in small groups or through one-to-one sessions. Staff's improved phonics knowledge, a shared passion for reading and raised expectations mean pupils are now securing their phonics knowledge at an earlier stage. Careful and accurate use of pupils' EHC plans and ongoing assessment information helps the school keep track of pupils' strengths and rectify gaps in their phonics knowledge.

Opportunities to thread personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) education through pupils' learning are prioritised. For example, pupils brush their teeth after lunch or represent their peers in the school council. Sixth-form students talk at length about their learning and the impact this has on their personal development. They can reflect on prior learning and what staff do to support them to achieve their individual targets.

The careers programme is well developed. The school offers a range of opportunities to prepare pupils for adulthood and the world of work. This begins in the early years. Relationships with internship and work experience partners are strong. Parents are involved in helping their children make informed choices for the next stage of their education and adulthood.

The school provides a calm, safe and welcoming place for its pupils. The school's therapy team supports teaching staff to develop the skills and knowledge to meet pupils' social and emotional needs. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They explore people's lives that are different from their own and learn to appreciate these differences. Every pupil has the support to attend school frequently.

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 wider curriculum areas, pupils do not have a secure knowledge of the subject's important concepts. They cannot connect their learning to use and apply their knowledge effectively. The school needs to identify the essential knowledge it wants pupils to know, remember and apply in these wider curriculum subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2019.

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	113641
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10322210
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matt Burrell
Headteacher	Stuart Heron
Website	www.mayfieldtorbay.org
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Mayfield School is on three sites.
- The main site, Mayfield School, caters for pupils up to 16 years of age with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The Mayfield Chestnut site in Brixham caters for primary-age pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Students with severe or profound learning difficulties aged 16 to 19 attend Mayfield College in Occombe. Mayfield Chestnut manages the six-day provision annex for pupils excluded from mainstream primary school.
- All pupils have EHC plans or are on the assessment pathway.
- Places at the school are commissioned by Torbay and Devon local authorities.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2020. Each site has a head of school.

- The school provides outreach for mainstream and special schools in the local area.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the heads of school, senior leaders, staff, pupils and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with the director of children's services at Torbay local authority, the school's external improvement partner and a representative from South Devon College.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics, PSHE and personal development and physical education and physical development. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and EHC plans and access to learning plans.
- The inspectors also discussed the school's curriculum and provision with leaders.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Thomson	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
David Simons	Ofsted Inspector

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