

New Forest Small School

1 Southampton Road, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7BU

Inspection dates

26–28 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school. Everything that leaders do is based on this belief. Together with the staff, they have developed a caring culture where pupils thrive.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Leaders provide a safe and happy environment. Pupils develop extremely positive attitudes to learning, to staff and to each other.
- In the early years, children are well supported and make good progress.
- The curriculum is very strong. Staff plan highly engaging activities that capture pupils' interest. Pupils are skilfully taught knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make sound progress.
- Parents are very happy with the school. They are confident that their children are safe and happy. Parents value the attention given to their children's well-being. One parent spoke for many when she said, 'a great school, really caring'.
- Pupils make at least good progress in all subjects. In many areas of the curriculum, pupils make progress that is better than this. However, pupils do not do as well in writing and mathematics as they do in other areas.
- Leadership has improved since the last inspection. However, all middle leaders are not yet successfully tackling weaknesses in their subjects.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that writing and mathematics tasks contain sufficient challenge to stretch the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils can achieve.
- Subject leaders should further develop their knowledge and oversight of their subject's performance to precisely identify areas that need to improve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are ambitious for their pupils. As a result, they have developed a compelling educational philosophy that puts personal development at the heart of the school. Leaders believe that confidence and well-being are essential for pupils' long-term success. Leaders are rightly proud of the confident, well-rounded young people the pupils become.
- The school has improved since the last inspection. Leaders have successfully corrected the areas that required attention. The oversight of all areas of the school's work has been upgraded. As a result, all the independent school standards are now met.
- Leaders are committed to further improving the school. They are clear and honest about current strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have strengthened their supervision of policies and procedures. They have also reviewed many areas of their work, the curriculum, for example. These developments have enabled leaders to accurately identify areas that could be even better. This has led to an advisory board being recently established. They will act as a governing body.
- The curriculum is carefully designed. It provides pupils with a breadth of knowledge and frequent opportunities to think for themselves. Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure that it is up to date and relevant. This can be seen in recent developments to reflect examination requirements and big issues, such as migration. Younger pupils develop a good understanding of the world around them from a wide range of activities that they enjoy. A bespoke curriculum is available for each pupil at secondary level. Extra activities, such as the performance of 'Macbeth' and the very effective use of the outdoor space, provide pupils with excellent opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- Leaders' oversight of the curriculum is not comprehensive. While some subjects are monitored closely, such as English in the secondary classes, other areas do not receive the same level of scrutiny. This means that the curriculum is not fully achieving its intended impact because leaders do not monitor its delivery closely enough.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils have many valuable opportunities to learn about British values. Lessons ensure that pupils consider all aspects of life in modern Britain.
- Staff are proud of the school and enjoy their work. Leaders monitor teaching, learning and assessment effectively and ensure that performance management is linked to pay. The monitoring of pupils' progress has been significantly improved since the last inspection. Information about what pupils know and can do is well used to monitor the pupils' learning.
- Subject leadership is not consistent. Some subject leaders track and monitor the progress of all pupils and use this information to plan improvement. However, not all these leaders have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject. Consequently, some are having limited impact on their subject.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Leaders ensure that all aspects of pupils' safety and well-being are dealt with well. A suitable safeguarding policy is in place and available on the website. Staff report any concerns that they have, and leaders deal with these appropriately. Leaders liaise well with other agencies when they need to. The whole-school focus on well-being ensures that staff are vigilant and that vulnerable pupils get the help that they need.
- Leaders ensure that thorough checks are carried out to determine the suitability of staff and volunteers. The single central register is well ordered, and a clear record of additional checks and training is maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils do well in the school and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They develop very positive attitudes to learning and many demonstrate a thirst for knowledge. Pupils relish the range of subjects that they cover and value their teachers. Pupils develop very powerful and positive relationships with staff.
- Staff make sure that lessons spark pupils' interest. This ensures that most pupils are highly engaged in their learning. Teachers think carefully about the subject matter being covered and make sure that it is relevant to the pupils. For example, in a primary history lesson on Neolithic burial rituals pupils considered their own reaction to death and loss to better understand the subject matter.
- The outside space is used very effectively as a learning space. Here, strong teaching and engaging activities provide pupils with a wide range of rich learning activities. A good example of this was the tree house building activity for primary pupils. This covered a wide range of science, maths and English skills and delighted the pupils involved.
- Pupils make very strong progress in subjects where teachers have high expectations of the pupils and make them think hard about their work. Teachers use their thorough subject knowledge to expertly question pupils, deepening pupils understanding of the subject being taught. For example, during the rehearsals for 'Macbeth', staff skilfully questioned pupils to draw out their knowledge.
- Pupils do not yet make very strong progress in all lessons. This is because not all teachers share the same high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils can achieve. Consequently, pupils achieve different levels of success in different subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils get great pleasure from being at school. They have excellent relationships with adults and each other. Pupils feel very safe and are well looked after; their personal development is given a high priority by all staff. This approach is fundamental to the character of the school. This was summed up by a member of staff who said, of leaders, that 'the well-being of staff and pupils is their core philosophy'.
- Staff help pupils to develop their confidence and self-belief in a wide range of areas. For example, they develop their physical confidence by having regular opportunities to take

risks safely when learning outdoors. The school's approach also provides excellent support for pupils who suffer from anxiety and have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The supportive and welcoming nature of the school supports these pupils to develop confidence and self-belief. Personal, social, health education lessons also provide excellent support for all pupils. One such lesson, covering cyber bullying, expertly engaged all pupils and helped them to deepen their understanding of this complicated issue.

