

# Inspection of New Forest School

Fawley Road, Fawley, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1FJ

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Inspection dates: 8 to 10 July 2025

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are set up for success at this caring and ambitious school. Many pupils have previously experienced disrupted schooling and arrive at this school with negative views about education. Their time at the New Forest School restores their self-belief and supports them to build aspirations for the future.

The school has high expectations for all. There is a shared determination for pupils to be prepared for their next steps. There is no ceiling set for pupils' academic achievements. They learn the curriculum well and achieve highly. There is an impressive balance achieved between high-quality therapeutic care alongside a broad and ambitious education.

Pupils learn in an extremely calm and supportive environment. The school sets clear and high expectations for behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them and are supported well through the positive relationships that they build with school staff. They behave well and show respect and care towards others. Staff are highly effective at supporting pupils in regulating their behaviour.

Pupils' views about school matter. They know that they are listened to and have a voice. Pupils are proud of their school gardens, which they designed and maintain. They take pleasure in the rewards that they receive and the showcasing of their work on classroom displays and the school's 'wow' board.

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

All pupils attending this school have education, health and care (EHC) plans based on their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school ensures that it understands their needs and shapes the curriculum and wider opportunities around them. The breadth and depth of the curriculum offer is impressive. It is aspirational and highly bespoke. Pupils' strengths are nurtured and, as a result, they thrive and flourish. They achieve a wide range of qualifications, preparing them well for their next educational steps.

Teaching staff have excellent subject knowledge. They support pupils' learning extremely well by showing them what success looks like. They ensure that the curriculum is carefully broken down into clear steps, which allow pupils to build their knowledge and skills well. Subject-specific vocabulary is emphasised, and pupils use it accurately. In lessons, regular recaps allow pupils to remember and apply their previous learning and make purposeful links across subjects.

Pupils are assessed carefully against the targets on their EHC plans and their learning across the curriculum. Assessment systems are detailed and purposeful. It uses the information collated to check and address any gaps in pupils' understanding. In lessons, teachers routinely check pupils' learning using skilful questioning. They successfully address any misconceptions and move pupils' learning on.

The school successfully promotes a love of reading. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are supported well through the school's approach to teaching phonics. Reading books and resources are used with expertise to support pupils. They become confident and fluent readers, who explore a wide range of text types. Pupils enjoy their regular story times and accessing the school's appealing reading areas.

Pupils benefit from the school's high-quality resources and specialised learning areas. The school is maintained to a high standard across all sites. Pupils value the opportunities to learn about animal management and horticulture at the school farm and develop their skills at the construction centre. The outdoor learning centre provides a wide range of additional experiences, including forest school, archery and climbing. Pupils' interests and talents are nurtured and enriched through these many exciting opportunities.

The school's strong, holistic offer focuses on building life skills, allowing pupils to develop their resilience, independence and ability to work together. In lessons, pupils are highly attentive and engaged learners. They maintain their focus well and complete their activities. Staff support pupils extremely well in terms of their well-being. This is aided by strong lines of communication and information sharing between the school and parents and carers. Many pupils have high attendance because they want to come to school. They enjoy their learning and feel safe with their trusted teaching and welfare staff.

The commitment to pupils' personal development is exceptional. It encompasses the school's 'TREES' values and a wide pastoral offer. Pupils relish their opportunities to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and a wide range of trips, which enhance their learning. They benefit from interactions with the local community and learn about road and water safety, which is pertinent to the school's locality. Information that pupils receive about future careers is extensive and well thought through. Pupils develop their independence through the careful support they receive and the opportunities they have to stretch their wings.

Staff value the school's extensive induction and ongoing training opportunities. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and well-being and are incredibly proud to be part of the wider school family. Many parents express praise for the education and opportunities their children experience.

The proprietor and governing body have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They support the school well and have an in-depth understanding about its strengths and next steps. The proprietor ensures that the school meets the independent school standards consistently. This includes compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137279
<b>DfE registration number</b>	850/6089
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10375001
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent day school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	88
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	New Forest Care
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Fry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Duncan Smith
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£65,600 to £98,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380893629
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newforestschool.co.uk">www.newforestschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:education@newforestschool.co.uk">education@newforestschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 23 September 2022

## Information about this school

- New Forest School is part of New Forest Care, a group which runs several children's homes. The group provides residential, educational and therapeutic provision across its providers.
- The school is a split-school site comprising five main sites. Fawley is the home site and the others include:
  - Dibden site, Lundale Road, Dibden Purlieu, Hampshire, SO45 4QN
  - Totton site, Water Lane, Totton, Hampshire, SO40 3ZX
  - The Outdoor Learning Centre, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 6AB
  - Bartley Forest Farm, Old Lyndhurst Road, Cadnam, Southampton, Hampshire, England, SO40 2NR
- All pupils who attend have an EHC plan and a diagnosis of autism or social, emotional and/or mental health needs. Many pupils are in the care of a local authority.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.
- The school is operating beyond its registration agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). It has notified the DfE about a change of proprietor.
- At the time of the inspection, the school did not have any pupils on roll in the sixth form.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the proprietor, senior school leaders and members of the school's governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and experiences at school.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.
- 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 toured all school sites to gather evidence about compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents and policies.

### **The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils**

The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, the inspectors checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.
- The recommendation for the maximum number of pupils is 130.
- The proprietor has a clear rationale for increasing the number on roll. There is an ambition for the school's strong pastoral and educational offer to benefit more pupils. Planned staffing numbers are well considered and the school's recruitment processes are robust.
- The school's leadership team have extensive experience and expertise in working with pupils with SEND. They lead with integrity and conviction. The school has strong lines of communication with local authorities, who commission places for pupils at the school.
- The school has four sites and a farm. The existing buildings and facilities are well equipped and suitable to meet an increase in pupil numbers.
- The school's health and safety policy details clear guidance and practices. There are thorough risk assessments, which include working with animals and farming equipment.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Serridge

Ofsted Inspector

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