

Inspection of The Stable School

2–4, 12 Dudmoor Farm Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6AQ

Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The Stable School provides high-quality education for pupils who have struggled elsewhere. Pupils love their school and attend well. They feel valued and cared for. Leaders put pupils at the heart of all they do. They lead with integrity and respect. In a short amount of time, leaders have established a school with a strong family feel. Parents are glowing about the school. A typical view, that reflects those of many, states, 'We would be so lost without it (the school).'

The headteacher's inspirational morning briefing helps pupils to settle quickly. Staff and pupils gather to reflect on their achievements and set goals for the day. Pupils leave with a spring in their step and are ready for the day ahead. Later in the day, pupils and staff eat and play together.

Pupils and staff treat each other with respect. Staff want the best for pupils. They adapt what they are teaching to help pupils succeed. Pupils engage in activities with focus and determination. They behave well. Sometimes, when pupils struggle to cope, adults are on hand to offer a helping hand and listening ear.

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

Leaders make sure that they meet the independent school standards in full. This includes ensuring the school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Since opening in the autumn term 2019, the school has quickly become an important part of the pupils' lives. School leaders, who are also the proprietors, run a tight ship. They play an integral role in the school's effectiveness. Leaders are in the process of passing responsibilities to other leaders and trustees. This work is in its early stages. They are deciding on the specific responsibilities they want others to have, so they can assure themselves that the school will continue to go from strength to strength. Pupils have settled quickly and are keen to learn. The school's strong therapeutic and pastoral support helps pupils to achieve well.

Leaders ensure that strong relationships with pupils are in place, so pupils feel safe and trust staff. This helps to lay foundations for future learning. Pupils know staff want the best for them, describing staff as 'amazing'. Staff set realistic goals for pupils but need more help to break these into well-sequenced, manageable chunks.

Pupils respect the well-maintained building and premises. Leaders provide staff with the training they need. Staff appreciate this and fully back leaders' aims that have pupils at the centre of their work. Staff told us, 'Everything leaders say is heartfelt and genuine.'

Staff support pupils' reading well. Some pupils are still in the early stages of identifying letters and the sounds they make. Staff know precisely what to do to help pupils most, including with their speech and language development. Leaders introduced daily 'drop everything and read' sessions to promote a love of reading.

Pupils enjoy the opportunity to dive into a book, before getting ready to go home. Leaders have invested in a rich and varied book stock. Pupils pick books that not only interest them but are also matched well to their reading capability. However, leaders have not yet put in place a long-term plan to map out what pupils need to learn in reading, and by when.

Leaders have made clear what they want pupils to know for this academic year, in all subjects. Individual 'curriculum trees' help to remind staff of gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders are developing longer-term plans, recognising that, while some pupils may eventually return to mainstream education, others may not. Because of this, they have started to put 'pathways' in place to help pupils build towards meaningful qualifications by the end of key stage 4. Suitable careers advice is available for pupils.

Leaders support pupils' character development well. Adults challenge pupils to work beyond their comfort zone. Pupils benefit from meaningful personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions. Staff do not shy away from tackling issues that most benefit pupils. They help pupils develop confidence and resilience. A commonly held view of parents is how well staff help pupils with complex mental health needs, including anxiety. Pupils' strong attendance is an indicator of their positive attitudes towards school.

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Many need help with their social, emotional and mental health. Leaders provide pupils with bespoke therapeutic and pastoral support, delivered by school staff and external experts. Most pupils have had disrupted schooling prior to joining the school. Leaders tackle targets in pupils' plans with urgency. Over a short period of time, pupils are already surpassing targets in their plans.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel and are safe. Pupils trust staff and know they want the best for them. They tell adults if they have a concern or worry.

Leaders have robust recruitment procedures in place which ensure they appoint adults who are suitable to work with pupils. They do not appoint supply staff. Staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. They use their strong knowledge of pupils to notice changes in behaviour, which may indicate an underlying concern. Staff pass concerns on to leaders, so they can act to keep pupils safe, working with external agencies when needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders, who are also the proprietors, have quickly established a successful school. They have a very 'hands-on' role, enabling them to model their expectations to others. As they prepare to hand the reins over to other leaders and trustees, they need to make sure that others are clear about their responsibilities to continue the school's strong start.
- Leaders and staff have prioritised supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health. This is paying off so that pupils can achieve well. Staff are successfully helping pupils to tackle gaps in their knowledge. However, they have not yet put in place long-term curriculum plans to help pupils know and remember more, particularly for those who may attend the school long-term. Leaders need to agree and implement long-term curriculum plans, which build on pupils' prior knowledge.
- Staff are mostly successful in identifying and plugging gaps in pupils' knowledge. They provide pupils with appropriate curriculum goals. However, staff are not routinely breaking these goals into well-sequenced, manageable chunks. Staff require training, so they can help pupils to know and remember more to achieve clear milestones in their learning.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147198
DfE registration number	839/6012
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10126708
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	The Happy Learning Centre Ltd
Headteacher	Daniel Vincent
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,000 – £30,000
Telephone number	01202 116274
Website	None
Email address	dan@thestableschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The proprietor established The Stable School to support pupils' social, emotional or mental health. Local authorities fund pupils' placements at the school. Most pupils were permanently excluded from mainstream settings.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since it opened in October 2019.
- The proprietor is also the school's headteacher. He has established a board of trustees but, at the time of the inspection, they had not yet held their first board meeting.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

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

- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, PSHE and history. We met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' workbooks, conducted lesson visits, and spoke with teachers and pupils. We also spent some time carrying out visits to art lessons and looking at pupils' artwork.
- We met with the designated leader and deputy leader for safeguarding to evaluate the school's safeguarding procedures. We also checked the school's single central record.
- We met with the special educational needs coordinator. We considered how pupils' EHC plan targets inform the education and pastoral support the school provides, and the subsequent impact of this work.
- We met with the leader responsible for providing careers support and advice to pupils.
- We considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We also spoke with staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Carrington

Her Majesty's Inspector

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