- This school works hard to include everyone equally. Pupils have a very well-developed awareness of the importance of equality. They treat everyone with respect. One parent described the impact of the school's approach to their child, who has anxiety and SEN. She said that her child is now happy and enjoys school after many negative experiences in other schools.
- The very rare cases of bullying are dealt with extremely effectively. The school promotes highly positive relationships between pupils. Staff seek out every opportunity to help pupils to understand how their actions can affect other people. This leads to a very positive environment where arguments and disagreements are rare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school, showing high levels of respect and care for adults and each other. Staff are proud to work here and are confident that children are safe. They all feel that pupils' behaviour is exceptional, and that any issues are dealt with promptly and sensitively.
- Attendance is lower than national averages at both primary and secondary levels. However, a third of pupils in the school attend part-time. Many pupils have previously had poor attendance and their attendance is improving. Leaders have very effective arrangements to ensure that part-time pupils are receiving the broad and balanced curriculum to which they are entitled.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils leave the school with at least five strong GCSE examination results in a range of subjects. Outcomes are particularly strong in some subjects, including English, psychology, art and geography. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils achieve at least expected levels in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils in the primary years develop a sound understanding of the range of subjects covered by the curriculum. They are skilled readers who enjoy reading a wide range of books. In some areas of learning, pupils develop knowledge and understanding that is well beyond the expected levels for their age. For example, in science, history and design technology. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Pupils do not receive the same level of challenge in writing and mathematics as they do in other areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not achieve the same confidence and high level of knowledge in these areas as they do in other parts of the curriculum.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive successful help and guidance from teachers and learning support assistants. The school's supportive and welcoming environment enables pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties to develop their confidence. As a result, these pupils make the same good progress as others in the school.
- In the secondary classes, pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in many other subjects. The levels that pupils can achieve in their GCSE examination has been capped by the school's decision to enter some pupils early for their examinations. Although this means that most pupils pass the GCSE examination, some do not achieve the grade of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- The school meets the independent school standards and requirements for children in the early years.
- Children enjoy their learning and make good progress. Staff skilfully engage them in well-planned activities that gently stretch children's learning. The combination of engaging activities and the highly supportive environment enables children to thrive. Most go on to become confident learners who enjoy challenging tasks. As a result, children start Year 1 with levels that are either in line with or higher than the national average.
- Most children achieve a good level of development by the time they finish Reception. Staff closely monitor each child and plan carefully for their individual needs. Children's learning moves on very quickly in some areas of learning, for example knowledge and understanding of the world and personal development. This is because staff give these areas greater focus than other areas of learning.
- Parents are happy with the school and value the information that they receive. Parents are well informed about the progress of their children and have regular opportunities to talk to teachers. The introduction of an online system to share children's learning has ensured that parents and the school communicate well about children's development.
- As with the older pupils, children make more progress in some areas of learning than in others. Children do not receive the same level of challenge when learning about writing and mathematics as they do in other subjects. For example, children's musical skills are very well developed as the result of enjoyable lessons that build skills and confidence over time. The basic skills in writing and mathematics are not delivered as systematically as they are in other areas of learning. This means that children do not achieve the same confidence and high level of knowledge in these areas as they do in other areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	136112
DfE registration number	850/6075
Inspection number	10039164

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

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Number of part-time pupils	25
Proprietors	Nicholas and Alison Alp
Headteachers	Nicholas and Alison Alp
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,900–£9,900
Telephone number	02380 284415
Website	www.newforestsmallschool.com
Email address	newforestscool@live.com
Date of previous inspection	10–12 December 2014

Information about this school

- The New Forest Small School is an independent day school for pupils aged three to 16 years.
- There are 75 students on roll. Most children in the early years setting attend on a part-time basis. Some pupils in the primary classes only attend for part of the school week. These students are educated at home when they are not in school.
- The school does not use any off-site training for pupils.
- The two headteachers are also the proprietors of the school.
- The school was last inspected in 2014, when its quality of education was judged to be requires improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector took into account 53 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 35 free-text comments.
- A range of documents was considered, including: the school's self-evaluation and development plans; records of pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety; and the school's information about pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons and parts of lessons, four of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also looked carefully at work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with the headteachers, two subject leaders and pupils in primary and secondary classes.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Walshe

Ofsted Inspector

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